

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street, Easton, MD 21601
Board of Elections Meeting Room

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Present:

Board

Susan J. MacKinnon, President
Denise Lovelady, Vice President (arrived late)
Gugy Irving, III, Secretary
Barbara H. Perry, Member
Walter W. Black, Member

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan (online)

Staff

Tammy Stafford, Election Director
Donna Kegley-Hacker, Election Program Manager II
Fred Gleockler, Election Program IT Specialist II

Members of the Public

Gary Judy, Citizen
Shari Wilcoxon, Citizen
Mark Harrison, Citizen
Jason Bell, Citizen
Paul Duggan, Citizen
Larry Schuyler, Citizen

Absent/Excused:

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gleockler and Ms. Stafford confirmed that the live streaming was working.

Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM PRESENT

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

With four of five Board members in attendance, Ms. MacKinnon declared that a quorum was present.

CLOSED MEETING SUMMARY

A Closed Meeting Summary for a closed meeting held in December 2025 was not given. It will be given at the March 18, 2026, meeting.

Ms. MacKinnon reported that two Official Opinions of the State of Maryland Open Meetings Compliance Board had been received. Ms. MacKinnon read a summary from *20 Official Opinions of the Compliance Board 15 (2026)* dated 01/12/2026 which cited the following violations:

- §3-305 (d)(2)
- §3-104
- §3-306(c)(2)
- §3-306 (e)(1)
- §3-305 (b)(1), and
- §3-301.

Ms. MacKinnon also read a summary of *19 Official Opinions of the Compliance Board 362 (2025)* dated 12/17/2025 which cited the following violations:

- §3-305 (d)(2)
- §3-301, and
- §3-305 (b)(7)

The full opinions can be found on oag.maryland.gov.

APPROVAL OF OPEN MINUTES- 12/17/2025 Open Board Meeting

(Reminder- the January Board meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather & State & County closures.)

Minutes from the Open Board Meeting held on 12/17/25 were mailed in Board packets to members and were posted on the LBE website, allowing for review prior to this meeting. Ms. MacKinnon called for any corrections to the minutes.

With no requested corrections, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Perry and seconded by Mr. Irving. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

The agenda was posted. Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

Ms. Lovelady arrived at this time and apologized for being late.

Ms. Lovelady asked if the Board was going to discuss the findings of the Compliance Board. Ms. MacKinnon replied that she had just read the statements. Ms. Lovelady questioned if the complaints had been reviewed and stated that the Board did not get copies. Ms. MacKinnon stated that she was not sure what specific documents Ms. Lovelady was referring to but that she had read two legal summaries and could look at what Ms. Lovelady had after the meeting and if necessary, add it to the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Stafford announced that Board Attorney Ms. Ryan was online.

Ms. Ryan stated that she sent out copies of the Open Meetings Act Opinions. Ms. MacKinnon read the statements required under the Open Meetings Act that we were found to be in violation. She added that if Ms. Lovelady submits her questions by email, they can make this an agenda item for the next meeting. She added that she can provide an overview of the Open Meetings Act at the next meeting to help ensure that the Board is in compliance going forward. Ms. Ryan stated that she is going to work on procedures for the Board to follow to remain in compliance going forward. Ms. Ryan added that the Open Meetings Act Compliance Board has determined that the LBE is not able to discuss individual Election Judges in closed session.

Ms. Lovelady stated that she felt the rest of the Board should receive copies of the documents. Ms. Ryan stated that she did send out copies of both opinions and would be happy to do it again. Ms. Lovelady asked if it was the 20-page document. Ms. Ryan stated that she sent both Opinions from the Open Meetings Act Compliance Board and would send them again. Ms. Lovelady responded that she did not recall receiving them but would go back and check.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Black motioned to approve the agenda. Ms. Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Copies of the Board's Public Comment Protocols and Procedures were attached to the copies of the agenda available at today's meeting.

Ms. MacKinnon opened the floor for public comments. Three members of the public spoke.

1. Mr. Harrison stated that Elected Officials are elected to serve the people and the majority of legal citizens want voter id. He questioned why Elected Officials reject voter id. Mr. Harrison asked that the Board ask and report back why Elected Officials reject voter id.
2. Ms. Wilcoxon thanked Ms. MacKinnon for reading the Open Meetings Act Compliance Board Opinions; she had them with her. She stated that it does not give "us" great

pleasure to know that the Board has been in violation. She added that “they’ had been coming to the meetings for several years, largely for the judge parity issue. “We” perceive an air of secrecy, that you have something to hide.

Ms. Wilcoxon added that she has participated with a group looking across the State and they are seeing that the State does not want to cooperate and make sure the voter rolls are clean.

