



Cecil County Board of Elections
February 21, 2024
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 Elections office located in Suite 1900 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 21st day of February 2024 in the Northeast Room on the 1st 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, as noted below.

ATTENDEES:	Jennifer Graham	President
	Stephen Stiles	Vice President
	Krista Moretz	Secretary
	Bradley Moore	Board Counsel
	Eunice Grant	Board Member
	Holcombe Grier	Board Member
	Gary Holmes	Director
	Karen Benecewicz	Deputy Director
	Sheri Woodruff	Election Supervisor
	Mary Nelson	Public
	Collen Gray	Public
	Sean Brimm	Public

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order by President Jennifer Graham at 3:02 pm. Quorum was established with five (5) Board Members present in person.

AGENDA

The Board noted that they would be in closed session at the conclusion of the Board Meeting.

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

President Jennifer Graham thanks those that attended the Voter Registration Volunteer training that took prior to the start of the meeting. Reminded everyone in light of the tension growing as the elections get closer, to be non-partisan in all things public, and to uphold their office to the best of their ability.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the January 17, 2024, Board meeting were provided to the Board a copy in each of their folders.

MOTION: Board Member Holcombe Grier motioned to approve Minutes for January 17, 2024, Board Meeting as present.

SECOND: Steven Stiles, Vice President Cecil County Board of Elections

ACTION: Krista Moretz asked that the minutes be amended to reflect the statement of “innocent until proven guilty”, regarding Carlos Ayala.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Gary attended the February Director/Deputy meeting on February 15, 2024, at the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections along with Karen. The meeting was followed by a Table -Top exercise where worst case scenarios were given, and the purpose was to brainstorm actionable solutions. Sheri Woodruff, Supervisor also attended the Table-Top exercise.

On February 9th the office was staffed until 9 p.m. so candidates could file up to the deadline. Gary stayed to man the office with Brenda Ross.

The staff trained with Sheldon from ES&S, the week of February 12th. Electionware training was attended by Jasmine and Ashira. The entire staff received training on the DS200 scanning unit as well as the ExpressVote or BMD.

On February 16th Gary along with Karen, Deputy, and Stephanie Taylor of Harford Co. meet with Shon McCollum and Tony Prattico of the finance office to address our needs for the fiscal year 2025. The need for a larger office and warehouse was addressed in addition to increased staffing. Gary is compiling a report with the cost estimates of staff and election judge salaries. Gary has also been reaching out to nursing homes to determine their need for absentee ballots. We plan to meet with Sheldon at the end of the week. We will have a meet and greet with the state trainers and set up the training room.

COUNSEL’S REPORT

None at the time.

OLD BUSINESS

The office is active on Facebook, X, and Instagram again. New postings go up almost daily. It was suggested that the list of important dates/deadlines be the banner photo on the page, and we create events for those dates as well.

The article on the office staff and dates relating to the Primary Election was printed in the Whig.

County email addresses for the Board was discussed and the decision was made to create Gmail accounts with the format first.last.ccbe@gmail.com. Holcombe motioned to approve, and it was seconded by both Jennifer and Stephen. The email addresses had been initially brought up by Kelly Sengstock, the former Board President, and its relation to the Open Meetings Act. There would be little difference in the security or legal statue according to Bradley Moore, Board Attorney. As a cost efficiency effort Gmail address will be used.

OFFICE REPORT

We will begin training February 26, 2024, and almost all judges have scheduled their training. We currently have 237 judges assigned.

Reviewed quantity of mail in ballot applications received.

electronic batches and # scanned batches.

batches were transferred.

Voter statistics will be added to the report for the March meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

President Jennifer Graham asked that any upcoming or relative legislation be added to the Director's report/ packet. We can give updates on any bills that will potentially affect elections. Krista mentioned HB 14 which would allow 16-year-olds to vote. While Mary said there is currently a bill in Ways & Means that would allow voter registration at 15 yrs. and 9 months.

Holcombe mentioned the withdrawal of one of the candidates for County Executive.

Jennifer Graham, President of the Board requested an SOP/ worst case scenario guide be created for the staff similar to ensure safety and security for themselves, as well as for any transition roles. There is a Cecil County Board of Elections Disaster Recovery and Incident Management Plan. It was recently updated in January of 2024.

The Perryville municipal election is still in discussion as to whether they will be holding their election at the school for voters' convenience. The suggestion was made to be sure that we have a greeter at that location, should both elections be at that location.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISCLOSURES

Gary mentioned that we received a request for a confidential voter. It was mentioned that in the climate of elections, and with concerns for safety, have staff and board made confidential, if possible.

Holcombe disclosed that he started following Fund CCPS, for the purpose of monitoring any misinformation regarding elections and well as Bill Kilby's County Executive campaign.

Steven Stiles attended the Republican Central Committee meeting.

Krista Moretz also attended the Republican Central Committee meeting. It was asked that a list of the different duties assigned to the Board vs the office staff.

Eunice Grant attended the Democrat Central Committee, First Friday event.

Jennier Graham started following Fund CCPS for the purpose of monitoring misinformation as well.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Mary Nelson addressed concerns over the individual who worked early voting, who was not staff or judge and assisted in bring back supplies. Suggested having closing judges. The chain of custody was questioned.

HBo641 Bill on Curb Voting -- suggest writing letters and attending meetings.

HBo459 /0417 Bills regarding the hiring of the Election Director, change of board duties and giving more power to SBE. Jennifer mentioned how helpful the state was during the staffing process. At no time had the SBE imposed any undue requests upon the staff or the Board during the process.

Mary also inquired into whether voter rolls are cleaned up. Asked about citizens going through rolls to report on deaths and other voter updates. It was explained that we get regular reports from the state that we use to just those things. To make any changes to a voter's record written documentation is required or a source.

The staff and Jennifer Graham assured the public that our voter rolls are being updated regularly and through official means that are verifiable. We may not accept any changes from any unofficial source and will continue to follow the process. We will not be accepting volunteers to monitor or maintain these changes.

Colleen addressed concerns over non-citizens registering to vote. The verification process was provided: via state id and/or social security number.

For the next meeting, it was asked that legislative bills be put on the agenda, as well as any pertinent voter numbers.

Board Folders: February 21, 2024 -Agenda
January 17 -Board Meeting Minutes

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next meeting will be held on March 20, 2024, at 3:00 pm in the Northeast Room on the 1st Floor of the Cecil County Administration Building located at 200 Chesapeake Boulevard in Elkton, Maryland. The meeting will be available for public viewing in person.

ADJOURNMENT

Krista Moretz, Secretary moved to close the open meeting.

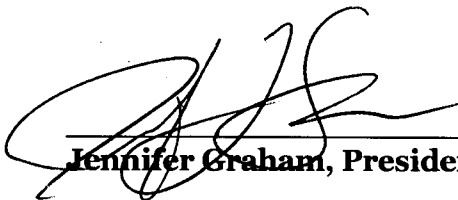
Seconded by Eunice Grant.

Meeting adjourned at 4:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Krista Moretz, Secretary



Jennifer Graham, President

Meetings, Trainings, and Important Dates:

February 15, 2024, Directors/ Deputy Meeting

February 26, 2024 – Election Judge training scheduled to begin.

March 6, 2024 – Transportation meeting.

March 7, 2024 – E40 training

March 11, 2024 – Ballot proofing to be completed.

March 20, 2024 – Board Meeting

March 21,2024 – Directors Meeting

March 25-29, 2024 – Ballot Boxes delivered.

April 17, 2024 – Board Meeting

April 23, 2024 – Voter registration deadline.