

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025**

### **MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

#### **In-Person Attendance Board Members:**

David A. Naimon, President

Daniel A. Koroma, Vice President

Amoretta (Amie) M. Hoeber, Secretary

Alexander C. Vincent, Board Member

Margie C. Delao, Substitute Member

Lawrence J. Halloran, Substitute Member

#### **Virtual Attendance Board Members:**

Keyna I. Anyiam, Board Member

#### **In-Person Attendance Board Attorney:**

Kevin Karpinski

#### **In-Person Staff Attendance:**

Boris Brajkovic, Election Director

Michelle Gonda, Vote-by-Mail and Canvassing Program Manager

Philip Jackson, Outreach, Recruitment, and Training Manager

Lisa Merino-Dean, Administrative Specialist

Sandra Prudenti, Voter Services Manager

Janet Ross, Voting Systems and Information Technology Manager

Mindy Williams, Elections Operations Manager

Gilberto Zelaya, Outreach Coordinator/Public Information Officer

A video of the meeting may be found on YouTube at the link below:

[https://youtu.be/b0ytpZeYv\\_w?si=Dhx\\_HKP9nt\\_F0nuT](https://youtu.be/b0ytpZeYv_w?si=Dhx_HKP9nt_F0nuT)

#### **Convene Board of Elections Meeting (0:07)**

Mr. Naimon called the meeting of the Board of Elections to order and declared a quorum present

#### **President's Remarks (0:25)**

Mr. Naimon thanked the Montgomery County Council and the Montgomery County Executive for their unanimous approval of the use of 14 Early Voting Centers for the 2026 gubernatorial election cycle. In June, our Board unanimously approved the staff's proposal to return to all 14 early voting sites that were used in the 2024 presidential election cycle, which is subject to final approval by the Maryland State Board of Elections.

Mr. Naimon reported that he gave a presentation to the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee on election statistics and that he looks forward to delivering the same presentation to the Republican Central Committee and other groups that are interested.

Mr. Naimon announced that Mr. Joseph M. Griffin, the Montgomery County Register of Wills, a deeply committed public servant, had passed away. He noted that the Judges of the Montgomery County Orphans Court will select an individual to fill the position for the remainder of the term. Additionally, Mr. Naimon informed the Board that Ms. Suzan Gildenhorn, a longtime friend, mentor, and local advocate for the disabled and their families, passed away recently.

Mr. Naimon gave the floor to Mr. Koroma, who shared the news that his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Elliott-Bavor, passed away at the end of July. Mr. Koroma shared his mother's story of resilience, courage, and strength that touched the lives of many and solidified her role as a steadfast pillar in the Koroma family.

**Additions/Changes to the Agenda (11:50)**

No additions or changes to the agenda were requested.

**Disclosure of Campaign Contributions and Fundraiser Attendance (12:00)**

No disclosures were made.

**Public Comments (12:10)**

No public comments were submitted.

**Election Director's Report (13:10)**

The Election Director's Report can be found [at this link](#).

Mr. Vincent asked Mr. Brajkovic for clarification regarding the evaluation of the 2026 polling places for accessibility. Mr. Brajkovic responded that staff is surveying locations to ensure the polling places are ADA-compliant and that facilities meet operational needs for the upcoming elections. Mr. Naimon asked if the surveys are submitted separately or as part of the election plan. Mr. Brajkovic confirmed that these surveys are included in the election plan submitted to the State Board for approval. Mr. Naimon asked that since the polling locations submitted are the same as previous years, if the board is confident that the surveys will be approved. Mr. Brajkovic stated that they are confident but always conduct location checks in case there are site changes that need to be addressed. Mr. Vincent asked about the remediation process when and if any accessibility issues are found at a polling place. Mr. Brajkovic responded that Ms. Williams works with our partners at the sites as well as with MCPS and other governing agencies to rectify any identified issues. One of the goals for conducting all the surveys well ahead of the 2026 election cycle is to maximize the time in which any identified issues can be resolved and plan for any temporary adjustments that might be needed on Election Day.

Mr. Halloran asked about the status of Westland Middle School following the damage to the building that occurred during storms in June of 2025. Mr. Brajkovic and Ms. Williams responded that the school is operational and there are no concerns regarding the incident impacting the school's operations for the 2026 election cycle.

Mr. Naimon asked about the process of removing Mr. Joseph M. Griffin from the 2026 ballot, as he had previously filed as a Register of Wills candidate. Mr. Brajkovic stated that staff will investigate the process and act accordingly to ensure his candidacy is terminated but noted that once the death certificate is processed it will flag the system.

