

## Montgomery County Board of Elections Election Director's Report – March 2023

### Notice and Distribution of Materials

Draft minutes of the February 27, 2022, meeting and Agenda for March 20, 2023, meeting were circulated to the Board on March 10, 2023.

The Agenda for March 20, 2023, meeting was posted on the website on March 10, 2023.

The Director's Report, the Budget documents, and Action Items from the previous Board meeting were shared with the Board on March 16, 2023.

### Action Items from Previous Meetings

1. **The Final CTLC Report** was shared with the Board, and it will be posted on the website under March 20, 2023, Board meeting documents.

2. **Working Groups**

a) **Provisional/SDR Forms**

SBE is working in conjunction with the University of Baltimore to review the State forms. The University of Baltimore staff is focused on usability, while the elections staff is emphasizing content. Forms that are in focus are: Provisional Ballot Application and Same Day Registration Form, Voter Update Form, Voter Assistance Form, Request for Polling Place Change or Mail-in Ballot, Mail-in Ballot: Designation of Agent.

b) **Election Judges Best Practices**

The Working Group was assembled to share lessons learned from the 2022 election cycle and to seek suggestions and best practices across LBEs. Key Topics include: Recruitment - Social Media, Outreach at community events; Poll workers engagement; Training Materials/Manuals and Online Training Module; Canvass Workers; Voting Equipment; Polling Place Evaluators.

c) **Voter Registration and Mail In Voting**

The Working Group conducted a review of lessons learned from 2022 election cycle, with the focus on: mailing schedule, ballot tracking, envelopes design, permanent mail in voting confirmations, forms and inserts, bounced emails, ballot processing (receiving, batching and canvass), and voter communication. Regarding Voter Registration, the topics included: list maintenance, developing an online voter registration cancellation form, voter communication. Efficiency regarding processing of both voter registration and mail in ballots / applications was also discussed.

d) **Voting System & Electronic Pollbook**

SBE reached out to all LBEs to gather staff input on the following issues: Documentation (Checklist & Guidelines), Voting Equipment, ES&S Support, Ballot Duplication, Electronic Pollbook, and Cradlepoint Router.

3. **Eligible but not registered**

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SBE sends out two post cards prior to the election to eligible but unregistered voters. The first is a postcard sharing the voter registration deadline. This list comes from ERIC, by comparing MVA data against registration voter data to identify potential voters who are eligible but not registered to vote. The second mailing is sent to eligible but unregistered voters to inform them about same day registration. This list comes from MVA.

#### 4. Election Management System

The system is a county system that enables voters to sign up to serve as Election Judges, schedule training and be assigned to a polling place to serve. Additionally, the system enables students to sign up for the Future Vote program and houses the polling place information for an election cycle.

The staff is working with TEBS (county department for IT solutions) to upgrade the system:

- To be up to date with improvements introduced across county government agencies.
- To improve Early Voting scheduling.
- To improve communication with applicants via text messages.
- To integrate online training with applications processing in one place.
- To create more user-friendly processes for both applicants and the staff.

#### Voter Registration Statistics

**Monthly Statistical Report.** The Report for February 2023 was distributed to Board members on March 1, 2023. As of that date, there were 677,653 active registered voters in Montgomery County and 58,498 inactive voters, for a total voter count of 736,151.

#### Personnel

**Permanent positions:** The target start date for selected candidate for the Office Services Coordinator position with Voter Services is April 10.

The advertisement of an Administrative Specialist II position, responsible for budgetary and financial aspects of the department, has been closed. The Staff is awaiting the list of well qualified candidates from the HR Department to commence internal review and proceed with scheduling interviews.

The IT Technician III position has been advertised and it will remain open until March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Temporary positions:** A limited number of temporary team members remains on the payroll while current vacancies for BOE permanent positions are filled to assist with a variety of deadline-driven tasks, such as post-election inventory, voting equipment maintenance, preparation for the new pollbooks and outreach.

#### Budget

A Document presenting FY23 Board of Elections Expenditures through March 15, 2023, has been shared with the Board. The expenditures since the last Board meeting were in line with the forecast.

On March 15, 2023, the County Executive recommended a supplemental appropriation to the BOE FY23 budget in amount of \$4,244,911. The appropriation will fund unbudgeted expenditures due to the postponement of the 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election, which resulted in two elections occurring in the same fiscal year. This increase is needed because between March 15, 2022, and October 7, 2022, the Court of Appeals issued orders postponing the 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election due to redistricting litigation and extending the timeframe for processing Vote by Mail ballots in the 2022 Gubernatorial General Election.

