



Cecil County Board of Elections  
February 15, 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 15<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023 in the North East 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 and by phone, as noted below.

<b>ATTENDEES:</b>	Kelly Sengstock	President
	Nancy Simperts	Vice President
	Diane Letts	Secretary
	Jennifer Graham	Board Member
	Stephen Stiles	Board Member
	Doug Walker	Director (by phone)
	Cindy Rimmey	Acting Deputy Director
	Bradley Moore, Esq.	Board Counsel

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

The meeting was called to order by President Kelly Sengstock at 3:03 p.m. Quorum was established with four of the five Board members present in person. Diane Letts arrived at 3:08 p.m.

**AGENDA**

Director presented the attached Agenda.

**PRESIDENT’S REMARKS**

President Kelly Sengstock

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the January 18, 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: Nancy Simperts motioned to approve the Minutes of the January 18, 2023 Board meeting.
- SECOND: Jennifer Graham
- ACTION: Favorable and unanimous, Motion carried

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – February 2023**

**Board Folders:** Agenda, February 15, 2023 Board Meeting  
Board Meeting Minutes January 18, 2023  
Director's Report, February 2023  
Notice of General Election Manual Audit  
Manual Audit Report (under separate cover after the Audit)  
Monthly Statistical Report, January 2023  
Legislative Update  
SBE Report on the 2022 Gubernatorial General Election

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

January 18, 2023 Board Meeting  
January 19, 2023 Election Directors Meeting  
January 19, 2023 State Board Meeting  
January 19, 2023 Candidate filing for 2024 Presidential Election opens  
January 24, 2023 MAEO Business Meeting  
January 24, 2023 MAEO Holiday Social  
February 9, 2023 Manual Audit

### **Upcoming:**

February 15, 2023 Board Meeting  
February 23, 2023 State Board Meeting (2:00 p.m.)  
March 8, 2023 Deadline for LBEs to complete GG22 Manual Audit Deadline  
March 15, 2023 Board Meeting  
March 22, 2023 Posting of Manual Audit Deadline  
April 19, 2023 Board Meeting  
May 14-19, 2023 MAEO Conference  
May 17, 2023 Board Meeting scheduled (see Old Business)  
TBD Sept./Oct. 2023 SBE Mandatory Biennial Meeting  
January 22, 2024 Candidate filing for 2024 Presidential Election ends  
April 11-18, 2024 Presidential Primary Early Voting  
April 23, 2024 Presidential Primary Election Day (PP24)  
October 24-31, 2024 Presidential General Early Voting  
November 5, 2024 Presidential General Election Day (PG24)

### **Manual Audit**

The Manual Audit must be completed within 120 days of Election Day making the deadline March 8, 2023. We are scheduled to conduct our audit of 1,952 total ballots on Thursday, February 9, 2023 (with a snow date of Thursday, February 23). Ballots to be audited include 927 Election Day ballots from precinct 05-04 (North East Elementary School), 268 from the first day of Early Voting at the County Administration Building 181 Vote by Mail ballots and 576 Provisional ballots accepted-in-full from the post-election Canvass. The required notice of the Manual Audit is attached for your information. Staff is required to submit Audit worksheets to SBE within two days of the Audit and present results of the Audit and copies of the signed Manual Ballot Tabulation Audit Worksheet to the local Board at its next meeting. The Board will receive those items under separate cover after the conclusion of the Audit.

## **Operational Budget**

On Thursday, January 19, the Director met with County Finance Director Shon McCollum and the new Budget Manager to discuss the FY24 budget. They were joined by County Executive Hornberger and County Administrator Overbay, who observed but did not otherwise participate. The Director and Budget Manager had a follow-up meeting on January 27 to clear up unresolved questions of accounting for salaries/benefits of state employees, details of professional and related services relating to the SBE quarterly billing and updating projected costs for the MAEO Annual Meeting and SBE mandatory biennial training.

## **Election Deputy Director Vacancy**

Closed session.

## **Pending Legislation**

The last day for the introduction of Senate bills was February 6. House of Delegates members have until February 10 to introduce legislation. Staff will continue to update the compilation of bills MAEO and SBE are tracking and their status under separate cover.

