



Cecil County Board of Elections

March 17, 2021

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 (wall) outside of the Cecil County Board of Election office located in the Cecil County Administration Building, and also by posting on the Election agency website and election social media platforms. A copy of the agenda was made available.

MINUTES of the Cecil County Board of Elections meeting held on the 17th day of March, 2021 in the Perryville Room of the Cecil County Administration Building located at 200 Chesapeake Boulevard in Elkton, Maryland.

Due to current social distancing guidelines set by the Center for Disease Control, and to comply with the Governor's Proclamation of April 10, 2020 and the County Administration's Executive Order for the Administration Building to be closed to the public, public viewing is by livestream only. Board members may be present in person or virtually.

ATTENDEES:	Kelly Sengstock	President
	Nancy R. Simpers	Secretary
	Diane Letts	Board Member
	Ruie Marie Lavoie	Director
	Karen Perry	Acting Deputy Director
	Nathan Reynolds	Election IT Program Manager
	Duane Souder	Election Program Assistant
	Stephen Stiles	Guest
ABSENT:	James Crouse	Vice President
	Cameron Brown	Board Counsel

Cameron Brown was absent due to a conflict with a requirement to be in court but provided Ruie Lavoie with a summary of his Board Counsel Report.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Quorum was established with three (3) Board Members present in person. The meeting was called to order by President Kelly Sengstock at 3:08 pm.

AGENDA

The Board reviewed the Agenda. Ruie Lavoie stated the closed session indicated on the agenda was no longer needed and can be removed.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Kelly Sengstock welcomed everyone and made introductions of each Board member and staff in attendance. Mrs. Sengstock remarked that she is looking forward to spring and the next election season. She also spoke briefly about James Crouse and his outstanding contributions to the Cecil County Election Board and the citizens of Cecil County. She then asked Ruie Lavoie to provide information regarding his service on the Board.

Ruie Lavoie reported James Crouse notified her and the Governor's Appointment Secretary that as of March 17th, 2021, he is retiring from service on the Board of Elections. She further reported that the Appointment Secretary has started the process to fill the vacancy and contacted the Democratic Central Committee. This vacancy leaves two (2) vacant members, a republican and a democratic position on the Board. When new Board members are appointed, they will fill the vacant term on the Board and not necessary the office the member holds. The office of Vice President is now vacant. Officers are elected by the Board.

MOTION: Kelly Sengstock motioned to appoint Nancy Simperts as Interim Vice President until such time that the vacancies are filled and the Board can elect a Vice President to serve the remaining term.

SECOND: Diane Letts

ACTION: Favorable and unanimous, Motion Carried.

With Nancy Simperts being appointed interim Vice President, the office of Secretary is now vacant.

MOTION: Kelly Sengstock motioned to appoint Diane Letts as Interim Board Secretary until such time that the vacancies are filled and the Board can elect a Secretary to serve the remaining term.

SECOND: Nancy Simperts

ACTION: Favorable and unanimous, Motion Carried

Last week, the Governor approved the name nominated by the Republican Central Committee and submitted to the Senate for confirmation to fill the vacant republican Board position.

The Board unanimously agreed to present Mr. Crouse with an award acknowledging his service. Staff will make the arrangements and Nancy Simperts will deliver to Mr. Crouse.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the February 10, 2021 Board meeting were reviewed.

MOTION: Nancy Simperts motioned to approve the February 10, 2021 Board meeting minutes as written.

SECOND: Diane Letts

ACTION: Favorable and unanimous, Motion carried.

DIRECTOR' S REPORT

Prior to the meeting, a written Director's Report was delivered to the Board and Board Counsel by email or by regular mail. An updated copy was provided in the Board folders at this meeting.

