

St. Mary's County Board of Elections

23250 Leonardtown Hollywood Road

Leonardtown, MD 20650

Board Meeting Minutes of 7 February 2024

Present:

Board Members:

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

Staff Members:

Wendy Adkins, Director
Susan Julian, Deputy Director

Cynthia Panos, Board Attorney

Absent: None

At 1:32 PM, Ms. Rebecca Wathen, Board President, determined that there was a quorum present and called the meeting to order. President 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 President Wathen. The sign in sheet is attached.

Documents Distributed:

- December 5, 2023 Minutes
- Election Judge Application
- Candidate Listing
- Precinct Voter Counts
- 2024 Presidential Election Information Sheet
- Sample Flyer
- Legislative Bill List

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the meeting held on December 5, 2023 were presented. Mr. Jack Payne made a motion to approve the minutes, with corrections from the floor, seconded by Ms. Darlene Johnson. Motion carried.

Meeting Agenda: The meeting agenda was reviewed. No changes were made.

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

- **Polling Place Plan:** Ms. Adkins advised that the State Board of Elections (SBE) approved the 2024 Presidential Polling Place plan and it has been posted to the website.
- **Election Judge Recruitment:** Ms. Adkins advised that the recruitment process was underway. Judges are still needed. Flyers are being placed in all notification cards that are being mailed. The State and the County will grant eight (8) hours of administrative leave to individuals for serving as a judge. Additional applications are available in the office and on the website.
- **Mail In Ballots (MIB) Applications/Notices:** SBE has mailed out the first round of MIB applications to all registered voters. Locally we have received a good response. As of February 6, 2024, the LBE has

processed 2,161 MIB applications for a grand total of 7,397 applications for the 2024 Presidential Primary Elections. 6,478 out of 7,397 are permanent MIB.

- **Candidate Filing List:** Ms. Adkins provided the candidate listing as of February 6, 2024. The report can also be found on the SBE website. The filing deadline is Friday, February 9, 2024. The office will be open until 9 PM on February 9, 2024.
- **Voter Count:** Ms. Adkins provided the count of registered voters as of today. There is a new recognized party in Maryland, "No Labels Maryland Party."
- **County Badges:** All Board members must have a County Employee badge. It must be worn on Election Day. Ms. Adkins will make an appointment for us to obtain updated badges.

Old Business:

- **Ballot Drop Box Update:** Ms. Adkins advised that SBE had approved all seven (7) of our ballot drop box locations. Mr. Bob Kelly, County IT Administrator, will be assisting and providing the county owned camera system which will provide 24/7 surveillance of the ballot boxes.
- **2024 Presidential Information Sheet:** Ms. Adkins distributed the sheet, which provides dates and deadlines for the Primary and General Election. The sheet also contains the Early Voting locations and Ballot Drop Box locations along with the addresses. A QR Code is also on the sheet if anyone needs to update their voter information or needs to register to vote. These can be copied and distributed. The information is also on the website.

New Business:

- **Post Card:** Ms. Adkins provided a copy of the postcard that is being mailed to all households and it will be available on the website. This is to prompt voters to begin thinking about the upcoming election, ensure they know where to vote, and to prompt them if they need to update their information before the deadlines.
- **Legislation:** The Maryland Session began on January 10, 2024. It is scheduled to end on April 8, 2024. The SBE Administrator and MAEO's main goal for this legislative session is to not implement any changes during this Election Cycle.
- **Highlighted Bills:** A full list of election related bills was provided to the Board members.
 - **HB641 – Curbside Voting:** Requires each LBE, at least six (6) months prior to each statewide primary election, to designate an outside location for curbside voting, subject to the approval of the SBE. Requires the LBE to take into account certain factors when determining a location for curbside voting; and establishing requirements governing curbside voting, including requirements related to the designation of curbside voting locations and how to vote at a curbside voting location.
 - **HB585 – Protecting Election Officials:** Prohibits a person from knowingly and willfully making a threat to harm an election official or an immediate family member of an election official because of the election official's role in administering the election process; and generally relating to threats against election officials and their immediate family members.
 - **SB29 – Special Elections:** Requires that a special election be held to fill a vacancy in the office of or resolve a tie for election as a Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly unless the vacancy occurs during the year in which the General Assembly is elected. Requires that a special election to fill a vacancy or resolve a tie be conducted by mail and requires the SBE and the LBE to each pay 50% of the cost of postage-paid envelopes for a special election.
 - **HB257 – Affiliating with a Party:** Authorizes unaffiliated voters to request to affiliate with a political party at an early voting center during a primary election and to vote a provisional ballot for the voter's preferred political party.

Next Meeting: Ms. Adkins advised that she will schedule the Board members to receive their oath of office for the Presidential Primary just prior to our March Board Meeting. The next meeting will be held on March 6, 2024 immediately following the swearing in.

A motion was made by Ms. Coombs to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Payne. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 1: PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Coombs
Board Secretary

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Coombs". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name and title.

