



# Cecil County Board of Elections

April 19, 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 March 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.

### **ATTENDEES:**

Kelly Sengstock	President
Nancy Simperts	Vice President
Diane Letts	Secretary
Jennifer Graham	Board Member
Stephen Stiles	Board Member
Doug Walker	Director
Cindy Remmey	Acting Deputy Director
Bradley Moore, Esq.	Board Counsel
Eunice Grant	Board Member-Select
Holcombe Grier	Board Member-Select
Krista Moretz	Board Member-Select

### **DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

The meeting was called to order by President Kelly Sengstock at 3:00 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 members and staff to the meeting. She also extended a welcome to incoming Board members Eunice Grant, Holcombe Grier, and Krista Moretz whose terms on the Board commence on Monday, June 5, 2023. The President pointed out that the new members would have a lot to do and a lot to learn and stated that the current board members were happy to help with any questions they may have. Vice President Simperts observed that this marked the first time that incoming Board members had been invited to listen in on a Board meeting before taking office.

### **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:** Jennifer Graham motioned to approve the Minutes of the February 15, 2023 Board meeting.  
**SECOND:** Nancy Simperts  
**ACTION:** Favorable and unanimous, Motion carried

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

**Board Folders:** Agenda, April 19, 2023 Board Meeting  
Board Meeting Minutes March 15, 2023  
Director's Report, April 2023  
Monthly Statistical Report, March 2023  
MAEO Conference Agenda  
Board Letter Opposing House version of HB410

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

March 15, 2023 Board Meeting  
March 22, 2023 Posting of Manual Audit Deadline  
March 29, 2023 State Board Meeting (2:00 p.m.)  
April 10, 2023 End of Legislative Session  
April 11, 2023 County Council FY 24 Budget Departmental Meeting  
April 19, 2023 Board Meeting

### **Upcoming:**

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  
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 retires (tentative)  
October 3, 2023 All-day Statewide Tabletop Election Exercise, Glen Burnie  
October 19, 2023 SBE Mandatory Biennial Meeting/Training, Annapolis  
January 22, 2024 Candidate filing for 2024 Presidential Election ends at 9:00 p.m.  
April 11-18, 2024 Presidential Primary Early Voting (subject to current legislation)  
April 23, 2024 Presidential Primary Election Day (subject to current legislation) (PP24)  
October 24-31, 2024 Presidential General Early Voting  
November 5, 2024 Presidential General Election Day (PG24)

### **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 appeared at the second of six Council Budget Hearings on Tuesday, April 11. While showing no indication of their ultimate votes, the Council asked reasonable and informed questions about election judge compensation, potential equipment needs, and whether the cut/cap in training affected election judge training or staff training. The Director is scheduled to

appear at the Thursday, May 18, 2023 Public Budget Hearing at Elkton High School during the MAEO Conference. 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 the June 6 Council Legislative Session.

### **Election Deputy Director Vacancy**

Four applicants have met SBE qualifications for the Deputy Director Position. SBE Human Resources requires us to interview all of them, and all have responded affirmatively to interview invitations. Interviews are scheduled for Tuesday, April 18.

### **General Assembly Recap**

The Director thanks all Board members for agreeing to sign-on to the March 24 letter to Sen. Jason Gallion opposing the House version of HB410. Sen. Gallion was kind enough to meet with the Director regarding the bill immediately prior to the March 28 Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee hearing at which it was considered. Sen. Gallion did not indicate his voting preference but did provide the helpful observation that Committee Chair Sen. Brian Feldman had to that point demonstrated an inclination to support passage of all bills to clear the House of Delegates with a unanimous vote as HB410 had done. This information was shared with the MAEO and SBE legislative teams. The Senate ultimately amended HB410, even altering the title from “Election Reform Act of 2023” to “Elections—Polling Place Plan, Prohibited Acts, and 2024 Primary Election Date.”

Key takeaways from the 2023 General Assembly session include:

- The date of the Presidential Primary is being moved three weeks later to May 14, 2024;
- Election judge compensation:
  - has been reset to a minimum of \$250 per day;
  - bonuses of \$100 are *per day worked*, not just one time.
    - State/County 50/50 split of the cost amended to bill.
    - Implementing regulations are TBD;
- New mandatory Polling Place Plans will be due to SBE by December 2023.

### **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.

### **2023 MAEO Conference**

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 \$250 per attendee. Single Day registration for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday is \$165/day. 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. MAEO is negotiating with nearby hotels for overflow accommodations. Reservations have been made for President Sengstock, members Jennifer Graham and Stephen Stiles, and incoming members Holcombe Grier and Krista Moretz, and four staff members. Incoming member Eunice Grant is unable to attend due to a conflict. An updated detailed agenda is included in the meeting materials

### **MAEO Committee Work**

The Director has accepted an invitation to co-chair MAEO's Constitution and Bylaws Committee with Anthony Gutierrez, Frederick County Deputy Election Director. At its March 31 Meeting the MAEO Board referred a motion tasking the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to draft a MAEO code of conduct or ethics to which MAEO members would agree on accepting membership.

### **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.*

### **New SBE Chief Information Security Officer**

SBE hired new Chief Information Security Office Patrick Angel

### **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. Installation of new foam inserts into pollbook cases anticipated in late June. MAEO has convened monthly project status update.

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

Counsel indicated there were no developments to report.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Legislative Update/Session Recap
- b. Deputy Director Position Status

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. The Acting Deputy Director, noting that SBE has increased the fee for voter file data to \$75, suggested that the Board discuss the merits of evaluating Cecil County LBE pricing for voter file data.
  - i. MOTION: Vice President Simperts motioned to increase the voter file fee to \$75 effective January 24, 2024, after this year's municipal elections.
  - ii. SECOND: Diane Letts
  - iii. ACTION: Favorable and unanimous, Motion carried

- b. At the suggestion of Board Counsel, staff will make the disclaimer language on the application form consistent with that on the State Board request form.

### **QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS**

None at this time.

### **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 2023, one week later than the customary third Wednesday of the month due to a conflict with the Maryland Association of Election Officials Conference taking place May 14-19. Board meetings will be available for public viewing in person.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Vice President Simperts offered a motion to adjourn and reconvene in Closed Session to discuss personnel matters, which was seconded by Board member Jennifer Graham. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 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 interviews of candidates for Deputy Director and the interview team's selection, as well as the disposition of current employment contracts and proposed staffing. The Closed Session adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**



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**Diane Letts, Secretary**



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**Kelly Sengstock, President**

Approved this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May 2023

