

**Tele conference Minutes**  
**Monday, February 22, 2021**  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
18743 N. Frederick Ave Suite 210 Gaithersburg MD 20879

APPROVED

**In Virtual Attendance:**

James Shalleck, President  
Nahid Khozeimeh, Vice President  
David A. Naimon, Secretary  
Diane Nash Dillon  
Elisse W. Barnes  
Alan Banov  
Jacqueline L. Philips

**Board Attorney:**

Kevin Karpinski

**Staff:**

Margaret Jurgensen, Director (on site)  
Alysoun McLaughlin, Deputy Director (on site)  
Lisa Merino, Administrative Specialist (on site)  
Boris Brajkovic, Voter Services Manager (on site)  
Kera Bumbray, Management and Budget Specialist (on site)  
Janet Ross, Information Technology Manager (on site)  
Christine Rzeszut, Operation Manager (on site)

Audio may be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAQmBOTaCY0>

**Board President Remarks [7:40]**

Mr. Shalleck announced that Barbara Sanders from the League of Women Voters wrote a letter thanking the staff and the Board for an excellent job on the election.

Mr. Naimon informed the Board of the passing of Henry B. Heller. He was known as Hank Heller. He was a delegate from District 19.

**Additions/ Changes to the Agenda [10:32]**

Legislation Committee Report was added under New Business.

**Disclosure of Campaign Contributions [10:26]**

There were no contributions to report.

**Public Comments [11:50]**

There were no public comments.

**Election Director Status Report [12:16]**

Ms. Jurgensen announced that the County Council will be recognizing the Board of Elections tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. for how well the election was conducted. It was to be conducted via the County website.

She added that Mr. Brajkovic sent the monthly statistics at the beginning of the month. A link was sent to the Board regarding the Election Assistance Report for the 2020 election. She noted that the Board of Elections was also informed that the census redistricting data will not be available until September 30, 2021 and reminded the Board that the State Ethics Commission requires the Board Members to file their annual financial disclosures by April 30, 2021.

**Personnel [13:16]**

Ms. Jurgensen reported that temporaries in the IT section continue to work on post election maintenance of the equipment, as well as conducting the State required inventory.

**Budget [13:38]**

The budget spreadsheet was provided in advance. There were no questions.

**Voter Registration [14:07]**

Ms. Jurgensen reported that the manual audit was held on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Brajkovic described the process. He reported that the audit of over 10,000 ballots included ballots from Early Voting, Election Day, Mail in Ballots and Provisional Ballots. Six pairs of teams separated batches of 25 and then took 10 ballots at a time to record ballot accounting. The process went very smoothly and was completed in 2 days. The 2020 General Manual Ballot Tabulation Audit report can be found [here](#).

**Legislation [14:08]**

Mr. Shalleck thanked Ms. Dillon and Mr. Banov for their tireless work on the legislative report. Ms. Dillon discussed her votes on every issue in the report. She voiced her concern upon learning that Mr. Naimon had testified on some of the legislative issues and inquired what the protocol was. Mr. Shalleck stated that Board members could testify in their individual capacities.

Mr. Karpinski added that the protocol has been that if a Board member wishes to testify, they must make it clear they are not testifying on behalf of the Board, but they certainly have a right to express their own individual opinion on a particular piece of legislation. Mr. Naimon said that Delegate Luedtke, who represents District 14 in Montgomery County and is the House Majority Leader, reached out to him and asked him to testify on his bill on early voting. His bill would change the number of early voting locations across the State according to a population formula. That formula would give Montgomery County two additional early voting sites. Mr. Naimon added that he also testified on a bill relating to internet ballot delivery. He added that there must be an easier method for getting ballots to voters who either do not know that they received their ballot or didn't receive their ballot. Mr. Naimon noted he made it very clear that he testified only as an individual.

Mr. Banov thanked Ms. McLaughlin for her work with the legislative report and stated that one bill that the Board could get behind was HB341, which would allow local boards to open absentee ballots up to 14 days before Election Day.

The Board then discussed House Bill 341. Ms. Dillon believes that in-person voting should be the standard. She believes that mail-in ballots are necessary, and she supports that. However, she does not support the bill. Mr. Shalleck asked for Ms. Jurgensen's opinion.

Ms. Jurgensen stated that she strongly supports opening the ballots 28 days prior to the election, especially with the possibility of the implementation of vote by-mail. By Federal Law, the Board must mail out ballots 45 days prior to the election. She added that due to the complexity of the preparation of the equipment for early voting, the entire IT staff will be out in the field setting up 14 early voting centers in a short period of time. She said that fourteen days are insufficient time to conduct the canvass and encouraged the Board to suggest a 28-day lead time to open ballots prior to the election.