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Also on March 15, 2023, the County Executive presented the budget for FY24. The total recommended FY24 Operating Budget for the Montgomery County Board of Elections is \$12,239,983, an increase of \$1,609,656 or 15.14 percent from the FY23 Approved Budget of \$10,630,327.

**Legislation**

The Board's monthly meeting is on crossover day, the deadline for each chamber of the Maryland General Assembly to send bills to the other chamber. The status of all election bills under consideration by the General Assembly is presented in the document shared with the Board. As of March 16, the bills crossing over appear to include:

- Senate Bill 379/House Bill 535 to authorize the Vote by Mail canvass to begin prior to Election Day;
- Senate Bill 339/House Bill 642 amending the procedures for recounts; and
- Senate Bill 925/House Bill 1200 establishing minimum compensation for Election Judges.

Senate Bill 379, as amended, would set the date of the 2024 Presidential Primary Election as the second Tuesday in May. Both Senate Bill 379 and House Bill 535 also provide by law for electronic means of signing a missing Vote by Mail ballot oath and establishes a two-day deadline for vote by mail ballots to be logged as received. The Senate Bill would extend that deadline to four days for web delivery ballots. The procedures in Senate Bill 339 and House Bill 642 would require other counties to conduct their recounts in a manner similar to Montgomery County. Senate Bill 925 would establish a minimum pay of \$250 for Election Judges; House Bill 1200 would increase that minimum to \$350 for Election Judges who have served previously.

**Sections’ activities:**

**Lessons learned sessions:** The BOE staff continues its engagement with SBE and other LBEs through Working Groups that are looking into different programmatic areas and reviewing lessons learned from the 2022 Election Cycle.

**Voter Services:** Voter Registration team continues its daily List Maintenance activities that include processing of all incoming records, provided directly by the voters, or received from DHMH, Jury Commission, Courts or through ERIC.

Voter Services supports Montgomery County localities in implementation of their municipal elections. Support includes providing the list of registered voters and Drop Boxes. BOE engages with the City of Rockville through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), as support includes training, on-site support and processing and scanning of returned mail in ballots. So far, we have received the below dates for scheduled municipal elections.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Election Date</b>
Brookeville	5/9/2023
Chevy Chase View	5/11/2023
Chevy Chase Village	5/20/2023
Friendship Heights	5/8/2023
Gaithersburg	11/7/2023
Garrett Park	5/1/2023
Kensington	6/5/2023
Laytonsville	5/1/2023

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Martins Additions	5/10/2023
North Chevy Chase	5/2/2023
Rockville	11/7/2023
Somerset	5/9/2023
Town of Chevy Chase	5/2/2023
Washington Grove	5/13/2023

**Products and Services:** Following multiple inquiries and discussion with SBE, staff will start providing a Permanent Vote By Mail List as a part of BOE Products and Services. The new product will be available upon request and further details will be posted on the BOE website.

**IT Section:** Temporary IT Staff is performing Post Election Maintenance, inventory and decommissioning of the pollbooks in preparation for the new pollbook solution for the 2024 election cycle. The temporary IT Staff will perform User Acceptance testing on the new printers once PEM is completed.

The BOE Information Technology Specialist has been selected by SBE to be a member of the pollbook subcommittee to review the implementation of the new pollbooks.

IT Manager is continuing to work with TEBS to develop a solution to replace the Election Worker module. The IT Staff is also continuing to work with the Recruitment staff to update the software requirements with requested enhancements for the Election Worker module.

**Operations Section:** The Staff continues to prepare the 2022 unused ballots for shredding according to the State Board of Elections document retention and disposal schedule. Since the last Board meeting, the total of 19,700 pounds of unused ballots and other election related materials were shredded. The 2020 materials have not been shredded yet pending resolution of the court process.

Recruitment staff is actively involved in the reassessment and redesign of the Election Worker recruitment software. This task is expected to continue through April.

Staff has reached an initial agreement with the Montgomery College Germantown Campus for use of their Conference venue for canvassing of mail in ballots during 2024 and 2026 election cycles. Staff will work with the Montgomery College Germantown Campus on finalization of the agreement once the date for the 2024 Primary election is set. Staff would like to express their appreciation for the so far received support and it is looking forward to future cooperation with the MC Germantown Campus.

**Upcoming Meetings / Events**

**JAD:** The Staff is taking part in the Joint Application Development working meetings with SBE and other LBEs at the end of March. The three-day session will focus on updating MDVOTERS based on the lessons learned and identified needs.