

MINUTES
Howard County Board of Elections
8900 Columbia 100 Parkway
Columbia, Maryland 21045
September 29, 2008

Present:

Board:

Ann M. Balcerzak, President
Donna K. Thewes, Vice-President
Raymond M. Rankin Member
Donna L. Rice, Alternate
Charles M. Coles, Jr., Alternate
Michael S. Molinaro, Board Attorney
Vivian L. Dixon, Board Secretary

Staff:

Betty L. Nordaas, Election Director
Guy Mickley, Deputy Director

Guests: Jay Gerarden - Anne Arundel County

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Balcerzak at 4:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance Four (4) members present, constituted a quorum.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Balcerzak asked if Board had any corrections or additions of minutes from July 28, 2008 Board Meeting (advance copy provided). Ms. Thewes' motion for approval as presented, was seconded by Mr. Rankin and unanimously approved. Unanimous motion also carried for signing Reason for Executive Convening, July 28, 2008.

Agenda Addition: President noted that an Executive Session will be convened and Ms. Thewes will note Guest Speaker request under New Business. Ms. Nordaas was asked to give highlights on Information Handouts in light of there being a visitor

Informational Handouts:

- Mr. Parvis, Board of Education ref: Contract and expectations, particularly scheduling Election Eve access to polling cites.
- SBE Director's letter to Board Secretary - Failure to advise SBE Board would not meet in August. This affected approval time of July Minutes (September 29, 2008). Board Secretary provided appropriate response to Ms. Lamone's letter.
- Mr. Mickley's response letter to Mr. Cosentino ref: understanding of language on Application for Absentee Ballot
- Political Party Update: Maryland recognized Parties - Democratic, Republican, Green, Constitution Party, Libertarian and Independent Parties.

- Ms. Lamone's Letter - Frederick County Board explaining and apologizing for delay of FY07 billing, with commitment it will not occur again. *(HCBE also experienced the delay)*.
- Copy of Mr. Mickley's testimony on use of Emergency Paper Ballots in 2008 General Election.
- Confidential update on July 28, 2008 Executive Session action.
- Monthly Budget report.
- Voter Registration Activity Report - August/September *(handed out by Secretary)*.

President asked the Director to summarize registration and procession of new registrants, to date.

Director: Voter registration numbers show we are very busy. Many changes may not be reflected; address and name changes are on last page. Telephone inquiries have increased and daily mail extremely heavy (Filed Absentee Ballots and form requests). The daily activity can not be considered "up-to-date", currently averaging 2-day lag. At this point the only overtime is for training.

President congratulated Director and thanked her for keeping the Board informed.

Coordinating Board Precinct Visitation on Election Day: Board President requested earlier, and Donna Thewes agreed to coordinate Election Day Poll visitations. Ms. Thewes was asked to give her report.

Donna Thewes - Board Members were once again asked to provide a list of Polls visited for Primary. Board President responded to Email. Various sites have not been visited. Members Rankin and Coles will research and provide their list. Ms. Thewes will prepare a visitation schedule for all Member for the General Election.

- **Community Outreach Project:** This Project has included County Fair, Community and Viligage Center Fairs. Charles Coles and Donna Rice coordinated efforts to initiate the College Worker Recruitment Program at Howard Community College (HCC), 3-days in September. Staffers Guy Mickley and Carol Hart also gave assistance. Activities results:

A number of Poll Judges were recruited and approximately 45 - 50 students were registered *(Mr. Coles daughter, HCC Student, completed Judge Application and personally escorted students to register)*.

Mr. Coles reported that Shenell Garrett, Assistant Director of Student Life Office, had spoken to Administrators and was advised students would not be excused to work as Poll Judges. However, it was suggested that students contact their Professor for excused absences. In discussion with Student Government Representative, use of Campus news paper was suggested. Mr. Mickley left his card and expects to follow-up.

Donna Rice added that President and Vice President were unable to excuse students across the board. Regulations similar to the Hatch Act, would be violated. Student may however, be excused by Professors.