Board Folders: Agenda, March 17, 2021 Board Meeting
Board Meeting Minutes, February 10, 2021
Directors' Report, March, 2021
Legislative Review – 2021 Proposed for Elections – Updated 3/17/21
Monthly Statistics Report, February, 2021
County Bulletins and Registrars – Sent Electronically

Meetings, Trainings and Important Dates

Occurred/Attended:

February 11, 2021	Candidate Filing Training. Ruie Lavoie and Cindy Remmey attended.
February 11, 2021	New Pollbook Focus Group
February 15, 2021	Office Closed, President's Day
February 16, 2021	Document and Ballot Shred and Recycle completed by Shred-It
February 17, 2021	JIC Public Information Officer Call with Administration & Emergency Management. Ruie Lavoie joined the call.
February 18, 2021	International Government Association (iGo) Annual Conference. Ruie Lavoie attended the conference virtually.
February 18, 2021	Director's Call with the State Board. Ruie Lavoie and Cindy Remmey joined the call.
February 23, 2021	Candidate Filing began.
February 24, 2021	Manual Audit, as required by Maryland Law, was conducted.
February 24, 2021	Staff Team Building Activity. All staff participated.
February 25, 2021	Office Computers Audits. Nathan conducted the audits with the State Regional Manager.
February 25, 2021	GIS Workshop presented by the State. Ruie Lavoie attended virtually.
March 2, 2021	Website Meeting with County IT. Nathan Reynolds attended.
March 8, 2021	Computer Training - In person. Brenda Ross completed training for Windows, Word, Excel and Outlook in the office.
March 9, 2021	Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) Meeting. Ruie Lavoie, Karen Perry, Nathan Reynolds and Duane Souder attended the meeting virtually.
March 10, 2021	Board Meeting postponed to March 17, 2021
March 11, 2021	New Pollbook Project Meeting. Ruie Lavoie and Nathan Reynolds attended virtually.
March 11, 2021	Precinct Based Election Results Reporting Meeting with the State Board. Ruie Lavoie attended.
March 17, 2021	Staff Meeting and Team Building Activity. All staff participated.
March 17, 2021	Board Meeting at 3:00 pm

Scheduled/Upcoming:

March 18, 2021	Directors' Call with State Board.
March 18, 2021	PNC Credit Card/MUNIS Training. Ruie Lavoie to attend.
March 23, 2021	State Badge Appointments at DJS.
March 24, 2021	iGo CPL Course. Ruie Lavoie to attend.
March 31, 2021	MAEO Conference Planning Meeting. Ruie Lavoie and Nathan Reynolds to attend.
April 6, 2021	MAEO Meeting
March 14, 2021	Board Meeting
March 15, 2021	Directors' Call with State Board. Ruie Lavoie, Karen Perry and Nathan Reynolds to attend.

FY 2021 Budget and 2020 Presidential Election Expenses

In progress. The Finance Department is making the needed CARES funds adjustments and credits which will provide actual expenses.

FY 2022 Proposed Budget

The FY 2022 Budget is in progress. The meeting with the Finance Director and County Executive was cancelled and has not yet been rescheduled. Once the final proposed budget is complete, copies will be provided to the Board. We received an estimated cost for the new pollbooks from SBE. \$3,400 per pollbook and \$850 per printer. The total estimated cost for Cecil County is approximately \$616,000.00 plus a proportionate share of the project management expense.

JIC with Administration and Emergency Operations

The weekly calls have been cancelled unless communications due to the Pandemic becomes necessary. Election office updates will be sent to the County PIO when needed.

2020 Presidential Election Manual Audit

As required by law and within 120 days of the General Election, a manual audit was conducted on February 24, 2021. There were no variances or discrepancies which shows the voting equipment reported the accurate election results. These results are posted on the State Board website. Ruie Lavoie and Kelly Sengstock stated that the process went smoothly and thanked the election judges that assisted. Mrs. Sengstock suggested interviewing election judges about how a typical election day is, what canvassing is like, and post the videos on our webpage and social media. Hopefully this will draw in more elections judges for future elections and help everyone better understand the processes and procedures in place to ensure an accurate and fair election. She will work with Nathan Reynolds and Duane Souder on this project.

Redistricting 2021

Due to the 2020 Census reports being delayed, the redistricting process is also delayed. Any redistricting changes will be made before the Primary election in June of 2022. Candidates that may be affected will be notified of possible changes at the time of filing.

Ethics Filing for 2020

Board members and the Director must file Ethics paperwork with the State of Maryland and with Cecil County before April 30, 2021. As of today, all paperwork has been received and submitted.

