

Montgomery County Board of Elections

Acting Election Director's Report – January 2022

Notice and Distribution of Materials

The agenda for the meeting was posted and provided to Board members, along with draft minutes and the budget spreadsheet, on January 14, 2022.

Action Items from Previous Meeting

Alternate early voting sites. A notice of action was posted on the website after the November Board meeting of the selection of the designation of the East County Community Recreation Center, Upper County Community Recreation Center, and Long Branch Community Recreation Center as alternate early voting sites to be used in case of emergency.

Drop box locations. A notice of action was posted on the website after the December Special Board Meeting of drop box locations selected by the Board for the 2022 Gubernatorial Election.

Order for additional drop boxes. Orders for additional drop boxes were placed with the State Board of Elections consistent with the vote of the Board at the December Special Board Meeting.

Untimely ballot. At the Board's request, staff contacted the voter whose ballot from the 2020 presidential general election had been signed on October 13, 2020, but postmarked in October 2021. The voter indicated that they had deposited the ballot in a drop box at their college campus in Boston, Massachusetts. Staff contacted election officials in Massachusetts and the U.S. Postal Service who indicated they not aware of any systemic issue with ballots from that college.

State Board of Elections

Regulations. The State Board of Elections met on December 16, 2021, and considered final approval of a number of regulations. Those regulations include defining the term "ballot drop box" and updating when a voter registration application or absentee ballot application are considered timely to include submission at an authorized ballot drop box.

Early voting sites. The State Board of Elections approved 13 of the Board's requested 14 early voting sites at its December meeting, and deferred consideration of the 14th site to its January meeting pending formal approval by the Montgomery County Council. The Council took that formal action on January 18, 2022, and the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center is slated for consideration at the next State Board meeting on January 27, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

Electronic pollbooks. The Board of Public Works has rescheduled its consideration of the proposed contract with DemTech for new electronic pollbooks for their next meeting on January 26, 2022. Staff is proceeding with use of the legacy pollbooks for the 2022 gubernatorial primary and general elections. New pollbooks will not be used until the 2024 election.

Budget

Staff circulated a report to the Board on January 14, 2022, reflecting that year to date expenditures for FY22 are \$2,458,005. As is typical for an even-numbered fiscal year, the majority of the department's budget will be expended at the end of the year for the primary election. Staff are currently working with

the Office of Management and Budget to finalize a supplemental budget request to the County Council. Between the uncertainty that is always associated with the state invoice and the fact that many of the expenditures in the Board's supplemental request will not be incurred until the very end of the fiscal year, staff expects OMB to request a supplemental for less than our total projected deficit, with the remainder of the amount handled through a year-end transfer.

The Board's customary meeting with the County Executive on the department's FY23 budget has been tentatively scheduled for January 31, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. Board members will receive the invitation directly from the County Executive's office.

Voter Registration

The Monthly Statistical Report for December was distributed to Board members on January 3, 2022. As of December 31, there were 675,622 active registered voters in Montgomery County and 66,390 inactive voters, for a total voter count of 742,012.

Personnel

New hires. The Board staff welcomes a new bilingual voter registration coordinator, Angel Pinedo, and a new Election Judge Recruiting Coordinator, Aishah Mills-Pherigo.

Promotions. Jerry Quarshie, Information Technology Specialist, has been temporarily promoted to the position of Senior Information Technology Specialist, overseeing the day-to-day work of the IT Division while Janet Ross serves as acting Deputy Election Director. Lisa Merino, Administrative Specialist, has been temporarily promoted to the position of Management and Budget Specialist, managing a wider array of administrative and financial functions for the department.

Temporary detail. The Board staff welcomes Patrick Walsh, CountyStat analyst for the Department of Recreation, who has begun a six-month detail to the Board of Elections to assist in data gathering and analysis and process improvement.

Shared services for contracts and financial transactions. Board staff has entered into an arrangement with the Office of Management and Budget for a new Shared Services team to provide direct support to the Board of Elections in financial processing and contract administration. Shared Services is already successfully providing similar support to other smaller departments within the county. Under the arrangement, the department will retain the vacant position for a Management and Budget Specialist, but will be advertising for a position in a different classification series.

