

Board Meeting Minutes
Worcester County Board of Elections
201 Belt Street, Suite C, Snow Hill MD 21863
Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 10 a.m.

ATTENDEES:

BOARD

President Martina Barnes-Wharton, Democratic Board Member
Vice-President Ed Rodier, Jr. Republican Board Member
Secretary Terry Smith, Democratic Board Member
Thomas Butler, Democratic Board Member
Jeff McMahon, Republican Board Member

STAFF

Patricia Jackson, Election Director
Teresa Riffin, Deputy Director

GUESTS

Patricia Barbely
Susan Ostrowski, Republican Central Committee

Meeting called to order and Quorum determined- A quorum was declared present, Mrs. Barnes-Wharton called the meeting to order at 10 am.

Approval of Minutes – Vice President Rodier offered a motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes of June 7, 2023. Mr. Butler seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Correspondences: None

Fiscal Year to Date Budget Report

No discussion, Vice-President Rodier offered the motion to accept the budget from July 1, 2023, through September 1, 2023. Mr. McMahon seconded, with unanimous acceptance.

Old Business

Voting will be held at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center. The Early and Primary Elections will be held in the lobby. Terron was measuring the space to see how the front lobby could be set up. A larger room will be provided for the General Election.

A letter was sent to the Democratic and Republican Central Committees regarding concerns about electioneering on voting days. The letter was also sent to Mr. Vince Gisriel and explained to him because of his presence, it was felt necessary to notify him in case the Central Committee did not share the information. The purpose was to give a heads up about electioneering.

The Board of Education has approved changing the school calendar to reflect the correct election date, May 14, 2023.

Terry Smith completed the Open Meetings Act training class. Certificate of Completion has been sent to the State Board of Elections. The recommendation is that at least one Board Member complete the training. It is open to anyone who would like to complete the training.

New Business

Discussions:

A. Public Comments Policy

- The new implementation of a policy regarding public comments at the Board Meetings. Suggestion of 3 days' notice from persons who would like to speak with a detailed email or letter stating what they wish to discuss. This would give the staff time to gather documents and stats to address questions. Allows the staff to be prepared ahead of time and not have to follow up at the next meeting.
- The implementation of a 5-minute time limit which is used by other boards. The email or letters from the person wishing to speak would be sent to the Board Members. Time will not be yielded to someone else. This is 5 minutes per person even if it is about the same topic. A resolution will be typed and sent to the Board Members for signatures.

B. Election Judge Newsletter

The newsletter was created to keep Election Judges involved and informed of changes in rules and policies. The newsletter could possibly be used as a recruiting tool. It will be distributed quarterly.

C. State Board of Elections Biennial Meeting

- October 19, 2023.
- Reviewed the hotel form that will need to be filled out and the tax exemption certificate which will be needed when checking in.
- A list and receipts for any related expenses; mileage, meals, hotel room should be kept and submitted for reimbursement.

D. Board Member Fingerprinting

All board members must be fingerprinted. Save receipts for reimbursement.

E. Presidential Election Information will be taken to libraries, government centers to inform the public of dates, deadlines, and other information. Let Mrs. Jackson know of any locations for placing copies.

F. Maryland Legislation for Mail in Ballots

- Changed the law regarding when to count mail in ballots.
- Counties should begin at least one count before early voting. Then multiple days could be used for counting, if necessary.
- Space a concern due to units/machines, packing supplies and ballots. The equipment and supplies cannot be moved out due to security.
- Pre-election canvass will be held at the Snow Hill Library, April 24, 2024 if there is enough to canvass. Depending on the number of returned mail ballots our office receives, a waiver may be requested from the state.
- Results will be made to the public on Election Day when the polls close.

G. New State Board Administrator—Linda Lamone retired and Jared DeMarinis has been appointed the new administrator.

H. Mold Issues

- Items in the Records Retention Room, Supplies Room and Alternate Warehouse were affected.
- Mr. DeMarinis helped to get in touch with the right people to address the concerns. An industrial hygienist was contacted for consultation.
- Royal Plus is cleaning all items and carpet.

- Air Conditioner unit may be the source of the problem. A moisture gauge will be purchased.
- The best way to preserve historical records was discussed.
- Ceiling tiles may need to be replaced as well as painting in Terron's room.
- Not sure how the cost will be covered.

New Items

- Mrs. Jackson notified the Board Members that all polling places and the early voting center used in 2022 will be the same for 2024. All Board Members were in agreement with the polling places and early voting center remaining the same as they were in the 2022 Election.
- EL68 Audit Log request from Mr. Gisriel. A response was sent to Mr. Gisriel and others to notify them of the State's response that if the Board is not in possession of the log, they are not obligated to provide one.
- We have 3 separate audits (1) One day after the election Terron reruns the memory packs to make sure the counts are the same (2) an audit verification report where 3 precincts are chosen on election day in case there are issues. Tapes are run to make sure numbers equal the election night reports. (3) The state hires an independent company, Clear Ballot. Copies of the hard drive are sent to Clear Ballot to look for differences in any of the votes on the units. If so research and investigations are performed. After the General Election the state performs a manual audit for the precinct chosen by the state. We have not had any problems.
- Poll books are on hold until after the 2024 election. The old poll books will be used. New poll books will be in the FY25 budget.

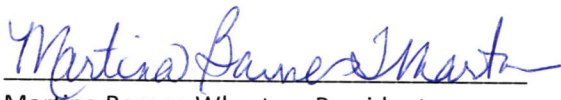
Scheduling of the Next Meeting: January 10, 2024 at 10 am at the 201 Belt Street Office

President Martina Barnes-Wharton asked for motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. McMahon, all in favor.

So moved, meeting adjourned 10:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Smith- Secretary



Martina Barnes-Wharton, President

