



Cecil County Board of Elections

May 24, 2023
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 located in 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 24th day of May 2023 in the Perryville Room on the 2nd 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 and by phone, as noted below.

ATTENDEES:

Kelly Sengstock	President
Nancy Simpors	Vice President
Diane Letts	Secretary
Jennifer Graham	Board Member
Stephen Stiles	Board Member
Doug Walker	Director
Hassan Aslam	Deputy Director
Bradley Moore, Esq.	Board Counsel
Eunice Grant	Board Member-Select
Holcombe Grier	Board Member-Select
Krista Moretz	Board Member-Select
Mary Nelson	Private Citizen/Voter

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order by President Kelly Sengstock at 3:08 p.m. Quorum was established with all five Board members present in person.

AGENDA

Director presented the attached Agenda.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Kelly Sengstock welcomed newly appointed Election Deputy director Hassan Aslam, expressing gratitude that he accepted the position. Noting that these would be her last comments as member of the Cecil County Board of Elections, she said it has been a great honor to be a part of this important County Board as a member since 2019 and President since 2020 and that she's thankful for the opportunity to learn more about our sacred voting system. She looks forward to serving as an election judge in 2024. The President's complete remarks are attached.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the March 15, 2023 Board meeting were provided to the Board by electronic mail prior to this meeting and a copy was included in the Board folders.

MOTION: Vice President Nancy Simperts motioned to approve the Minutes of the April 19, 2023 Board meeting.
SECOND: Board Member Jennifer Graham
ACTION: Favorable and unanimous, Motion carried

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – May 2023

Board Folders: Agenda, May 24, 2023 Board Meeting
Board Meeting Minutes April 19, 2023
Director's Report, May 2023
Monthly Statistical Report, April 2023

Meetings, Trainings, and Important Dates:

April 19, 2023	Board Meeting
April 20, 2023	SBE Election Directors' Meeting
May 4, 2023	State Board Meeting
May 14-19, 2023	MAEO Conference
May 18, 2023	County Council Public Hearing on FY24 Budget
May 24, 2023	Board Meeting

Upcoming:

June 4, 2023	Four-year term of current LBE members ends
June 5, 2023	Four-year term of appointed LBE members begins
June 21, 2023	Board Meeting
September 1, 2023	State Administrator Lamone retires (tentative)
October 3, 2023	All-day Statewide Tabletop Election Exercise, Glen Burnie
October 14, 2023	Deadline to notify SBE of Early Voting location changes
October 19, 2023	SBE Mandatory Biennial Meeting/Training, Annapolis
January 22, 2024	Candidate filing for 2024 Presidential Election ends at 9:00 p.m.
May 2-9, 2024	Presidential Primary Early Voting
May 14, 2024	Presidential Primary Election Day (PP24)
October 24-31, 2024	Presidential General Early Voting
November 5, 2024	Presidential General Election Day (PG24)

Presidential Primary (PP24) Early Voting Site Change

The Parks and Recreation Department has determined, and the County Executive's office concurred that the Cecil Arena, our second Early Voting site (EVO2), will not be available for the May 2024 Presidential Primary. "It is not possible to displace our existing programs and forgo county revenue" for the eight days of Early Voting plus set-up and break-down days, according to the County Administrator, who did offer to assist with reaching out to churches, fire houses, etc., to find an alternate site.

The Director and Deputy Director met with Cecil College's Director of Facilities, Facilities Manager and Events Supervisor on May 23 to explore options of conducting Early Voting on campus. The facility is very nice and ADA compliant. The College proposed two possible locations and we tentatively settled on a third that maximizes accessibility, security, and convenience for voters. The Director had been pessimistic about the new Primary dates, but the College Staff believes they can accommodate us as our load-out date is 10 days prior to next year's Commencement exercises.

Pursuant to COMAR Sec. 33.17.02.02C(2)(a), the LBE must submit a completed Early Voting Center Approval Form to SBE by October 14, 2023, seven months before the Primary Election.

Operational Budget

At a final budget meeting with the Finance Director and Budget Manager, on March 21, the Director was informed that the Executive's office had agreed to all of the Election Board's requests except that participation in the MAEO Annual Conference would be capped at \$10,000.

The Director attended the Thursday, May 18, 2023 Public Budget Hearing at Elkton High School on the final evening of the MAEO Conference. Well over 50 County residents addressed the Council. There were no questions about or reactions to the Elections budget. Except for three statements in support of the County Executive's budget proposal, three statements in support of funding for the County Public Library and two in support of the full funding for Emergency Services, the rest of the comments, called for increased funding for the Public Schools. Most speakers were CCPS employees—administrators and teachers. In her opening remarks, Council President Jackie Gregory explained that under State law the Council could not increase funding over levels proposed by the Executive. The Council can only pass or reject the proposal or cut line items. The exception is Education. The Council can increase Education funding but is required to cut elsewhere in the overall budget.