DHS Grant

Ruie Lavoie is working with the State Board, County Emergency Operations, and Office of Information Technology to determine the best use of this grant (\$10,000) specifically the type of equipment to purchase. She is working with Nathan Reynolds to decide the best options for our office and will update the board with their decision. This new equipment will be State Election equipment.

2021 Legislative Session

An updated outline of proposed legislation is included in the Board folders. Ruie Lavoie shared the information learned during the MAEO Legislative committee calls. She also shared how the Board can view updates online. Specifically, she provided information on proposed election related legislation that has momentum and a fiscal impact. For example, increased early voting days and times as well as an additional early voting center, ballot boxes, and mail in ballot applications mailed to all registered voters.

Equipment Inventory

The inventory process has started and is almost 90% complete. This process is due by June 30, 2021. Ruie Lavoie stated that she received many compliments on how quickly Nathan Reynolds learned the inventory system. She commended him on his diligence and hard work, completing most of the inventory in a short time period, having learned the system last week.

Warehouse and Document Retention

Documents past the retention mandate and the 2020 election blank ballots were shredded on February 16, 2021 by Shred-It. A second review of stored documents will be completed in April which will hopefully free up more warehouse space.

New Pollbook Project

Ruie Lavoie and Nathan Reynolds are active in the new poll book project, focus groups and meetings. They will continue to keep the Board updated. Each county is 100% financially responsible for the cost of new pollbooks and printers. The previous county administration was aware of the cost and Ruie Lavoie is currently working with the new administration to determine the best way to fund the cost. The current pollbooks will be stored at the State Central warehouse and used as a contingency in the 2022 election cycle.

2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election

Candidate filing began February 23, 2021 and to date, 3 local candidates have file. A list of candidates can be found on our website and is updated as candidates file.

International Government Association (iGo)

Ruie Lavoie attended the virtual conference on February 18, 2021 and plans to attend the in-person summer conference in July to complete training and course. After this conference, she will officially be designated in Certified Public Leadership and will be almost finished with the CPO designation as well.

Maryland Association of Counties (MACo)

Ruie Lavoie will continue to attend conferences, representing the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) and the Cecil County Board of Elections. MAEO pays the registration and hotel costs, and the County will continue to pay for training. After the next conference, she will have earned the MACo leadership designation.

Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO)

The MAEO Board and Conference Committee is discussing the logistics of holding an in person conference in late August. A survey was distributed and the results will be discussed at the next MAEO meeting. To date, the survey results are favorable to having the conference in person.

Voter Outreach and Election Judge Recruitment

On hold due to the current Pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions.

Personnel

The Contractual Election Program Assistant position was filled and Duane Souder started on February 17, 2021. He resigned his part-time County position which will remain vacant until next election season. The Election IT Program Manager position was filled and Nathan

All Election employees have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated through the County. Everyone that chose to be vaccinated has received their first shot with a second shot scheduled in 3 weeks. Cecil County election officials have been removed from the State vaccination list. The election office remains by appointment only and staff continues to work remotely when possible.

COUNSEL'S REPORT

Ruie Lavoie provided the report of behalf of Cameron Brown that she had been in contact with the Deputy County Attorney regarding the election judge complaint. Documents and emails were provided that show actual days the election judge worked or communicated with the office. The County Attorney communicated with the election judge that she was in fact compensated correctly and no further action on her part would be taken. The Board requests Cameron Brown to also send a letter stating that the matter has been investigated, compensation was correct, and the matter is now closed.

OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISCLOSURES

There were no announcements or disclosures.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Nancy Simperts stated a concern about the time the central committees have to make a nomination when a Board vacancy occurs. Ruie Lavoie explained that the law provides 20 days to send nominations to the Governor's Appointment Secretary. She further stated that both Central Committee chairs have been provided with information outlining a Board member's duties and responsibilities, time commitment, and salary.

Meeting Information

The next Board meetings are scheduled for April 14, 2021 and May 12, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, with a motion to adjourn by Nancy Simperts and on a second by Kelly Sengstock, the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Kelly Sengstock, President


Nancy Simperts, Vice President


Diane Letts, Secretary

Approved this 14th day of April, 2021