Remaining vacancies. The Board staff is currently conducting interviews for an Election Operations Specialist and a new position for a Vote by Mail Specialist. There are two remaining positions to be advertised for an Office Services Coordinator and a Supply Technician.

Temporary positions. The department currently has 18 temporary employees in the building, primarily in Information Technology and in Election Judge recruiting and training. Interviews are ongoing for positions throughout the department. The number of applicants is lower than usual and the number of positions required has increased with the additional early voting sites and ballot drop boxes. An email solicitation went out to all active Election Judges in our database encouraging them to apply for temporary positions on Friday, January 21.

Telework. Scheduled telework ceased on January 1, 2022. Employee requests for telework are being approved on a situational basis only. N95 masks are available for use by employees and COVID tests are available onsite if needed. Procedures for quarantine and return to work are being followed at the direction of Occupational Medical Services.

Facility Enhancement

On December 23, Board staff obtained approval for requested modifications to the facility. The Department of General Services has assigned a manager who has overall responsibility for the project. Shelving is in stock and will be installed first, as voting equipment has already been delivered that is currently sitting on the floor in the warehouse area. The work will be staged to occur in areas of the building while they are not in use and all work will be completed prior to the printing and mailing of ballots and the start of programming and testing of voting equipment for the election.

Ballot Sorting Equipment

The State Board of Elections has finalized arrangements for counties to leverage an existing state contract to secure inbound ballot envelope sorting and imaging equipment. The selected vendor has conducted site visits with each of the larger counties in the state and provided a bid for equipment that is proposed to pay for itself in labor savings over time. Board staff conducted a process mapping exercise working with a design team under the leadership of the county's Chief Innovation Officer on January 12th to map out the process for the intake of absentee ballots either with or without the proposed equipment, and is currently working with the Office of Management and Budget to determine whether it is feasible to obtain the equipment in time for the 2022 gubernatorial primary election.

Redistricting

On December 7th, the Montgomery County Council adopted a Council redistricting map. The final map includes a split of Precinct 13-40. **MC 26-22**, a delegation bill to amend the Board of Education map to conform to the change in the Council map for the Ken Gar neighborhood in Precinct 13-40, was accepted as a late-filed bill on January 21st. If enacted into law, this bill will allow the Board of Elections to move the affected voters into a neighboring precinct rather than creating a new precinct boundary.

On December 9th, the General Assembly approved a Congressional redistricting plan and on January 20th, the Senate approved **SJ 2**, a legislative redistricting map that will next be considered by the House of Delegates.

Once the remaining layers are final, staff will provide maps of recommended precinct boundary changes to the Board for consideration, along with proposed polling place changes for affected voters.

Legislation

Below is the current status of election legislation in the General Assembly as of January 22, 2022. At the upcoming hearing on January 26, the Maryland Association of Election Officials will be testifying in support of **SB 163**, which would allow absentee ballots to be canvassed at any time after the voter registration deadline, with an amendment to clarify what steps of the canvass and tabulation process can be conducted prior to Election Day. The bill as introduced prohibits tabulation, which is not a defined term but is understood to prohibit printing election results before Election Day.

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MAEO has also been working with the sponsors of **HB 329** and **SB 352**, which would also allow absentee ballots to be opened after the voter registration deadline, but does not include the limitation on tabulating votes before Election Day. These bills would prohibit canvassing during early voting.

SB 158 and **HB 35** represent a legislative initiative of the Maryland Association of Counties, seeking to codify the precedent that voting machines and related systems be a split funding responsibility between the state and counties. It specifies that counties would be required to reimburse the State Board of Elections for 50% of the state's cost of all election-related goods and services mandated by the State Board. Election-related goods and services not mandated by the State Board would be paid for by county funds. The Maryland Association of Election Officials is taking no position on this bill, which also includes a number of other requirements on state election contracts, contract renewals, and change orders including requiring an affirmative vote by the State Board of Elections.