The Council has scheduled Budget deliberation sessions on May 23 and 30 and is expected to vote on final adoption of the FY24 Budget at its June 6 Legislative Session. The Director finds no reference to the Elections budget in the transcript of the May 23 session.

Election Deputy Director Vacancy

After interviews on April 17-18, the interview team comprising the Director, former Deputy director Karen Perry and Queen Anne's County Director Chrissy Jones unanimously selected Hassan Aslam of the Anne Arundel County LBE to serve as Deputy Director. Hassan has now joined the staff effective May 17, during the MAEO Conference. His onboarding and orientation continue, and he is assuming leadership of filling our vacant Election Program Assistant position.

Election Program Assistant Vacancy

The Deputy Director has assumed leadership of the interview team for our vacant Election Program Assistant vacancy. The SBE Human Resources provided a list of nine qualified candidates, all of whom we will be required to interview unless they decline our invitation. The proposed interview team and interview questions have been submitted to SBE for approval. We hope to complete interviews and selection by mid-June.

Board Member Ethics Filing

A reminder, after the April 30 Ethics Commission filing, Board members who are not serving another term will be required to submit an “end of service” ethics filing which can be completed on the same Commission web page you use for periodic filings.

SBE Biennial Pre-Election Training

COMAR Title 33.02.02.01, Statewide Biennial Meeting, requires all local Board members, Board Counsel, Election Directors and Deputy Directors, and other staff as assigned by the State Administrator, or LBEs to attend a Statewide biennial meeting to instruct local board members, counsel, and staff on the proper conduct of elections. SBE would ordinarily conduct this session at the MAEO Annual Meeting. However, since MAEO has scheduled its meeting in May, prior to the seating of new LBEs, *SBE has scheduled the Biennial Meeting for Thursday, October 19 in Annapolis*. The State Administrator has granted Board member Jennifer Graham an excused absence due to her work conflict.

Pollbook Project Update

Cecil County is scheduled to obtain 133 new electronic pollbooks at a cost of \$735 per unit. SBE has received and is testing all of the pollbooks. Initial testing of the pollbook tablets was complete with only one failure. Hub testing to verify network connectivity is approximately 50% complete as of April 12. MAEO has convened an EPB Committee for monthly project status updates. The Committee has conveyed concerns to SBE regarding timely distribution of the hardware, completion of instructional material for election judge manuals, and training.

BOARD COUNSEL’S REPORT

Counsel suggested that when staff updates the County Application for Voter Registration Data form, the new version should replicate the disclaimer language in the state form to ensure compliance with COMAR regulations. The Board agreed at its April meeting to update the form effective January 1, 2024, after the 2023 County municipal elections are completed, and at the same time increase the fee to \$75.00 consistent with the State Board of Elections fee.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. No Old Business

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Board members and staff discussed observations from the May14-19 Maryland Association of Elected Officials (MAEO) Conference, particularly the need for local Boards to be more mindful and vigilant about security as well as the challenges of recruiting sufficient election judges of the 2024 Presidential Election.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

None at this time.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Pursuant to State statute, the term of new local boards of elections commences on June 5, 2023, the first Monday in June after the inauguration of the Governor. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21, 2023. Board meetings will be available for public viewing in person.

ADJOURNMENT

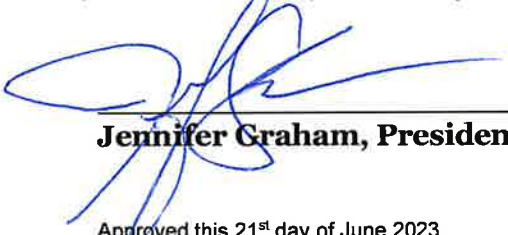
There being no further business, Board member Jennifer Graham offered a motion to adjourn and reconvene in Closed Session to discuss personnel matters, which was seconded by Vice President Simpers. The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Under statutory authority to close session provided in General Provision Article 3-305(b), the Board reconvened in Closed Session at 4:17 p.m. The Director updated the Board on the status of two Election Program Assistant positions (one contract, one staff) and the Election IT Program Assistant position (currently contract). Having accepted an employment opportunity outside of Elections, the Director proffered his resignation to the Board effective Wednesday, June 14, 2023. The Director's resignation letter is attached. The Closed Session adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Krista Moretz, Secretary

Jennifer Graham, President

Approved this 21st day of June 2023

