

St. Mary's County Board of Elections

23250 Leonardtown Hollywood Road
Leonardtown, MD 20650

Board Meeting Minutes of 7 June 2023

Present:

Board Members:

Jack Payne, Board President (R)
Rebecca Wathen, Board Secretary (D)
Mary Coombs, Member (R)
Ann Raley, Member (D)
Darlene Johnson (D)

Staff Members:

Wendy Adkins, Director
Susan Julian, Deputy Director

Cynthia Panos, Board Attorney

Absent: None

At 9:29 AM, Mr. Jack Payne, Board President, determined that there was a quorum present and called the meeting to order. Secretary Becky Wathen announced that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of preparing the minutes.

Guests Present: The guests present signed in and were welcomed by Board President Payne. Sign In Sheet attached.

Documents Distributed:

- House Bill 410
- Title 33 State Board of Election
- State Board of Elections Welcome Package for Board Members
- By-Laws of the St. Mary's County Board of Elections 2023-2027 (Draft)
- Ballot Drop Box Proposed Consolidation List

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the meeting held on April 5, 2023 were presented. Ms. Wathen made a motion to approve the minutes, with corrections from the floor, seconded by Ms. Coombs. Motion carried.

Meeting Agenda: The meeting agenda was reviewed and with no revisions.

Director's Report: Ms. Adkins reported the following:

- **Legislative Update:** Ms. Adkins advised that the legislative session had ended. The State Board of Elections (SBE) is working to write regulations for the new bills that were passed (i.e. HB410 – Polling Place Plan, Prohibited Acts, and 2024 Primary Election Date, HB1200 – Judges Compensation, copies provided.)
- **Precinct Consolidation:** Precinct 1-1 and 8-9 consolidation as previously approved by this Board, have been consolidated and effected voters have been provided notification cards with the change. The Spring Ridge Middle School "gym" and "cafeteria" designations have been removed from the location identification and now just shows Spring Ridge Middle School.
- **Commissioners Meeting:** Ms. Adkins advised that she, Deputy Director^{or} Susan Julian, and Attorney Cynthia Panos attended the St. Mary's County Commissioners budget work session on May 9, 2023. The Commissioners granted the Local Board of Elections (LBE) the additional money requested to support

the Board raise, State cost of living adjustments, and election judge's additional pay. The third early voting site also be funded.

- **New State Administrator:** Ms. Adkins advised that the announcement of the new SBE Administrator who will be replacing Linda Lamone, will be announced on Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 3 PM.

New Business:

- **Elections of New Board Officers:** The new Board members appointed by Governor Moore were sworn in this morning by Clerk of the Court Debra Mills to begin their new four-year term. As such, the Board will need to elect a new Board President and a new Board Secretary.
- **President:** Ms. Coombs made a motion to nominate Ms. Wathen as the new Board President, seconded by Mr. Payne. Motion carried.
- **Secretary:** Ms. Wathen made a motion to nominate Ms. Coombs as the new Board Secretary, seconded by Mr. Payne. Motion carried.
- **New Member:** Our new member this term is Ms. Darlene Johnson. Returning Board Members are Ms. Wathen, Ms. Raley, Ms. Coombs, and Mr. Payne. Members introduced themselves along with staff members in attendance. It was determined that Mr. Payne and Ms. Wathen would complete this meeting as Board President and Board Secretary and the newly elected President and Secretary will take effect after the completion of this meeting.
- **By-Laws:** The Board reviewed the By-Laws that will govern the Board for the next four (4) years. Typos were noted. Ms. Wathen made a motion to accept the By-Laws with the noted errors corrected and that a clarification regarding Social Media be added, seconded by Ms. Coombs. Motion carried.
- **Welcome Packet:** The packet was distributed to the Board members from the SBE. The packet included a welcome letter, Ethics and Standards for Election Officials and Employees memo, Maryland Public Ethics Law Summary, and the Maryland SBE Guidelines for Conducting Meetings and Writing Minutes.

Old Business:

- **2024 Ballot Drop Box Proposed Locations** – Ms. Adkins advised that since the completion of the 2022 election cycle, her staff has had the opportunity to review the locations of the Ballot Drop Boxes used. Ms. Adkins had previously provided data and statistics on the drop box location usage. The LBE has provided the specific criteria that is needed to designate a location as an official Ballot Drop Box location and the public has had an opportunity to attend our meetings to voice any concerns. The LBE will still need to contact Valley Lee Fire House to determine if the fire department will allow the LBE to place a drop box at their location. Ms. Coombs made a motion to approve the reduction from eleven (11) ballot drop boxes to six (6) ballot drop boxes with the option to add a seventh one, seconded by Ms. Wathen. Motion carried.
- **Security Cameras:** Ballot Drop Boxes will need 24/7 recorded camera security. Camera footage is required to be stored along with the election records. Therefore, school cameras and local government and fire department cameras cannot be used. Ms. Adkins advised that the SBE will split the cost 50/50 with the LBEs. There has been two proposals received: Layer One and SolarTech.
 - Layer One has an estimated cost of \$12,000 per location for a five-year period. Extended licenses will cost an additional \$1,000 per camera for another five years. If new licenses, software or technology upgrades are required, the cost would be an additional \$2,500 per camera. Layer One would be responsible for storing, setting up, and taking down equipment for each election. The drop boxes would also have to be modified to attach the cameras to each box.
 - Solar Tech provided an estimated of \$17,362.64 per camera. This would be a one-time purchase. Software upgrade fees would apply, but Ms. Adkins is still waiting on that estimate. This is the company that the County currently uses. The county cameras were used at Hollywood Firehouse

during the prior election cycle. It sits on a tripod and can be relocated anywhere as needed. The County would need to store them, set them up, and take them down for each election cycle.

- Additional information will be forthcoming.

- **CLOSED SESSION:**

- Ms. Wathen made a motion to enter a closed session to discuss a personnel issue, seconded by Ms. Coombs. Motion carried. Session was closed at 10:26 AM and the Board relocated to a private room.
- Ms. Wathen made a motion to return to the open session of the Board meeting, seconded by Ms. Coombs. Motion carried. The Board returns to the Open Meeting room at 10:37 ~~PM~~ AM

Next Meeting: There will be no July meeting. The next meeting will be on August 2, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

A motion was made by Ms. Wathen to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Coombs. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rebecca J. Wathen

Board Secretary