HB 362 is a delegation bill to allow the Montgomery County Council to adopt, by law, a ranked choice voting method or an approval voting method for elections for county offices.

Bill/Chapter (Cross/Chapter)	Title	Sponsor	Current Status
HB0017	Campaign Finance – Recurring Contributions and Donations – Requirements	Delegate Palakovich Carr	In the House - Hearing 1/19 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0030 (SB0329)	Election Law – Polling Sites – Firearms Prohibitions	Delegate Henson	In the House - Hearing 1/19 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0035 (SB0158)	State Board of Elections - Contracts and Invoices - Requirements	Delegate Palakovich Carr	In the House - Hearing 2/01 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0065	Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Bus Stops	Delegate Crosby	In the House - Hearing canceled
HB0093	Candidates for Offices of Municipalities and Common Ownership Communities - Reports of Donations and Disbursements	Delegate Terrasa	In the House - Hearing 1/25 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0099	Election Law – Absentee Ballots – Signature Requirements and Verification	Delegate Long	In the House - Hearing 1/25 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0113	Elections - In-Person Voting - Proof of Identity	Delegate Long	In the House - Hearing 1/25 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0160	Election Law – Party and Elected Public Offices – Prohibition	Delegate Boyce	In the House - Hearing 1/13 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0169	Elections – Voter Registry – Notification and Removal of Deceased Individuals	Delegate Hartman	In the House - Hearing canceled
HB0181	Declaration of Rights - Religious Freedom, Religious Tests, and Oaths and Affirmations	Delegate Hill	In the House - Hearing 2/01 at 2:30 p.m.

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HB0201 (SB0284)	Election Law – Voter Registration Drive – High Schools	Delegate Kelly	In the House - Hearing 2/01 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0212	Election Law - Signature Verification of Absentee Ballots and Absentee Ballot Applications and Ballot Canvassing	Delegate Parrott	In the House - Hearing 2/01 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0291 (SB0101)	Election Law - Contested Elections	Delegate Kaiser	In the House - Hearing 2/01 at 1:00 p.m.
HB0306	Election Law - Circuit Court Judges - Nonpartisan General Elections	Delegate Qi	In the House - First Reading Judiciary and Ways and Means
HB0313	Election Law - Recall Elections	Delegate Novotny	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0320 (SB0063)	General Assembly - Residency Requirement - Enforcement - Factors	Delegate Wilkins	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0327	Elections - Election Judges - Minimum Compensation	Delegate Jones, D.	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0328	Elections - Polling Place Location Restrictions - Repeal	Delegate Jones, D.	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0329 (SB0352)	Election Law - Ballots - Processing and Reporting Procedures	Delegate Moon	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0336	Harford County - County Superintendent - Election and Recall Procedures and Compensation	Delegate Impallaria	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0340 (SB0015)	Election Law - Campaign Finance - Enforcement	Delegate Jones, D.	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means and Judiciary
HB0344	Election Law - Campaign Finance - Contributions (Prohibiting Pay to Play Act of 2022)	Delegate Palakovich Carr	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0347	Baltimore County - County Superintendent - Election and Recall Procedures and Compensation	Delegate Boteler	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HB0362	Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 13-22	Montgomery County Delegation	In the House - First Reading Ways and Means
HJ0001 (SJ0003)	Maryland Citizens' Legislative Districting Plan of 2022	Speaker	In the House - First Reading House Rules and