#### **Board Attorney's Report (27:35)**

Board Attorney Kevin Karpinski updated the Board on the Open Meetings Act complaint regarding the canvass minutes not being posted. Mr. Karpinski reported that he had filed a response to the Open Meetings Act complaint that took the position that the Open Meetings Act didn't apply to the canvass because the Board of Canvassers acted in an executive or quasi-judicial capacity and was performing a ministerial function. The Open Meetings Act Committee agreed with this position and the issue was resolved.

Mr. Karpinski added that he has been working with Mr. Brajkovic and Ms. Williams on finalizing the memoranda of understanding for Montgomery County, Gaithersburg, and Sandy Spring for the 2026 election cycle. He expects that they will be finished in the following weeks and that it will begin to be circulated to the Early Voting Centers. Mr. Halloran asked if the agreed-upon time for Early Voting Center Managers to access the facilities would remain 5 A.M. or if it would be moved earlier. Mr. Karpinski responded that the time would remain 5 A.M. for the 2026 election cycle. Mr. Naimon asked if there was any issue in approving the MOUs before the election plan is submitted to the State Board of Elections for final approval. Mr. Karpinski responded that the MOUs will be signed after the election plan is approved, but given the large number of individuals and offices that typically review the MOUs before they are officially signed, the schedule gives all entities more time to review the documents.

#### **Website Update (31:14)**

Mr. Brajkovic informed the Board that the Board of Elections website usage continues to reflect normal usage in a non-election year following the 2024 election cycle. Website Statistics can be found [at this link](#).

#### **Outreach Update (33:00)**

The list of outreach events for July and August 2025 can be found [at this link](#).

Dr. Zelaya informed the Board that staff have been busy participating in various community events and festivals for their summer outreach activities, including various events for National Night Out on August 5, 2025. Dr. Zelaya added that high school outreach visits are in the process of being scheduled for the upcoming school year. Dr. Zelaya encourages the public to contact the Board of Elections with any

inquiries requesting our participation in a community event. Mr. Naimon requested more information on when outreach would be conducted at Northwood High School, as he would like to attend.

### **Old Business (37:02)**

#### **Staff Proposal for a Drop Box Location Change Within the Riderwood Senior Living Community for the 2026 Election Cycle (39:30)**

Mr. Brajkovic and Ms. Williams' presentation of the staff proposal for the drop box location change at the Riderwood Senior Living Community for the 2026 election cycle can be found [at this link](#).

Mr. Brajkovic began by noting that the Board had previously approved the staff proposal of 58 ballot drop box locations for the 2026 election cycle. Ms. Williams added that due to construction at the address where the ballot drop box at Riderwood Village had been placed in the 2024 election cycle, the staff is proposing moving the ballot drop box approximately one block within the Riderwood Village campus. The proposed location for the Riderwood Village ballot drop box for the 2026 election cycle is 3120 Gracefield Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Additionally, this address change would bring the ballot drop box into the same building as the assigned Election Day polling place for Riderwood Village.

#### **Staff Proposal for a Polling Place location at Clearspring Elementary School for the precinct 12-01 for the 2026 Election Cycle (41:01)**

Ms. Williams presented the staff proposal for the polling place change of precinct 12-01. The presentation can be found [at this link](#).

The staff proposal recommends moving the polling place for precinct 12-01 from Damascus Elementary School to Clearspring Elementary School, to have the polling place location within an adjacent precinct. Clearspring Elementary School is located within precinct 12-05, which is adjacent to the home precinct of 12-01. Additionally, the proposed location of Clearspring Elementary School is roughly 1.5 miles away from the previous polling location of Damascus Elementary School.

Ms. Delao asked about the No Electioneering signs that are impacted by the wind and blown away. Ms. Williams responded that for future signs, she hopes to use corrugated plastic with H-frame stakes, as they are much sturdier. However, due to the No Electioneering signs being placed on concrete with less area to place the stakes, the signs need weights to stop them from blowing away. Mr. Halloran added that in his experience, he often used water jugs or rocks found nearby to weigh the signs down. Mr. Brajkovic and Ms. Williams acknowledged the issue and will continue to search for a solution that meets operational capacities.

#### **Board Action on the Staff Proposals of the Drop Box change within Riderwood Village and the Polling Place Change for Precinct 12-01 (59:56)**

Ms. Delao moved to approve both the drop box location change for Riderwood Village and the polling place change for precinct 12-01 to Clearspring Elementary School. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hoeber and passed unanimously.

