

# Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections  
215 Bay Street  
Easton, MD 21601  
*February 19, 2020*

Present:

## **Board**

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

## **Staff**

Jeri Cook, Election Director

## **Board Attorney**

Philip Cronan

## **Public**

None

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on February 19, 2020 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.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of January 15, 2019, copies of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Mr. Black moved approval of the minutes as presented. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **Addition/Changes to the Agenda**

Mr. Bulman moved approval of the agenda as presented. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## Election Director's Report

Ms. Cook reported on the following:

- The county has been working on the phone system and we are no longer experiencing problems with the voicemail system.
- An updated polling place evaluation form was sent to Board Members along with instructions for use during Early Voting and on Election Day. Discussion of this topic continued under the New Business portion of the meeting.
- She and Fred Gleockler attended the Election Technology Committee meeting in Baltimore on January 17. Topics included the use of the new routers and best practices information for use in the upcoming elections.
- Ms. Cook attended the iGo Conference in Charleston, SC. The meeting was a good opportunity to network with other election officials throughout the country and hear how other states are handling their elections. Topics included a presentation by the Department of Homeland Security on issues facing the upcoming elections and election officials from Oregon discussed their all mail in ballot procedures.
- Five agencies attended the table top meeting hosted by the county emergency management services. They discussed the plans they are developing for the upcoming elections and the role the other agencies will be asked to fill. The meeting was successful and appreciation was given to the emergency management services members, Clay Stamp and Geneva Harrison, for working closely with the Director to bring the agencies together.
- The State Board has decided to not require local boards to implement the new connectivity system on Election Day for the primary or general elections this cycle. A news article on this decision was provided to the Board Members.
- Work has begun on the installation of the security window to replace the current open window at the service desk in the office.
- The State Board has asked all the local boards to be sure that their websites are secure. Discussion of this topic continued during the New Business portion of this meeting.
- County Councilman Chuck Callahan, along with four others, toured our areas in the Talbot County Business Center to assess what will be needed for our space once we are required to vacate the building.
- Judges' training will begin on March 3, 2020. Board Members are encouraged to attend at least one session.

## **Board Attorney's Report**

Mr. Cronan expanded upon his report at the previous meeting regarding the need to include equal number of Election Judges by the two major political parties. He answered questions regarding possible situations when there are not enough Election Judge candidates from one of the parties to comply with the statute. Questions were also raised by Board Members regarding the application of our local policy to give preference to in-county applicants and proximity of the applicant to the polling place location.

## **Old Business**

### a. Facility for Election Board

Ms. Cook reported earlier that Councilman Callahan had visited our space in the Talbot County Business Center to assess what space will be needed for the future. No new information is available for future space plans for the Election Board.

### b. Budget FY2020

Expenditure reports through January were provide to the Board Members. Ms. Cook responded to questions from Board Members.

### c. Review Invoices

Ms. Cook previously provided Board Members with copies of invoices received since the last meeting. There were no questions from Board Members.

### d. Budget FY2021

Ms. Cook provided the Board with a detailed proposed budget as previously approved by the Board, reformatted to comply with the county requirements. The County Council is scheduled to meet with the Board on 5:20 PM on Tuesday March 3, but due to the fact that is election judge training, the Director has requested a change in date and/or time. All Board Members are invited to attend.

### e. County Bulletins

Ms. Cook provided the Board with copies of the most recent County Bulletins and responded to questions from the Board Members.

f. Meeting with Talbot County Emergency Management personnel

Ms. Cook expanded upon her earlier report on the meeting hosted by the Emergency Management staff. Those Board Members who attended the meeting offered their observations on the positive value of the meeting.

**New Business**

a. Secure Web Site

The Talbot County Board of Elections' web site is a part of the Talbot County web site. This web site is not secure. Ms. Cook had advised the Board that the Dorchester County Board of Elections recently changed to a secure site. It had been utilizing the Dorchester County site, which was not secure. Just following the transition to a secure site by the Dorchester Board of Elections, Dorchester County's site was subject to a ransomware attack. Talbot County Board of Elections opened our office to Dorchester Board of Elections to process daily work temporarily until cleared.

During the discussion regarding the State Board's request that local boards utilize a secure website, the county had asked Ms. Cook to have our Board send a letter to the County Manager requesting action this fiscal year to secure the county site. She presented a draft letter for consideration by the Board. Mr. Cronan presented a revised draft to the Board for consideration. The content of his draft was discussed and suggestions were made for modification. He suggested that Board Members review the draft and offer changes by email. A final draft will then be circulated and, if there is no objection, it will be signed and sent to the county.

b. Recognition of Election Judges

Mr. Black suggested that the Board recognize the service of those who serve as Election Judges in the form of a letter or certificate. It was the general consensus that the Board should do that following the general election later this year. The matter will be placed on the Board agenda closer to the November elections.

c. State Delegation Invitation

Mr. Secrist noted that the State Legislative Delegation for District 37 will be hosting a reception and invited the Talbot County Election Board to attend.

d. Training for Election Polling Place Evaluation

During the presentation by Ms. Cook of the new Polling Place Evaluation forms, there were questions regarding the process for selecting the polling places and the number that need to be evaluated. The process mentions that those evaluating Polling Places should be properly trained. Ms. MacKinnon moved that the agenda for our next meeting

include training for Board Members. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

### **Confirmation of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections will be Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 9:30 AM.

### **Closed Session**

Mr. Black moved that the Board go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters as permitted under General Provisions Art. 3-305(b) (1). Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Whereupon the Board went into closed session at 11:28 AM. At this point, Ms. Cook departed the meeting.

At 1:07 PM, the Board returned to open session. President Secrist reported that the Board completed the End-Cycle review of the Election Director's performance.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Black moved adjournment of the meeting. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:08 PM.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph H Secrist, Jr. (jmc)  
Joseph H. Secrist, Jr., President

Richard B. Bulman (jmc)  
Richard B. Bulman, Secretary