



# Cecil County Board of Elections

## September 18, 2024

### MINUTES

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE MEETING**

Public notice of the Board meeting was provided by displaying the meeting information and agenda on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Cecil County Administration Building, and by posting on the Election agency website and Election agency social media platforms. A copy of the agenda was made available.

**MINUTES** of the Cecil County Board of Elections meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024 in the Northeast Room on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Cecil County Administration Building located at 200 Chesapeake Boulevard in Elkton, Maryland. Public viewing of this meeting was available in person. Board member attendance was in person, as noted below.

|                   |                  |                                     |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>ATTENDEES:</b> | Jennifer Graham  | President                           |
|                   | Stephen Stiles   | Vice President                      |
|                   | Krista Moretz    | Secretary (phone- arrived for oath) |
|                   | Bradley Moore    | Board Counsel                       |
|                   | Eunice Grant     | Board Member                        |
|                   | Holcombe Grier   | Board Member                        |
|                   | Gary Holmes      | Director                            |
|                   | Karen Benecewicz | Deputy Director                     |
|                   | Sheri Woodruff   | Election Supervisor (arrived late)  |
|                   | Mary Nelson      | Public                              |
|                   | Doug Johnson     | Public                              |

#### **DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

The meeting was called to order by President Jennifer Graham at 3:10 pm. Quorum was established with five (5) Board Members, four (4) in person.

#### **AGENDA**

The agenda was amended to have the Board of Canvassers take their oath later in the meeting, as Krista Moretz was not yet present. Also added was a meeting of the Canvass Board to review a Primary ballot that had been received by mail, in the Election Office the previous day.

#### **PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

President Jennifer Graham is aware of how busy the staff is with so much to do in such a small window of time. Jennifer encourages the board to attend at least one judge training session prior to the election. In addition, she asked if any of the board would like to assist in the collection of the ballots particularly during early voting, when 2 pick ups a day are required. Jennifer requested that Gary reach out to Katie Berry for a checklist of the requirements as they pertain to the responsibilities of the board during the election.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the August 21, 2024, Board meeting were provided to the Board with a copy in each of their folders.

**MOTION:** Board Member Holcombe Grier motioned to approve Minutes for August 21, 2024; Board Meeting as present.



SECOND: Steven Stiles, Vice President Cecil County Board of Elections  
ACTION: Minutes approved and signed by Jennifer Graham, Board President and Krista Moretz, Board Secretary.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Gary Holmes, Director, enclosed the Monthly Statistics report. The monthly Critical Oversight report was submitted. Sheri has been working with Mary on obituaries. Election Judge classes started on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September. We did not use a moving service to transport the equipment to the training center. We have approximately 50 classes in total planned. To date, 351 judges have signed up to work, 104 have already attended training. Gary stops into the New Judge training classes to introduce himself and thank them for their service.

Over the month, the staff processed 130 batches. The call volume in the office is increasing with requests for voter cards and mail in ballot applications. The Drop Boxes for the county were deployed today and Gary escorted the boxes and added the locks and seals. The lock was also covered with a directional sign indicating where the slot is. The first scheduled pickup will be on Monday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, as the ballots are set to begin mailing on Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. We are keeping current with our social media postings and disabling comments. Jennifer suggested an FAQ on how to request a ballot and how to check your registration be added to social media. She also asked that we post the most asked questions on our FAQ page. Stephen Stiles mentioned that a non-working telephone number has been posted, at some point in time. Jennifer asked that we do our due diligence when posting. Making sure that links work and the correct information is provided. We finished up with outreaches until sometime after the election. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> Ashira and Karen attended Books, Beats and Eats where they handed out several election judge and voter registration applications. Gary and Sheri Woodruff, Election Supervisor took part in National Voter Registration Day yesterday (Sept 17<sup>th</sup>) setting up tables as both Elkton and North East libraries.

The shedding company came on August 28<sup>th</sup>, and everything went smoothly. We cleared an upper section for storage of documents, it doesn't help with floor space, which is what we are in desperate need of. In addition, the Wi-Fi internet has been moved inside the warehouse. A workstation and telephone line have also been added to the warehouse.

The printed and audio ballot for the DS200 were proofed and approved. We received our first set of test decks and L&A the scanners that will be used during the canvass process. We are awaiting another set of test decks so we can begin the L&A process for Early Voting and Election Day. As of right now, there has been no movement as far as getting a new space. The plan is to wait until the new County Executive and Council meet in January.

We have had discussions with Abacus regarding the temp surge staffing. We have had RaShawn Forbes, return and he has already started. Mina and Leslie are due to return on Monday. They will all be assisting with L&A of the DS200 Scanners and ExpressVote / Ballot Marking Devices. We will have an additional 2 more people for the L&A of the pollbooks. They are scheduled to start on October 7<sup>th</sup>. They will start with taking an election judge training class.