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			Executive Nominations
SB0015 (HB0340)	Election Law - Campaign Finance - Enforcement	Senator Jackson	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0063 (HB0320)	General Assembly – Residency Requirement – Enforcement – Factors	Senator Kelley	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0073	General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office	Senator Lam	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0088	Election Law - Deadline for Selection of Lieutenant Governor	Senator Pinsky	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0101 (HB0291)	Election Law - Contested Elections	Senator Kagan	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0112	Election Law - False Ballot Drop Boxes - Criminal Penalty	Senator Kagan	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0158 (HB0035)	State Board of Elections - Contracts and Invoices - Requirements	Senator Kagan	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0163	Election Law – Ballots – Processing and Reporting Procedures	Senator Kagan	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0239	Election Law - Campaign Finance - Protection of Contributor	Senator Simonaire	In the Senate - Hearing 1/26 at 1:30 p.m.
SB0284 (HB0201)	Election Law - Voter Registration Drive - High Schools	Senator Washington	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
SB0285	Election Law - Campaign Signs - Prohibitions	Senator Hough	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
SB0329 (HB0030)	Election Law - Polling Sites - Firearms Prohibitions	Senator Waldstreicher	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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SB0352 (HB0329)	Election Law - Ballots - Processing and Reporting Procedures	Senator Lam	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
SB0358	Public Financing Act – State Senate and House of Delegates	Senator Pinsky	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Budget and Taxation
SJ0003 (HJ0001)	Maryland Citizens' Legislative Districting Plan of 2022	President	In the Senate - Hearing 1/18 at 3:00 p.m.

Website

Each division is reviewing their content on the department website and has been directed to provide updates for the 2022 election. A meeting is scheduled with the Department of Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions on January 28th to discuss modifications to the website layout.

Outreach

Board staff is currently working with high schools to facilitate a voter registration and Election Judge recruitment campaign from February 8th to May 17th, 2022, working with community partners to develop a virtual empowerment calendar, and working with food bank distribution centers to deliver bilingual voting information.

Future Vote recruitment is scheduled to begin in mid-February, to coincide with the scheduled kickoff of Election Judge recruitment.

Below is a table of recent outreach events.

DATE	EFFORT	LOCATION	CITY	ZIP
10/3/2021	2021 Takoma Park Street Festival	Takoma Park	Takoma Park	20902
10/9/2021	MCPS Information Fair	Paint Branch HS	Burtonsville	20903
10/9/2021	Hispanic Heritage Festival	BlackRock Ctr for the Arts	Germantown	20874
10/14/2021	Innovator Fair	Wheaton Community Recreation Center	Silver Spring	20877
10/23/2021	Community Fall Festival	North Potomac/Nancy Dacek Community Ctr	Rockville	20850
10/26/2021	Voter Empowerment Training	Leisure World	Silver Spring	20902
11/3/2021	Voter Empowerment & Recruitment	Montgomery College-Rockville	Rockville	20837

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11/6/2021	Emancipation Day	Sandy Spring Slave Museum	Sandy Spring	20854
11/7/2021	Our Own Voice Potluck	Rockville Town Square	Rockville	20866
11/9/2021	County Executive Hybrid Budget Hearing	Mid-County	Wheaton	VIRTUAL
11/17/2021	Fall Film Festival	Gandhi Brigade Youth Media	Silver Spring	20866
11/18/2021	Student Empowerment & Recruitment Virtual Training	Springbrook High School	VIRTUAL	20832
11/18/2021	Fall Film Festival	Gandhi Brigade Youth Media	Silver Spring	20910
11/19/2021	Student Empowerment & Recruitment	Springbrook High School	Silver Spring	20904
11/22/2021	Voter Empowerment & Recruitment	National Center for Children and Families	Bethesda	20817
11/23/2021	C-4's Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service	The Baitur Rehman	Silver Spring	20905
11/27/2021	Voter Empowerment & Recruitment	Westfield Wheaton Mall	Wheaton	20902
12/4/2021	Holiday Bazaar	Bauer Drive Community Center	Rockville	20853
12/11/2021	Voter Empowerment & Recruitment	Westfield Wheaton Mall	Wheaton	20902
12/13/2021	MCPS Job Fair	MCPS HR Office	Rockville	20850
12/18/2021	Voter Empowerment & Recruitment	Westfield Montgomery Mall	Bethesda	20817
12/22/2021	C19 Vaccination & Toy/Food Box Giveaway	Adventist Health Care	Silver Spring	20904
1/11/2022	Virtual 50+ Employment Expos	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL
1/15/2022	MoComCon	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL
1/17/2022	Montgomery County MLK Celebration	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL
1/20/2022	Montgomery College Student Empowerment	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL	VIRTUAL