

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street
Easton, MD 21601
January 23, 2019

Present:

Board

Joseph H. Secrist, President	(R)
Walter Black	(D)
Richard B. Bulman	(R)
Wadella Thomas *	(R)

Staff

Jeri Cook, Election Director

Board Attorney

Philip Cronan

*Ms. Thomas arrived shortly after the start of the meeting arriving after the determination of a quorum and approval of the minutes and the agenda.

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on January 23, 2019 in Conference Room # One at the Board office indicated above. Mr. Secrist called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

Department of Homeland Security Presentation

Mr. Secrist noted that Mr. David Johnson was scheduled to make a presentation to the board. Due to the shutdown of portions of the Federal Government, he could not be at this meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the open portion of the meeting of December 19, 2018, a copy of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Mr. Bulman moved approval of the minutes of the open portion of the December 19, 2018 meeting. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Addition/Changes to the Agenda

Mr. Secrist asked for additions or changes to the agenda. He asked that the following be added to the agenda and noted that there is no need for a meeting of the Board of Canvassers or for a Closed Session:

- Report on meeting with County Council on January 22, 2019
- Report on staff vacancies

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Black moved approval of the agenda with the changes suggested by Mr. Secrist. Mr. Bulman seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

At this point, Board Member Wadella Thomas entered the meeting.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Election Director's Report

Ms. Cook reported on the following:

- The Manual Audit will be performed on February 14, 2019 at the warehouse.
- She spoke with Dr. Anne Browne to discuss the alleged ADA compliance issues raised in her letter to the Board. Ms. Cook said there were some issues that Dr. Browne raised that could be fixed by the election office for future elections, but that some of the issues were either changes that need to be made by the county or discussed the fire department. The letter from Dr. Browne was sent to Erin Perrone, Director of Election Reform, at the State Board to make her aware of the concerns.
- All current Voter Notification Cards that are sent out show only a Post Office Box for the Election Board office. Older Voter Notification Cards have the prior office physical address. Following discussion of the need to send new cards to all voters in the county, there was no interest in incurring the cost of such a mailing, since new cards no longer have the board office address on them. Some cards, however, have voters placed in an incorrect Easton Election Ward. Ms. Cook is working with the County and Town of Easton GIS to update the voters' information. Following discussion of the need to reissue Voter Notification Cards to correct the Wards for the upcoming Easton Town election in May 2019, Mr. Bulman moved that the Board invoice the town for the cost of postage and printing related to the reissue of the cards. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- Regarding the presentation by the Department of Homeland Security, Mr. Ray Hanna of the agency should be available to meet with the board in February.

The computers in the office and the warehouse, with the exception of the Director's, currently use Windows 7 Operating System. The State has directed that all offices be

upgraded to Windows 10 by the end of this year. This will entail the replacement of all our computers and scanners. Two computers and one scanner will be replaced this current fiscal year and two computers and one scanner will be replaced fiscal year 2020. This cost will show on the state's quarterly billing to the county.

Board Attorney's Report

Mr. Cronan spoke with Delegate Chris Adams regarding legislation to require all schools to close on election day so as to facilitate the use of the schools for voting. Delegate Adams will support our requested legislation and will be discussing our legislative request with Senator Addie Eckardt.

Old Business

Budget FY2019

Mr. Secrist reported on the meeting with the County Council he, Mr. Black and Ms. Cook participated in on January 22 regarding a modification to the current budget to fund salary adjustments. The Council declined to consider an adjustment until the next budget year, which begins on July 1, 2019. Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. Black moved that the board seek another meeting with the County Council to request that the Director's salary increase be reconsidered and effective immediately. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Review of Invoices

Ms. Cook previously provided copies of invoices received since the last meeting and answered questions from Board Members.

County Bulletins

Copies of the latest County Bulletin were distributed to the Board members.

Legislation for school closing

This topic was discussed during the Board Attorney's Report.

New Business

Budget FY2020

A draft budget request for FY2020 was provided to the Board for discussion. The Board is requested to have its budget request to the county by February 8, 2019. The Board discussed the details of the draft. Some items in the budget, such as FICA and Health Insurance, remain estimates and await input from the State Board. There was a significant increase to the budget to accommodate the purchase of new pollbooks. The option for the county to finance the pollbooks over three years through the State Treasury Office is available according to an email sent by Michelle Holland, Finance Director, from SBE. To address this uncertainty and to meet the county's submission deadline, Ms. Thomas move to approve the budget submission of \$587,877, subject to modest modifications. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Facility for Election Office

Mr. Bulman asked that the Board schedule time to discuss the need for a more secure location for the Board's office and warehouse space for the voting equipment. He pointed out that access to the current location where the equipment is located is subject to the Sheriff's department and county personnel control. This area is not primarily subject to the Election Board oversight. This does not allow for the public to easily enter the warehouse where most of the public display takes place, ex. all election canvasses, the manual audit, election judge training. Also, the current office space on Bay Street is not handicapped accessible after normal business hours when the office is required to be open late for candidate filing and voter registration. He would like the Board to consider leasing space where it can be more certain that it is complying with election law.

Report on meeting with County Council on January 22, 2019

This item was discussed as part of the Budget FY2019 agenda item.

Report on staff vacancies

Ms. Cook reported that the two vacancies have been advertised. State Board Director of Personnel Services, Sylvia Brown, is preparing the documentation for the Director to work with her to set up candidate interviews. Ms. Cook anticipates that she will have the positions filled by the end of February.

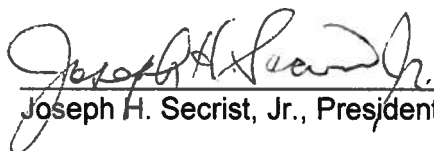
Confirmation of Next Meeting

To accommodate Mr. Ray Hanna, Ms. Cook suggested that the start time for the next meeting be rescheduled for 9:00 AM. Mr. Black moved that the next meeting of the board be held at 9:00 AM on February 20, 2019. Mr. Bulman seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.


Adjournment

Mr. Black moved adjournment of the meeting. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:40 PM.

Attested,


Joseph H. Secrist, Jr., President

Respectfully submitted,


Richard B. Bulman, Secretary