

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street
Easton, MD 21601
September 16, 2105

Present:

Board

Joseph H. Secrist, President (R)
Susan MacKinnon (D)
Walter W. Black (D)
Richard B. Bulman (R)
John F. Hall (R)

Staff

Patricia L. Mitchell, Election Director

Board Attorney

Philip Cronan

Guests

Mary-beth Goll
Eugene Goll
Kimberly Meiklejohn, State Manager, Field Support Division, State Board
of Elections

A meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on September 16, 2015 in Conference Room # 1 at the Board office indicated above. Mr. Secrist called the meeting of August 19, 2015 to order at 9:30 p.m. Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes of August 19 and August 14, 2015, and September 11, 2015

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of August 19 and 24, 2015 which had been forwarded to the Board Members by email in advance of the meeting. Mr. Bulman moved the approval of the minutes and Mr. Hall seconded. The motion to approve was carried unanimously.

Mr. Secrist then asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of September 11, 2015 which had been forwarded to the Board

Members by email in advance of the meeting. Mr. Hall moved the approval of the minutes and Mr. Black seconded. The motion to approve was carried unanimously.

Addition/Changes to the Agenda

Mr. Bulman asked that the agenda be changed by the addition of three additional matters, viz.: (1) how the Board might gather the information needed to respond to questions in the Performance Planning and Evaluation Program, such as those that relate to customer service and to cooperation with other agencies; and (2) how the job description of the Election Director should be updated. The President stated that those matters would be added under new business. Mr. Bulman also pointed out the need to elect a secretary, now that the Board's bylaws had been approved by the State Board. The President stated that the election would be included in Old Business, which includes the bylaws as an item.

Mr. Bulman then asked that the issue of whether the budget would need to be revised to address additional training to be added to the agenda. The President stated that the subject would be discussed as new business.

Public Comment

Mr. Secrist asked if the members of the public present wished to make any comments. There was no response.

Reports

Mrs. Mitchell provided her report in writing, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A. Mr. Bulman asked for an explanation of the acronym "ERIC." Ms. Mitchell explained ERIC refers to the Electronic Registration Information Center.¹

Mr. Hall asked if the training referred to in the report related to the reactivation of inactive accounts and Ms. Mitchell stated that it did.

The Board asked Ms. Mitchell for information on the leasing of warehouse space for equipment, pointing out that space was needed for the equipment in order to hold the mock election. She stated that she had emailed R. Andrew Hollis, County Manager, asking that a decision be made. Mr. Black moved that Ms. Mitchell be instructed to

¹ According to the State Election Board web page, ERIC "is a multi-state partnership that uses sophisticated, secure data-matching to improve the accuracy of state voter registration systems."

contact Mr. Hollis and to point out the urgency of the need for a prompt decision regarding the selection of warehouse space. The motion was seconded by Ms. MacKinnon and carried unanimously.

Mr. Cronan referred to his memorandum concerning the confidentiality of earlier closed meeting that had been circulated by email on September 7, 2015 and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Old Business

Site for early voting

Ms. Mitchell stated for the record that the Board had visited three sites and that, by consensus, the American Legion site had been rejected.

Mr. Blacked made a motion, which was seconded by Ms. MacKinnon, to hold early voting at the Easton Fire Department building. In support of his motion, Mr. Black pointed out that early voting was conducted at only one site in the County, and that the Community Center is a greater distance from Tilghman Island than the Fire House is.

Mr. Bulman stated that he was concerned about the safety of both the fire house, due to the presence of the public on the apron by which emergency equipment existed the fire house, and of the Community Center, which required most county voters to make a left turn across two lanes of traffic.

Mrs. MacKinnon stated that she felt that the danger presented by the left turn across two lanes of traffic was decisive in favor of the firehouse.

Mr. Hall stated that, with some exceptions, early voting was a matter of convenience, and that those who enjoyed such convenience should be willing to accept the few inconveniences presented by the Community Center. Mr. Secrist stated that he was concerned about the safety presented by the use of the fire house, to both the voting public and to responding firemen, especially if a second alarm ever occurred during early voting.

Mr. Bulman asked if the early voting site could be re-located for the general election. Ms. Mitchell stated that the State Election Board disfavored such a move and would have to hold a new vote to approve it. Mrs. MacKinnon felt that a change between the primary and the general election would cause more voter confusion.