Ms. Wilcoxon announced that the two opinions can be found at the Office of the Attorney General’s website, oag.maryland.gov. She added that if anyone in the public reaches out to her, she can send them the links. Ms. Wilcoxon stated that Talbot County had nine violations, more than any county in “our” nine months of efforts to uncover what is going on in the State. She added that “we have been asking questions, and we have been shut down. We filed complaints in October-January and there may be more coming”.

3. Mr. Judy stated that there is an Election Judge Parity Report requirement starting this month. He added that “We” are wondering that if after the end of March there is not a proper number of Republicans, Election Judges can be chosen from Democrats or Independents. “Our question is why is the reporting just now starting in February? If we knew there were not enough Republicans signed up, we would make an effort to get them to sign up. If you can clarify this for us, it can prevent a lot of problems later on.”

ELECTION DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Stafford’s written report which was mailed in the Board packets for review prior to the meeting is attached to these minutes. Ms. Stafford highlighted all key areas of the report.

Ms. Stafford added that she opted to not hire for the Deputy Director position. Instead, she will continue to hire additional staff for the 2026 Election Cycle.

Ms. Lovelady asked how many additional staff were needed and whether the positions would be full-time, part-time, or temporary. Ms. Stafford replied that the current budget contains four full-time positions and one part-time position. Three of the full-time positions are filled.

Ms. Lovelady referred to extra staff that worked in the previous Election Cycle and asked if the State would provide the staff needed to carry out the election duties. Ms. Stafford responded that she will get additional contractual staffing from the State for the 2026 Election Cycle.

Ms. Stafford announced that the Talbot County Board of Education School Calendar for the 2026-2027 school year now shows that schools will be closed on November 3, 2026, for Election Day. This is great news as two schools are used as polling places.

The Election Judge Parity Report was included in the Board packet. Ms. Stafford announced that this is a preliminary report and no one has been assigned. An updated report will be presented at the March meeting. Ms. Stafford highlighted that the report is color-coded and has the minimum number of Election Judges wanted for each polling place, as well as a maximum, trying to create an even number of judges at each polling place. She added that there is a difference in person voter turnout for a Gubernatorial vs. a Presidential Election and the maximum number of Election Judges may not be needed.

Ms. Lovelady asked if the budget would cover the maximum number of Election Judges presented. Ms. Stafford replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Lovelady asked why actual numbers of Election Judges were not presented; this is a template. Ms. Stafford replied that no one has been assigned.

Ms. Lovelady and Ms. Stafford engaged in back-and-forth discussion about the Election Judge Parity Report and the lack of assignments. Ms. Lovelady quoted SBE Policy 2025-04.

Ms. MacKinnon interjected to move the discussion along. Ms. MacKinnon asked if Ms. Stafford could provide the number of individuals “in the cue” by party breakdown. Ms. Stafford stated that she had given numbers in the past. She stated that the Parity Report shows how she intends to assign. At this time, she has not assigned any Election Judges. She added that there are a lot of Returning Judges and she will use them to staff the polling places. Ms. Stafford also stated that Election Judge applications will continue to be accepted; this allows for alternates and standby judges.

Ms. MacKinnon referred to a November 2025 report that provided preliminary interest based by party and asked if that information was still the same. Ms. Stafford referred to Ms. Hacker, who replied that off the top of her head one Republican Chief passed away in December, one returning Republican is now unable to work the Primary, and one returning Democratic has changed her response twice about working in 2026.

Ms. Perry asked when training for Election Judges will begin. Ms. Stafford replied April. Ms. Perry asked how many sessions would be offered. Ms. Stafford replied that there will be 3 weeks of training and then a week for make-up sessions. She added that if additional sessions for individuals are needed, they will be scheduled.

Ms. Perry asked for information on people who do not complete the training. Ms. Stafford stated that it is usually not a problem with people not completing the in-person training; sometimes after completing the training they decide they do not want to serve as an Election Judge, or they are no longer available.

Ms. MacKinnon asked Ms. Stafford for her thoughts on her ability to achieve equity based on her experience with past elections and the current pool of interested individuals. Ms. Stafford replied that she was confident that she can achieve equity at all the polling places, using some unaffiliated voters. She further explained that there are returning judges who are unaffiliated voters; the State has incentives in place for returners and returners provide continuity.

Ms. MacKinnon stated that we need to understand that there are other factors involved in the placement of judges in order to guarantee the public a smooth-running election.

Ms. Stafford added that past Boards have wanted Election Judges scheduled as close to their home polling places as possible. Ms. MacKinnon stated that if the Board were to suggest a different approach, we run the risk of losing judges if we ask them to travel.