### **New Business (1:00:50)**

#### **Board Policy Restricting the Use of Photographs of Board of Elections Members and Staff for Campaign Websites, Campaign Social Media, or Other Campaign Purposes (1:01:02)**

Mr. Karpinski introduced the draft board policy, which would restrict the use of photographs of Board members, the Board Attorney, and Staff for use on campaign websites, social media, and for other campaign purposes. He said this came out of the use of a photo of a staff member on a campaign webpage. The policy is intended to demonstrate that Board members, the Board Attorney, and Staff are not showing support for any candidate or campaign. The Board is not granting permission for the use of such photos to avoid that perception. The draft policy can be found [at this link](#). Mr. Koroma moved to adopt the policy governing the use of photographs of Montgomery County Board of Election members, attorney, or staff by political candidates or campaigns on political or ballot questions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vincent.

Mr. Naimon discussed how he believes this policy is important to ensure that there are no perceptions of the Board, Board Attorney, and the Staff favoring one candidate or campaign over another. He also clarified that there was no specific action by Board members, the Board Attorney, or the Staff that led to this policy. Ms. Delao asked if this applied to staff and their political engagement outside of work and if there are existing limits on political engagement for board staff due to their employment. Mr. Naimon responded that, according to separate regulations, staff are unable to perform certain campaign functions, including Campaign Manager and Campaign Treasurer. Mr. Koroma's motion passed unanimously.

#### **Board Discussion Regarding Mail-In Ballots (1:14:06)**

Mr. Naimon started the conversation by saying he'd like to make sure members of the public are aware of the pros and cons of every method of voting. He pointed out that there are two ways to vote in person (with ballot marking device or pen and paper) and two ways to vote by mail -- "Print your own" (web-delivered) ballot and U.S. mail ballot -- and that each method has its pluses and minuses. He pointed out that younger voters are much more likely not to return all mail-in ballots but the non-return rate for the "print your own" ballots is much higher.

Ms. Hoeber suggested getting a list of those who request mail-in ballots and don't return them, and compare it to a list of those who request the "print your own" ballots and don't return them, and asking researchers to look at why. Mr. Karpinski suggested that he'd need to check on whether the information can be shared with outside parties.

Ms. Delao asked whether the rise of technology may raise expectations that things can be done more quickly than they actually can. She said that including “print” in describing the “print your own” ballots would help to adjust expectations.

Ms. Anyiam suggested that the Board have a trusted spokesperson or group speak about this issue and review our current marketing of the steps required to complete mail-in ballots.

Mr. Halloran reported that voters would show up at early voting with questions about the mail-in ballot process.

Mr. Naimon suggested not only letting the voters know about the steps they need to take to vote but also the steps that the Board will take to handle the mail-in ballots, including the hand-duplication of “print your own” ballots.

Mr. Brajkovic pointed out that people may be influenced by waiting for their ballot to be counted, and Mr. Naimon added that some people may be affected by waiting for the ballots to arrive before they vote. Mr. Brajkovic pointed out that voters may have high expectations of ballots being mailed to them instantly but it will frequently take longer than voters believe.

The full Board discussion on mail-In ballots can be found [at this link](#). No Board action was taken.

#### **Future Action Items (1:54:07)**

- Mr. Karpinski has a future action item related to the Board policy regarding photos that was established today.
- Dr. Zelaya will contact Mr. Naimon regarding upcoming outreach events at Northwood High School once planned.
- Staff will ensure that Mr. Joseph Griffin’s candidacy for the 2026 election cycle is terminated.
- Staff will investigate ways to weigh down No Electioneering signs.

#### **Approval of Minutes (1:55:12)**

Ms. Hoeber moved to approve the minutes from the Board Meeting on June 16, 2025, as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Koroma and passed unanimously.

#### **Future Meetings (1:56:25)**

All meetings begin at 3:00 P.M. unless otherwise indicated. Dates and times are subject to change.

- Monday, September 15, 2025 (Virtual)
- Monday, October 20, 2025 (Virtual)
- Monday, November 17, 2025 (In-Person)

#### **Adjournment (1:59:27)**

Ms. Hoeber moved to adjourn the public meeting of the Board of Elections and move into an Executive Session to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter and to consult with staff about

pending or potential litigation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vincent and passed unanimously. The public meeting of the Board of Elections was adjourned at 5:02 P.M.

**Report on Executive Session**

The Montgomery County Board of Elections moved into an executive session at 5:03 P.M., pursuant to §3-305(b)(2), General Provisions Article, to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter and to consult with staff about pending or potential litigation.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Approved by the Board,

*The Board President's signature appears on the original document.*

David A. Naimon  
Board President