The President thanked Mr. Coles and Ms. Rice for their efforts, noting that this is a continuing effort to build a partnership with HCC, that spans elections.

- **In response** to question posed by Ms. Rice on High School registration efforts, Ms Balcerzak noted the League of Women Voters have historically covered that outreach effort. Although we have, on occasion, partnered with them to do Judge Recruitment, at the same time. Board President and Board Secretary are scheduled for HCC, October 3, 2008 Mock Election & Rock the Vote.
- **Charles Coles:** Outreach Judge Recruitments/Registrations was scheduled for the HCC: Guy Mickley and Staffer Carole Hart assisted Members Rice and Coles. Day by the Board. (Schedules will be provided).
- Board President and Board Secretary will cover October 3rd HCC Student's Mock Election.

Having no other matters of discussion, Director's Report was called for.

Director's Report:

Having covered the informational handout package the Director discussed the following:

- Howard County News Release notifying the public that on Columbus Day, October 13, 2008, the Columbia Elections Office will be open from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. (*Director notes in the Release, "This is going to be an historic election, and we want to give the citizens of Howard County every opportunity to make sure they are registered to vote."*)
- Letter from Douglas Gansler, States Attorney General to Ms. Linda Lamone, SBE Re: The concerns of voters who have lost their homes to foreclosure and whether they will be challenged at the polls. Although similar, this issue differs from those governing Jessup detainee registrations and procedures are also in place for processing the homeless.
- Board's discussion of Mr. Gansler's response failed to provide a definitive understanding. Atty. Molinaro, Board Counsel, will note this for the Thursday Attorney's Bi-Weekly Telephone Conference. Director asked Mr. Mickley to bring before the Board an action item.

Mr. Mickley presented a Confidentiality Voter Request, which requires Board approval. Unanimous approval rendered.

Board Counsel explained that a Confidentiality Voter Request is part of a program initiated under the Secretary of State Office, designed to protect victims of domestic violence. It's a new program and has approximately one-hundred (100) person registered. Official Confidentiality Cards are issued. Exception - Board will have their information and must provide for continuous confidential. **Mr. Mickley:** Voters Address will be suppressed in system.

Director's Report Cont'd:

- Director reported that Voter Registration and Judge Recruitment efforts took place at ten (10) locations during August/September. Efforts were successful and supported by Board Members and Staff.
- Upon request from LWV a Mock Election, with Touch Screen Machine, was held for 5th Grade Class at Bellows Spring Elementary Covered by Columbia Flier and Howard County Times. Scheduled to return for remaining two (2) 5th grade classes.
- Along with Deputy Director and Staff, research was conducted to determine locations of reregistered voters that had not used Touch Screen system. In an effort to create a “no fear factor” for General Election, Machines have been located at various Giant Food Markets every Saturday through October 11th. Mock voting will also be available at Columbia Mall, Saturday October 4th and 11th.

(Board Counsel resolved Mall Management's initial insurance concerns SBE Insurance covers local Boards.)

The Board thanked the staff for this creative and useful approach to Voter Education

- Ram's Head Tavern, Savage Mills requested Voter Registration of it October 2nd introduction of “Victory Amber Ale.” It was agreed that there could be registration in the Mills public area. Board Counsel cited and interpreted State regulations, President Balcerzak agreed with Counsel and did not call for a motion.
- Voter Registration Volunteers needed for the Heartlands Senior , October 1st, *(President noted that Donna Thewes & Raymond Rankin volunteered for Primary and she would like to participate this time around)*

Donna Rice questioned whether Vantage House and Morning Side had been visited and specifics of program.

- Board President, Director and Donna Thewes gave responses to question. Summary: Charlotte Davis, in coordinating the Nursing Home Program, contacts every HC Residential or Nursing Home, as well as all active Senior Facilities, to offer this service. They are not obligated to participate. Differentiation between service to Nursing Homes and Residential Facilities was also noted. Both locations are scheduled to be visited as part of the Program. Currently there are ten (10) facilities with fifty (50) or more residents. There are seven (7) facilities, participating with less than fifty residents and Absentee Ballots will be mailed to them.
- Director thanked Board for historical support and called for Volunteers noting that a 2-Member Team, Republican/Democratic, is required. Commitments: Ann Balcerzak - Days; Donna Thewes - Thursdays; Raymond Rankin - Week Days; Charles Coles - Week Days and Vivian Dixon - when needed. Director will provide and Board Secretary will coordinate Schedule.