Ms. Stafford also informed the Board that there are husband and wife teams that want to be assigned to the same polling place.

Ms. Lovelady asked if we will have a report in March. Ms. Stafford replied that the Board will be provided with the report in March and it will become more detailed as the Election gets closer.

Ms. Perry added that she hoped we are able to attract younger judges as many of our judges or people who express interest are older and the day is too long.

Ms. MacKinnon complimented the staff for the effort they have made to increase the pool of Election Judges.

Ms. Stafford finished highlighting her report, stating that the budget hearings are scheduled for May 5th.

Ms. Perry complimented staff member Ms. Hacker for providing Voter Registration Application Distributor (VRD) training, stating that she did an excellent job.

BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Ms. Ryan announced that she would provide a more detailed overview of Open Meetings compliance at the next meeting to ensure that all discussions for closed sessions remain appropriate under the Open Meetings Act and that the appropriate disclosures are posted in advance.

Ms. Ryan reported that she received an email from Ms. Berry (Deputy Administrator, State Board of Elections) advising that SBE is hosting a pre-election briefing on May 12th and June 9th

which Ms. Ryan will attend. Ms. Berry also wanted Ms. Ryan to remind Board members that they are State Officials and have a duty to the State in their capacity as Board members and should do their best not to have contact with those who are actively in litigation with the State Board of Elections. This means members of the Board should not be having discussions with others about processes, internal discussions, and closed session discussions as it could have an impact on their appointment status for just cause. Ms. Ryan stated that she would send a copy of the email to the Board members, but she wanted to make sure they were all aware and that it was done publicly.

OLD BUSINESS

A. FY2027 Proposed Budget

Ms. Stafford has submitted the FY2027 budget proposal to the County. Any changes will be the result of discussions/requests by the County. Ms. MacKinnon asked when the FY2027 budget would be approved. Ms. Stafford replied that the County budget public hearings begin May 5th.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to come before the Board.

DISCLOSURES

Ms. MacKinnon asked if any Board members had disclosures. None were announced.

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. MacKinnon announced that a Voter Registration List Maintenance handout was available for anyone who wanted a copy. She also stated that it was on the SBE website.

CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the LBE meeting room.

CLOSED SESSION

No Closed Session was held.

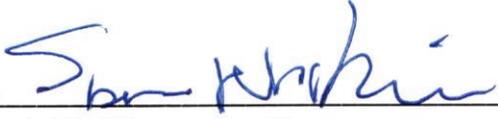
ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Black motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Irving seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present. The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 am.

Minutes prepared by: Donna Kegley-Hacker

Attested,

Reviewed and submitted,



Susan J. MacKinnon, President



Gagy Irving III, Secretary



TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS **ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

February 18, 2026

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members, February 10, 2026.

The agenda and meeting materials for the February meeting were also posted on the Board of Elections web page and the entrances to the office and building at 215 Bay Street, Easton, MD, February 10, 2026.

Personnel

I have opted not to hire for the Deputy Director position but instead continue to hire additional staff for the 2026 Election Cycle.

Meetings Attended:

I attended the monthly MAEO meeting and the meeting with SBE.

I was scheduled to attend the iGo Mid-Winter Conference but was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

Correspondence:

Nothing to report.

Voter Registration Activities:

Monthly Statistical Report- The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of February 1, 2026, there were 28, 884 active registered voters in Talbot County.

Voting System Activities:

The training database is available, and we are working with it in preparation for election judge training.

We are also preparing for training on Risk Limiting Audits. Training will take place next month.

Candidate Filing:

Candidate filing began February 25, 2025, for the 2026 Gubernatorial Election cycle. The deadline to file is February 24, 2026. The list of local races can be found on our website.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

The Board of Education is considering the Calendar for the 2026-2027 school year. There were two proposed calendars. Neither reflected a closure for Election Day. The calendar was sent back to the calendar committee for review and will be on second reader at the February 11, 2026, Board of Education meeting.

The election judge vacancy report was included in your packets. The report is preliminary and at this time no one has been assigned to the polling places. There will be an updated report given to the board at the next meeting.

Budget:

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY2026 was included in your board packet.

There are no significant expenditures to report.

Ms. MacKinnon and I met with County Manager Clay Stamp, Finance Director Martha Sparks, and Deputy Finance Director Kaitlin Foster Clark to discuss the FY27 Budget. The budget was submitted to the County and is under review.

Other projects:

We have been holding monthly Voter Registration Distributor training. There will be training on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Anyone who is interested can call or email the office to sign up.

The 2026 Legislative Session is underway. Information on the session and a list of bills were included in your packet.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

State Board of Elections Meetings:

Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.