

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

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Draft minutes of the March 20, 2023, meeting and the Agenda for the April 17, 2023, meeting were circulated to the Board on April 7, 2023.

The Agenda for the meeting was posted on the website on April 12, 2023.

The Director's Report, the Budget document, and Action Items from the previous Board meeting were shared with the Board on April 13, 2023.

Action Items from Previous Meetings

1. CTCL Grant related Action Items

- a. **The County Council Resolution** for a Special Appropriation to the FY21 of \$801,912.50 was shared with the Board and it will be posted on the website under April 17, 2023, Board meeting documents.
- b. **CTCL grant announcement** - Copies of the emails that announced CTCL grants as well as a web posting by the National Association of Counties were provided to the Board.

2. **Working Groups** – A more detailed presentation of the items that were discussed at the working groups was shared with the Board.

3. **Recount Cost** - Staff estimated the cost of the 2022 Primary Election Recount to be \$157,449.

Voter Registration Statistics

Monthly Statistical Report. The Report for March 2023 was distributed to Board members on April 3, 2023. As of that date, there were 676,753 active registered voters in Montgomery County and 60,872 inactive voters, for a total voter count of 737,625.

State Board Of Elections: The State Board of Elections conducted its regular audit of the administration of the 2022 Primary and General Gubernatorial Elections in Montgomery County. The findings indicate proper performance and require no need for future corrections in the following areas of election process:

- Logic and Accuracy (L&A) Testing
- Voting Unit & Pollbook Allocation
- On-time Opening
- Voting Systems Verification for General Elections
- Issuance of "Offline" Provisional Ballots
- Election Judge Training
- Polling Place Evaluation Program
- Accessibility by Individuals with Disabilities
- Ballot Drop Off Box Procedures
- Post Primary Election Audit – Mail In and Provisional
- Voters with Multiple Voting Credits
- Canvassing Minutes

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- Provisional Data Review
- Mail-In Ballot Data Review

SBE identified an instance where BOE inadvertently uploaded a draft version of the Voting System Verification workbook, and recognized upon receiving the final version of the workbook that:

- The voting system verification was properly performed prior to certifying the primary election.
- The audit of precincts with a discrepancy between the number of voters checked in and the number of ballots cast was conducted properly for the 2022 primary election.

SBE identified a missing Closing Summary Report for one precinct for the primary election, that has since been provided to SBE.

A Ballot Cart Security Certificate from one early voting site for day eight for the general election was not provided, while security seals for each ballot-carts transport trucks were verified by Board of Elections personnel upon loading and upon removing materials. As a response the Staff will review internal procedures and ensure that this paperwork is properly organized for the 2024 election cycle.

The review notes some Incomplete Election Judge Paperwork. This finding will be addressed going forward by reincorporating the pertinent exercises in our mandatory hands-on training.

The SBE review indicates that the incorrect reason was given for a single properly rejected mail in ballot in the general election. A corrected copy of the workbook has since been uploaded to the SBE.

The review indicates that BOE did not correct the email addresses and reissue a ballot within three days for a total of twenty-five web delivery ballots between the primary and the general election. These ballots could not be reissued using the voter's preferred delivery method within the given timeframe as voters did not respond timely to attempts to contact them for an alternate delivery method. Although the timeframe was longer than three days, all email addresses were either corrected or the delivery method was changed to mail a ballot to each voter.

Personnel

Permanent positions: Ms. Amy Reams has been selected to the Office Services Coordinator position with Voter Services. She joined the team in permanent capacity on April 9, 2023. Ms. Reams has previously served in a temporary capacity and as an Election Judge for almost a decade.

Staff is preparing to commence interviewing for the Administrative Specialist II position, responsible for budgetary and financial aspects of the department.

The IT Technician III position closed on March 30th, 2023. The Staff is awaiting the list of well qualified candidates from the HR Department to commence internal review and proceed with scheduling interviews.

The three IT Technician II positions will be advertised the week of April 17, 2023, and will remain open for the period of three weeks.

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.

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Budget

A Document presenting FY23 Board of Elections Expenditures through April 12, 2023, has been shared with the Board. The expenditures since the last Board meeting were in line with the forecast.

As previously reported, on March 15, 2023, the County Executive recommended a supplemental appropriation to the BOE FY23 budget in the 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. 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.

A County Council hearing on both supplemental appropriation for FY23 and the CE recommended budget for FY24 will be held on April 27, 2023.