Mr. Banov moved that the Board support and amend House Bill 341 to allow local boards the ability to open ballots 14 to 28 days before Election Day. The motion was seconded by Mr. Naimon. Mr. Shalleck, Mrs. Khozeimeh and Ms. Dillon voted against the motion. Mr. Naimon and Dr. Barnes voted for the motion. The motion failed.

Mr. Naimon moved that the Board support and amend House Bill 341 to allow local boards the ability to open ballots 21 days before Election Day. The motion was seconded by Mr. Banov.

The Board discussed the motion. Ms. McLaughlin noted that MAEO supported legislation to permit opening of mailed-in ballots 18 days before the election.

Mr. Shalleck, Mrs. Khozeimeh and Ms. Dillon voted against the motion. Mr. Naimon and Dr. Barnes voted for the bill. The motion failed.

#### **State Board of Elections [1:07:00]**

Ms. Jurgensen reported that the State Board staff advised the Board members that the voting system will be upgraded and that those cost estimates were not included in the FY 22 proposed billing to the local boards. She added that placing candidates' names on one screen is the central upgrade. In addition, the poll book RFP closed on January 29 and the proposals are under review by the State Procurement and the State Board staff. Ms. Ross and Mr. Quarshie are on the committee providing input. The current estimated cost is \$31 million.

#### **Board Attorney Report [1:09:49]**

Mr. Karpinski reported that he is currently working with staff member on a Freedom of Information Act request from an individual who has requested a copy of all the video footage from the drop-boxes throughout Montgomery County. He added that it is unclear what the individual is looking for. Mr. Karpinski will provide a further update at the next meeting.

#### **2020 Presidential Report [1:16:27]**

##### **Operations [1:19:01]**

Mrs. Christine Rzeszut, Operations Technology Manager, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the 2020 Presidential Election Operations. The full presentation can be found [here](#). The report synopsis is posted to the website. Upon the completion of her report, Board members had inquiries.

Mr. Shalleck thanked Mrs. Rzeszut and staff for a job well done on the election.

Mr. Banov asked for the number of staff assigned to curbside voting. Mr. Brajkovic responded that there were about thirty people that worked shifts. Staff reported at 5:30 a.m. and worked until the voting centers closed.

Mr. Naimon inquired if there were small drop-boxes. Ms. Rzeszut responded that there are three small pedestal drop-boxes that the Board of Elections (BOE) owns. The ballot drop boxes used in the 2020 General Election are owned by the State. If BOE were to request more drop boxes, the request would go the State.

Mr. Naimon inquired if there was data on how many ballots were collected at the Executive Office building in the small pedestal drop-box versus the large ballot drop box. Mrs. Rzeszut did not have the information on hand, but agreed to share it. Mr. Naimon suggested that the Board use small drop boxes instead of the yellow ballot bags in locations, because they were more secure and could hold more ballots. Ms. Rzeszut reminded that Board that the placement of ballot drop boxes was determined by the State Board of Elections' security mandates of the box and the use of cameras at the locations.

Mr. Naimon inquired if BOE paid for the floor covering of the gym at the Wheaton Recreation Center; Ms. Bumbray responded that BOE did not have to pay to protect the floors by the requested facilities.

Answering a question by Ms. Dillon about the security of the pedestal drop boxes, Ms. Jurgensen pointed out that they are bolted to two layers of concrete.

#### **New Business [1:57:29]**

Mr. Naimon inquired if Board meetings can be featured and linked on the front page of our website before every meeting. Ms. Ross responded that staff is working with the County DTS to redo the website, but a lot of their resources have been pulled due to COVID. He also noted that if the State Board Calendar could be updated or a link be provided. Mr. Naimon requested that there be a regular report on the website monthly.

#### **Action Items [2:02:20]**

- Website update
- Mr. Karpinski will circulate the FIOA request to the Board.

#### **Approval of Minutes [2:04:14]**

Ms. Khozeimeh moved to approve the minutes of the meetings on September 21, 2020, October 2, 2020 and November 3, 2020, as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dillon. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED

**Adjournment [2:07:52]**

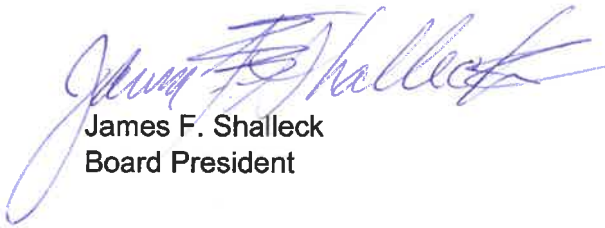
With nothing further to discuss, Ms. Khozeimeh moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dillon and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lisa Merino  
Administrative Specialist II

APPROVED BY THE BOARD



James F. Shalleck  
Board President