October 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:30 the board is scheduled to come and review the supply carts that go out to the polling sites. October 4<sup>th</sup> Karen Benecewicz, Deputy Director and Jasmine Barnette, Voting Equipment Specialist will perform the signal test at the early voting sites. October 18<sup>th</sup> is the date scheduled for the public L&A. It will be held from 1030am -1230pm in the Elk Room at 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elkton, MD 21921. Jennifer asked that this be posted on social media. Gary is meeting with Sheldon from ES&S on Friday to go over Electionware training. There is a reporter coming from the Cecil Wig on Thursday along with our monthly director's meeting. Still waiting to speak with the gentleman from the Cecil sports paper. The dates for Early Voting are October 24<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> and Election Day is November 5<sup>th</sup>.



## **COUNSEL'S REPORT**

Bradley Moore, Board Attorney, stated that he attended a pre-election legal meeting last week. They covered some procedural items and the on-going state level litigation. They will hold one more meeting with the board attorneys prior to the election.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

## **OFFICE REPORT**

The board received their early voting and election day evaluation assignments. The evaluation forms will be available in the office and will also be emailed out to the board.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Jennifer Graham had a request that the following items be included in the election day supply bag: Provisional Applications, Voter Update forms, extra set of signs for pocket stand, black markers, and general office supplies.

Charlene Notarcola swore in the Board of Canvassers. Stephen Stiles will remain President of the Board of Canvassers for the 2024 General Election and Holcombe Greir will serve as Secretary.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISCLOSURES**

Holcombe Greir announced that he is working with Vote Forward. He was asked to write letters encouraging people to vote and/or register to vote, as well as its importance.

Eunice Grant stated that she recently attended a sorority meeting where Kamala Harris was a scheduled speaker.

## **QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS**

Mary Nelson wanted to address a concern; the fact that there is no deadline stated for opting out of a mail-in and that this could lead to confusion and provisional ballots at the polling sites.

Sheri said she would reach out to the State Board to see if they could provide more clarity on a deadline for those requests. Gary Homles also said he would address the issue with Katie Berry.

Mary also wondered if there was a set standard for the way blank ballots are handled during a canvass – and if the voter only returns one page of a 2-page ballot. In addition, she was aware that the settings on the scanner had been changed so that it would no longer record a blank page as blank, but as undervotes. Mary is still concerned with the high numbers of reported blank ballots from a previous election. She plans to address these items at the next State Board meeting taking place on Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> and wants to give us notice.

Doug Johnson wanted to address a conversation that had been brought up at a previous meeting. The topic of power outages at polling sites and how they would be handled. First the fact that the equipment has a battery back up which would let them run without power for some time while we address the issue. Secondly, the fact that are polling sites are all located in schools and that most likely the schools have some kind of generator system in place for just that purpose. We have county and state level support on call for issues like this as well should the need arise.

413PM the Primary Board of Canvassers convenes to vote on an untimely Primary ballot received since the last board meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 418PM. (See canvass minutes)

**Board Folders:**

September 18, 2024 – Board Meeting Agenda

- Directors Report
- MDVOTERS VR 13 Monthly Statics
- Election Evaluation assignments
- August 21, 2024, Minutes for approval.

**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The Board/ Board of Canvassers may convene at 2pm on November 5, 2024 for the opening of the DS200 Scanners used for Early Voting during the General. They will also convene at 8PM on election night to select the precincts that will be audited as part of the Comprehensive Audit.

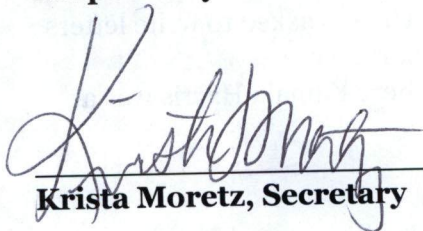
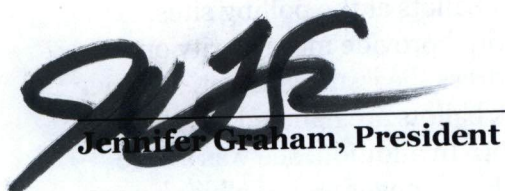
**ADJOURNMENT**

Holcombe Greir, motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Krista Moretz.

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,**

  
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**Krista Moretz, Secretary**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Jennifer Graham, President**

**Meetings, Trainings, and Important Dates:**

October 1, 2024 – Cart Verification by the board (Warehouse 1:30pm)

October 4, 2024- Signal Testing at Early Voting locations

October 15, 2024 – Voter Registration Deadline

October 18, 2024 – Public L&A (Elk Room 10:30AM – 1230PM)

October 24- 31, 2024 Early Voting

November 5, 2024- Election Day

November 7, 13 & 15, 2024 – Canvass (Mail In 1, Provisional, Mail In 2)

December 18, 2024 – Board Meeting / Holiday Celebration?