Legislation

The Maryland General Assembly adjourned sine die on April 10. The following bills were passed by both chambers and will be presented to the governor for signature:

Senate Bill 379/House Bill 535 reschedules the 2024 presidential primary election for the second Tuesday in May (May 14). It provides for the canvass of vote by mail ballots to begin eight business days before the first day of early voting and establishes that when an individual returns more than one ballot, the ballot that is counted is the first ballot that the local Board determines is legally sufficient. It also codifies the existing State Board requirement that election results for early voting, vote by mail, and provisional ballots be reported by precinct, creates a legal requirement for allowing ballot oath signature curing by text, and requires that ballots requested at least 60 days before an election be mailed at least 43 days before the election. It also sets deadlines for recording ballots as received in the statewide voter registration system (within two days for standard by-mail ballots and four days for printed-from-home ballots).

House Bill 410 requires each local Board to submit a polling place plan to the State Board for approval at least six months before each statewide primary election. This plan is to include an analysis of demographic and voter behavior information for each precinct, as well as information on other available suitable buildings within the precinct boundary. It also requires 14 days' advanced notice of a meeting to change the location of any polling place and specifies that interested individuals and organizations must be provided an opportunity to testify.

House Bill 1200 established a floor for Election Judge stipends of \$250 per day for inexperienced Election Judges, \$350 per day for those who have served previously, and \$50 for training. The State Board is required to reimburse each local Board for \$50 of the extra compensation provided to returning Election Judges.

Sections' activities:

Voter Services: The 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, the Jury Commission, Courts or through ERIC.

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At the end of 2022, two political parties (Working Class and Green) lost their recognized status with the State. Subsequently, the change was made in MDVOTERS for all registered voters affiliated with those two parties, from “Working Class” or “Green Party” to “Other- Working Class or Green Party”. In addition to this change, a letter was sent to all registered voters of these parties, informing them of the change. The Voter Registration team prepared and mailed a total of 1,627 letters (Working Class – 497, Green Party – 1130).

Voter Services supports Montgomery County localities in implementation of their municipal elections. Support includes providing the list of registered voters and may also include 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. In **bold** are updates compared to input provided in the March Director’s Report:

Municipality	Election Date
Garrett Park	5/1/2023
Laytonsville	5/1/2023
Glen Echo	5/1/2023
Barnesville	5/1/2023
North Chevy Chase	5/2/2023
Town of Chevy Chase	5/2/2023
Friendship Heights	5/8/2023
Brookeville	5/9/2023
Somerset	5/9/2023
Village of Chevy Chase, Section 5	5/9/2023
Village of Chevy Chase, Section 3	5/9/2023
Martins Additions	5/10/2023
Chevy Chase View	5/11/2023
Washington Grove	5/13/2023
Chevy Chase Village	5/20/2023
Kensington	6/5/2023
Gaithersburg	11/7/2023
Rockville	11/7/2023
Poolesville	11/5/2024
Takoma Park	11/5/2024

IT Section:

Temporary IT Staff has completed Post Election Maintenance and are continuing to decommission the pollbooks and pack them for return to SBE. In addition, the Temporary IT Staff is working with ES&S to test the updated software for the RCN sites used on Election Day to transmit results.

The IT Manager is continuing to work with TEBS to develop a solution to replace the Election Resource Management System. The software enhancements for the Election Worker module have been discussed

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and finalized with the Recruitment staff. The IT Manager will begin working with the Future Vote Coordinator and Operations staff to update the software requirements with requested enhancements for the Future Vote and Polling Place modules of the Election Resource Management System.

Outreach:

Staff has prepared a plan that includes 78 confirmed in-person Outreach events until October 2023. We are currently collaborating with Montgomery College, Washington Adventist University, MCPS, Strathmore, the City of Rockville and the Department of Recreation in planning, scheduling and conducting these outreach events. The general population, seniors and soon-to-be high school graduates are being engaged. Efforts are focused on voter registration and election worker recruitment.

Operations Section: The Staff continues to shred the 2022 unused ballots, with another 8525 pounds of paper shred since the last Board meeting.

The Operation Section is supplying items to municipalities for conduct of their election. The following arrangements have been made so far:

- Friendship Heights – currently using a pedestal ballot drop box
- Town of Chevy Chase -- currently using a pedestal ballot drop box
- Village of Chevy Chase – scheduled to pick up a box on April 24th
- City of Rockville – plans to use four ballot drop boxes during the fall election.
- City of Gaithersburg – plans to use:
 - 12 Plexiglas shields
 - 20 voting booths
 - 2 ADA voting booths

Upcoming Meetings / Events

County Council Hearing on FY23 Supplemental Appropriation and the CE Recommended FY24 Budget scheduled for April 27, 2023.