## **SBE 2022 General Election Report**

The 43-page report and appendices are attached. Of note:

- 2,031,635 votes were received and counted representing 49.26% of eligible voters;
  - Cecil County turnout was 47.47%
  - Kent and Talbot Counties each eclipsed 62%
  - Baltimore City came in at 37.27%
- 73% of voters cast their ballots in-person;
  - 51.49% of all voters voted on Election Day;
  - 18.75% of all voters voted during Early Voting;
- Around 640,000 voters requested Vote by Mail ballots;
  - 84% of those packets were voted and returned;
  - 50% of VBM voters used the ballot drop boxes, but drop box usage declined from 2020;
  - In Cecil County we sent 7,005 ballots. We received 82.28% of them back and accepted 99.55% of those.
- SBE processed contribution and expenditure reports for 2,758 political entities, including 1,391 new political committees, which filed 13,291 campaign finance reports;
- LBEs generally used the same early voting centers during the General Election as during the Primary. Of the 96 EV centers approved statewide, Cecil Arena was one of 25 that was not available on the new Primary date and one of 17 instances in which LBEs returned to the original EV site for the General Election;
- BMD use significantly increased Statewide from 3.11% in GG18 to 27.51% in GG20. In GG22 26.54% of voters used BMDs, down from 33.64% in the Primary. The highest percentages were in Dorchester and Garret counties (both over 40%) and the lowest were in Harford, Worcester, and Calvert Counties (all less than 20%).
- Early voting weekend turnout continues to be significantly lower than on the weekdays. A notable piece of legislation in the General Assembly this session would shorten the period from eight days to five.
- 97.3% of 62,618 Provisional ballots were counted Statewide.
  - The most-often cited reasons for rejection were:

- The applicant was not registered to vote;
- The applicant had already returned a VBM ballot or already voted; and
- The applicant did not sign the application;
- SBE commits to continuing to mail VBM ballots at least 30 days before the election, expand ways voters can track their ballots, and continue the envelope flap design that covers the voter's signature while the ballot is in transit;
- The independent and automated ballot tabulation audits show no variance greater than 0.5% between the voting system results and audit results. Manual audits, including Cecil County's, have yet to be conducted as of the publication date.

### **2023 MAEO Annual Meeting**

MAEO will convene the Annual Meeting May 14-19, 2023 in Worcester County. The MAEO board selected the theme: "MAEO—Making It Count" and approved a registration fee of \$245 per attendee. Food costs are approximately \$500/person, so any guests will be required to pay the registration fee. The hotel room rate ranges from \$159/night Queen-\$179 for a suite. When the room block is released, we are urged to make reservations immediately, as the adjacent condos are no longer available. MAEO is negotiating with nearby hotels for overflow accommodations. Making reservations by phone will avoid the need to provide a personal credit card for a deposit. The deposit has been waived, but that waiver cannot be honored when making reservations online.

### **SBE Mandatory 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 will schedule the Biennial Meeting for September or October in Annapolis. We anticipate this will be a one-day meeting not requiring overnight accommodations.

### **BOARD COUNSEL'S REPORT**

Counsel indicated there were no developments to report.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Deputy Election Director Position
  - a. Considered in Closed Session
- b. Rescheduling of May 2023 Board Meeting

The May 17, 2023 Board meeting conflicts with the May 14-19 MAEO Conference in Worcester County. The Board may wish to consider holding the meeting on May 10 or 24. A motion to move the May Monthly Board Meeting to May 24, 2023 by Stephen Stiles and a second by Nancy Simperts.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Presentation of GG22 Manual Audit Results (included in Director's Report)
- b. Election IT Specialist Position
  - i. Considered in Closed Session

**QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS**

None at this time.

**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 15, 2023. Board meetings will be available for public viewing in person.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, with a motion to adjourn by Jennifer Graham and a second by Diane Letts, the meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The closed session convened at 3:40 p.m. to discuss personnel The closed session adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**



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**Diane Letts, Secretary**



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**Kelly Sengstock, President**

Approved this 15<sup>th</sup> day of March 2023