- Family Expo, October 4, 2008. Board President and Virginia Coles will Team this event. Director will attend Voter Registration-Oakland Mills Diversity Day, also on October 4, 2008.
- Election Readiness: All Election Judges slots have been assigned. Twenty-seven (27) Democratic Alternates are assigned and one hundred eighty (180) interested cards for back-up. Total of five hundred forty-nine (549) Republican Judges assigned, seventeen (17) alternates and forty-two (42) Interest cards.
- Registration ends October 14th at 9:00 PM; input processed into system by 11:30 PM, October 21st. Precinct Register for Election Poll Books - October 22nd. Voting System Logic and Accuracy Test, completed by October 24th. Public Logic and Accuracy Test will take place same day at 10:00 AM in Dorsey Building. Notice will be published and Media will be advised of Testing date, time and place.
- First run of Sample Ballots will be mailed out week of October 20th and second run week of October 27th. Voters will be receiving Sample Ballot 2-3 weeks, sooner than previous elections.
- League of Women Voters is printing a Voting Guide and asked the Director if HCBE wished to place a sample ballot in the Guide at a cost of \$5,025.00. The Director declined because of cost and as noted above, sample ballots will be mailed earlier than before. Director thanked Deputy Mickley and Staff on their preparedness for this election; especially the early printing of sample ballot.

The Board concurred with the Director's decision to forgo participating in the LWV Guide and acknowledged the diligent efforts of the Director and her staff in preparing for this election.

The US Government Accountability Office has selected one hundred (100) counties nationwide, to be evaluated on Election Day. HCBE is among that total. Director stated that she had been interviewed by the GAO in 2006.

Attorney's Report:

- Counsel has not received any feedback on incidents considered to have been a violations that were referred to SBE for investigation. No response is expected prior to General Election. President raised the issue of "statutory limitations," particularly one involving voter casting vote in Baltimore City and Howard County. Matter will be addressed in Attorney's Telephone Conference, as well as Director's reported;
- Concern of LWV on what will be accepted as verification that a felon has completed the conditions of their sentencing thereby allowing registration or reinstatement on the voting rolls.

Interpretive discussion of Douglas Gansler, States Attorney General's letter, in response to Precinct Placements or address used for displaced voters, took place. The Board asked Counsel to ask SBE for reality based guideline for assigning inmates a specific precinct for registration.

New Business:

- Donna Thewes has been asked to address Teacher Association on "Voting Procedures and How the Vote is Counted", at Eggspectation Restaurant, October 20th. Ms Thewes and Director develop a thorough outline of the topic that can be used for other presentations. Board should have Reference Book of Outlines, Presentations and list of Materials used by Members.
- Raymond Rankin asked that the Board be given additional identification badges, now used by the Rovers, that are similar to Sheriff's badges. The Board agreed to getting a free picture identification badge through the County as a first step. Mr. Mickley will follow up on how to get the badges. Voiced concern over having an identification badge that appeared more official
- Donna Rice raised concern over distinction between Member and Substitute Member being badges.

Mr. Mickley will contact County Personnel and make a request to allow the issuance of County Photo ID Badges.

Actions: Board unanimously approved Overall Performance Rating of Director's End of Cycle Evaluation. Relative comments will be added prior to SBE submission

The next meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for October 27, 2008 at 4:00 PM in the Howard County Board of Elections Boardroom. Board Closed and Convened in Executive Session at 6:10 PM.

At 6:20 PM a motion to reconvene was made, seconded and agreed upon. There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously agreed upon. Meeting Adjourned at 6:22 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Signed 10/27/08
 10/27/08

Vivian L. Dixon, Board Secretary

Signed

Ann M. Balcerzak, Board President