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

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Draft minutes of October 16, 2023, meeting was distributed to the Board on November 13, 2023.

The Agenda for the November 20, 2023, meeting was posted on the Board of Elections web site on November 14, 2023 and shared with the Board.

The Director's Report, the budget document, and meeting materials were shared with the Board on November 16, 2023.

Action Items from Previous Meetings

1. Blank ballots from a Ballot Marking Device

2. More info on untimely ballots

Voter Registration Statistics:

Monthly Statistical Report for October 2023 was distributed to Board members on November 2, 2023, and published on the BOE's website. As of the end of October 2023, there were 680,376 active registered voters in Montgomery County and 64,389 inactive voters, for a total voter count of 744,765.

State Board of Elections (SBE):

Staff submitted required documentation for 14 early voting sites, unanimously approved by the Board, to the State Board of Election for review and approval. Montgomery County Early Voting sites are scheduled to be on Agenda of the SBE's November 30, 2023, meeting.

Staff have finalized and submitted the required Polling Place Plan and corresponding documentation for 234 polling places to the State Board of Elections for approval. Staff also completed and submitted required documentation for 58 drop boxes as approved by the Board.

Municipal elections

Staff provided requested support to City of Rockville Board of Elections for their municipal elections. Staff provided a team to process, canvass, scan, and tabulate Rockville's mail in and provisional ballots. As per established MoU, Montgomery County Board of Elections leased out some election equipment as well.

Staff provided voter registration lists to Gaithersburg to support their local elections and processed their provisional ballots as well.

Personnel

Permanent positions:

Two successful candidates for the Office Service Coordinators positions with Voter Registration will officially join the team as of December 4, 2023.

The Staff has completed interviews for the Program Manager II – Voter Services position. Successful candidate has been selected, and onboarding process is currently being conducted by the County's Office of Human Resources.

The Department has scheduled interviews for two IT Technician II position. Onboarding is expected in December.

Department prepared documentation to advertise the Voter Education and Training Specialist position. Interviews and onboarding are expected in December.

Department prepared documentation to advertise the Office Service Coordinator - Candidate Filing position with Voter Services Section. Interviews and onboarding are expected in December.

Temporary positions:

All Sections are conducting interviews for Election Aide II positions (temporary positions) for the 2024 Presidential Election Cycle. Even though onboarding of successful candidates will take place from December 2023 through March 2024, the Staff is aiming to complete selection process early to the extent possible, providing ample time to selected candidates to complete mandatory medical and background checks.

Budget

The attached Budget Document reflects the approved Fiscal Year 2024 Budget and Department's spending through the end of October 2023. Going forward, the Staff will produce for the Board to review a budget document at the end of each month, which should provide us with a better comparison of budget expenditures over time.

Sections' Activities

Voter Services
The Voter Registration team continues its daily processing of paper and electronic voter registrations, and list maintenance activities which include processing of all incoming records provided directly by the voters or received from DHMH, the Jury Commission, Courts or through ERIC. Additionally, Voter Registration team processed Same Day Registrations and Provisional ballots for Rockville and Gaithersburg municipal elections.

Mail-in Voting team provided support to Rockville municipal elections by onboarding temporary team members who processed all Rockville municipal elections mail in ballots. Additionally, Vote By Mail Specialist supported canvass of Rockville's mail in ballots.

Two candidates have filed so far for Board of Education contests while we have provided all necessary documents and instructions to another three potential applicants.

IT Section

IT permanent and temporary Staff completed updating the software and performed maintenance on the legacy pollbooks that will be used for the 2024 Presidential Election Cycle.

IT Manager is continuing to work with the Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) department on the implementation of the replacement election worker and future vote portal. TEBS and BOE Staff have begun unit testing of the election worker portal in October and continue to test the functionality with a new software release every two weeks. Testing for the Future Vote portal will begin the week of November 20th.

IT permanent and temporary Staff supported Rockville municipal elections by providing scanning and tabulation of the ballots.

Operations Section

As reported in the last Director's Report, MCPS had assigned a different date for the Advance Placement testing in 2024, as it was initially scheduled to overlap with the 2024 Presidential Primary Election Day. However, MCPS could not move the date of IB testing that is scheduled on the same day. MCPS's initial proposal was to organize IB testing in two clusters and utilize Bethesda Chevy Chase (BCC) and Watkins Mill High Schools.

Staff met with MCPS colleagues, reviewed various options and completed a field survey before reaching the following agreement: BOE will utilize both BCC HS and Watkins Mill HS as polling places as originally planned and approved by the Board. MCPS will organize clustered IB testing in two schools – Blair HS (not used on Election Day by BOE) and Seneca Valley HS. In Seneca Valley (reportedly the largest high school building in Maryland), BOE will use the same room on the ground floor and the same entrance for polling place as in 2022 elections while MCPS will use the main entrance (not used by BOE) and testing will be organized at upper two levels. Voters and students will be separated on different building levels and activities should not disrupt each other. Nevertheless, BOE will provide appropriate signage and a Greeter (election worker) to assist with directions and foot traffic.

Montgomery County Board of Election has conducted Election Day voting for Precinct 04-34 at the Presbyterian Church at Shady Grove for over a decade. However, correspondence we recently received from the church leadership announced that this location will not be available to serve as a polling place going forward. Staff is surveying available locations within the precinct to have a proposal ready for the Board's approval in December.

Recruitment and Election Support

Recruitment continues to process Election Worker applications, review the recruitment processes for the upcoming election and support Outreach Program by participating in scheduled outreach events.

Since October Board meeting, the Election Workers Recruitment Team sent out the Election Workers' Fall Newsletter to 10,119 individuals that are in active status in our system. The Recruitment Section sent out either postcards or emails to 1,705 individuals who expressed an interest to serve as election workers.

Interviewing is completed for the Recruitment staff, and it is expected that there will be a full complement of Recruitment temporary staff by mid-January 2024.

Meetings / events

Attended meetings / events
October 19, 2023: Board members, Board Attorney, Election Director, and Staff attended the 2023 Biennial meeting of Maryland Election Officials.

October 29, 2023: Board President and Election Director attended the Open House of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County. During his remarks, Election Director provided an overview of preparations for 2024 election cycle and reflected on Board's *continuity of service* approach regarding approved Early Voting Centers, Election Day Polling Places and Mail-In Ballot Drop Boxes

November 15, 2023: The new Maryland State Election Administrator visited Montgomery County Board of Elections, met with the Staff, discussed ongoing preparations for the 2024 elections, and inquired about the overall available warehouse space.