The Motion to use the Easton fire house as the site for early voting was approved by a majority of three (MacKinnon, Black and Bulman) in favor and two (Hall and Secrist) opposed.

Board Attorney's retainer agreement

Mr. Cronan presented his revised legal representation agreement and explained the change. Upon motion duly made (Mr. Hall) and seconded (Ms. MacKinnon), the revised legal representation fee agreement was unanimously approved and the President was authorized to sign it on behalf of the Board.

Bylaws.

The Board noted that the State Election Board had approved the bylaws adopted by this Board. Mr. Bulman noted that it was timely to elect a secretary. Upon motion duly made (Mr. Bulman) and seconded (Mr. Black), Mr. Hall was elected secretary to the Board.

Review of Invoices

Regarding the invoices, Mr. Hall inquired regarding the "This is not a bill" statement on the shredder's bill and the designation of 1 equip serviced. Ms. Mitchell explained that the shredder's bill is paid by credit card, such that the invoice has already been paid; reference to 1 equipment meant that the Board Office had one bag to be shredded.

Budget review

Mr. Bulman pointed out that the budget would be exceeded before the Board met again. He moved that the Board authorize the expenditure of sums in excess of the budget within reasonable limits in the categories of Unemployment Insurance, Dues and Membership and Contractual Services. Mr. Hall seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

New Voting Equipment (Distribution of Equipment)

No discussion

Mock Elections

Ms. Mitchell stated that the State Board is currently testing the equipment before it is sent to the local boards. Ms. Meiklejohn agreed with Ms. Mitchell's response. In response to a question from Mr. Secrist regarding whether the mock election coincided with this Board's next meeting, Ms. Mitchell stated that the mock election would be held

October 19 through October 23 and this Board's next meeting would be October 21. Mr. Secrist asked if that would be a problem; Ms. Mitchell stated that it would not be.

Website Corrections.

Mr. Secrist asked, regarding the website, if the Primary canvas dates had been added and the typo on the contact page had be corrected.

Warehouse space

The President noted that this subject had been covered earlier in the meeting.

School Use Forms

Ms. Mitchell stated that a form had been sent to the schools on August 24 and that she was waiting to hear from the schools.

New Business

Mr. Bulman asked if this Board had complied with the Open Meetings Act, specifically the requirement that the Board, at this meeting, stated what actions had been taken in a prior closed meeting. Mr. Hall responded that he had completed two such statements, one for the closed meetings of August 19 and 24, 2015, and one for the September 11, 2015 meeting on the form provided by the Attorney-General. He stated that he would include those statements as exhibits of these minutes. (See Exhibits B and C attached hereto).

Mr. Bulman expressed concern that the job description of the office of Election Director does not reflect, accurately, the nature of the job as it is currently being done.

Ms. MacKinnon suggested that the job description had been written by the State Election Board. Thus, if this Board felt that the description was inaccurate, we should suggest that to the State Election Board.

Ms. Mitchell agreed to contact Sylvia Brown, to ask for a current job description and how this Board would go about suggesting changes.

Mr. Hall suggested that everyone make an independent effort to update the job description and see if a consensus could be reached as to how the job description should be updated.

Mr. Bulman addressed the need for this Board to gather information from the public in order to complete the Election Director's performance evaluation, specifically

as it relates to customer service. He said that the Board needed to discuss a procedure for collecting such information.

A general discussion of how that information might be gained followed. Mr. Black asked if the information sought would relate only to the election itself or to the entire process, Mr. Bulman replied that the evaluation form addressed the entire process. Ms. MacKinnon stated that she felt that the success of the elections was the most important criteria. Mr. Black questioned whether a local business is engaged in conducting such a survey. Mr. Cronan responded that his firm does so on a limited basis, as its doing so is hampered by the need to maintain confidentiality.

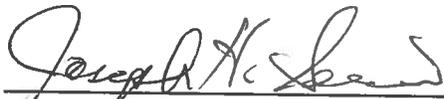
Further discussion was deferred until the next meeting. In the interim, board members would investigate some possibilities as to how such a survey might be performed.

The president announced that the next meeting would be held October 21, 2015.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph H. Secrist, President



John F. Hall, recorder