

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street
Easton, MD 21601
February 21, 2018

Present:

Board

Joseph H. Secrist, President	(R)
Walter W. Black, Jr.	(D)
Richard B. Bulman	(R)
Wadella Thomas	(R)
Susan MacKinnon	(D)

Staff

Jeri Cook, Election Director

Board Attorney

Philip Cronan

Public

Chris Koch
Mark Cohoon
Walt Johnson
Tom Miller (MCTV Videographer)

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on February 21, 2018 in Conference Room # One at the Board office indicated above. Mr. Secrist called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes of January 24, 2018

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of January 24, 2018, a copy of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Ms. MacKinnon asked to see the Written Statement for Closed Meetings. Copies were provided by the Election Director and will be attached to the draft minutes. She asked that these statements be as complete as possible and that they be circulated to the board members when the draft minutes are circulated for comment in the future. Upon motion duly made (Mr. Bulman) and seconded (Mr. Black), the minutes for January 24, 2018 were approved unanimously.

Addition/Changes to the Agenda

A motion was made (Mr. Black) and seconded (Ms. Thomas) to approved the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Election Director's Report

Ms. Cook reported on the following topics:

Calendar – A calendar of all significant state election events was sent to board members. Ms. Cook handed out a calendar she prepared with significant dates requiring Talbot County Board Members attendance.

Election Judges – An alphabetical list of potential Election Judges had been provided to Board Members. Ms. Cook is awaiting about 20 more possible judges to respond. She would like to have 100 judges for the upcoming election. She will provide the board with a list of judges sorted by polling place. The question was raised by Mr. Black regarding the need for equal number of judges from the two major parties at each polling place. Mr. Secrist read from Election Law the specific language regarding this. At this time, there are more Democrat judges than Republican. Ms. Cook noted she has contacted Republican Central Committee members to seek their help in recruiting more Republican applicants. There was discussion among the board members and with Ms. Cook regarding judges' pay. Discussion focused on salary differential for early voting versus election day and salary level need to attract applicants. Ms. Cook distributed a table of pay scales used by neighboring counties. She was asked to return to the board at its next meeting with a draft revised pay schedule for consideration.

Budget – Ms. Cook will address the county council on March 1. She invited all board members who are available to also participate in the presentation.

Pollbooks – Ms. Cook recommended that we not reduce the number of pollbooks. Legislation has been introduced to have same day registration on election day and that may actually require more pollbooks.

Internet Service – We are now using DSL service and it is proving inadequate. Staff is working with the state and Easton Utilities to upgrade service to cable.

Disaster Recovery – A disaster recovery meeting with the county is scheduled for February 28 at the office. Board members are invited to participate.

Other – Ms. Cook also addressed several administrative issues regarding office closings, office leave schedules, overtime and warehouse cleaning.

Board Attorney Report

Mr. Cronan had no report.

Old Business

Mark Cohoon – district and precinct lines

At the previous board meeting, Talbot County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Manager Mike Cohoon offered to work with the staff to modernize the maps uses by the board for

delineating districts, precincts and education board districts. He presented several maps demonstrating how modern GPS systems can more accurately show the boundaries. Discussion ensued regarding how the current maps were used to identify voters' proper districts and precincts. Upon assuming the position of Election Director, Ms. Cook was familiarizing herself with the county street files and performing a routine review of the street files when she discovered some administrative errors and corrected them. She found that approximately 1,800 voters were assigned to incorrect polling places or education board districts. That caused her to send out new voter registration cards and to ask for assistance from the county with this process of updating the information in the street files.

Upon further discussion, it was determined that the maps are not the governing document in assigning voter precincts. To determine the number of new voter registration cards that were the result of these updates, Ms. Cook has asked that the State Board consult the voter data base during that period in the county. That request is pending.

Concern was expressed that the mapping changes presented by Mr. Cohoon could change actual precincts or districts. The board was assured that the proposed mapping update will only make the maps more accurately conform to the boundaries as approved by the state and/or county. Ms. MacKinnon asked that Mr. Cronan research this and report back to the board at its next meeting. She asked that the board have as much specific information as possible so that we can explain to affected voters and the public the cause for the new voter registration cards.

There was also discussion regarding the likelihood that there may be many voters who may not have understood the purpose of the new voter registration cards and will arrive at the wrong polling place. Several suggestions were made regarding how to proceed with public notification, assure voter confidence in the Election Board and dealing with the issue on election day. Ms. Cook was asked to return to the next meeting with suggestions for the board to consider.

There was no action taken regarding the modernization of the maps. Further discussion regarding the maps was deferred to a future date after the elections.

Review Invoices

There were not comments regarding the invoices.

Budget FY 2018

The board reviewed the financial report of expenditures for the current year. Ms. Cook handed out the budget material she will use for the presentation of our request for next fiscal year and the revisions to this year's budget, which may not require any new funds.

Budget FY 2019

Discussion of this topic was held during the Election Director's report earlier in the meeting.

County Bulletins

The latest County Bulletin was previously distributed to the Board Members.

MAEO Conference

Ms. Cook pointed out that the MAEO Annual Meeting is set for March 13-16, 2018 in Ocean City. All members who will be attending have been registered and rooms have been reserved. She will handle paying of hotel bills.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Several surveys have been submitted since the last meeting and copies of these surveys were given to the board members.

New Business

Office Closing

Mr. Secrist noted that during her report, Ms. Cook pointed out that the staff will be at the MAEO meeting March 13 through 16, necessitating the closure of the office from noon March 13 through noon March 16. Mr. Black moved that the board approve closing the office during this time. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

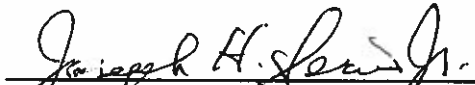
Confirmation of next meeting – March 21, 2018

Mr. Secrist noted that the next board meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. on March 21, 2018 at the board offices.

Adjournment

Mr. Black moved the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Attested,


Joseph H. Secrist, Jr., President

Respectfully submitted,


Richard B. Bulman, Secretary