

Public Outreach Event

April 9, 2014

APPROVED

In attendance were Board Members Ms. Keeffe, Mrs. Jeter, Mrs. Dacek, Mrs. Khozeimeh, Ms. Phillips, Mr. Naimon; Board Staff Ms. Jurgensen, Ms. McLaughlin, Mrs. Caro, Ms. Jones, Ms. Merino, Mrs. Rzeszut, and Mr. Zelaya; and Legal Counsel, Kevin Karpinski. Also in attendance were Ms. Herrera with the Department of Technology Services, student volunteers and parents: Maya Paul, Jhasper Paul, Adwin Paul, Pahola Martinez, and Nancy Melara. The following is a summary of discussions during the meeting.

Ms. Keeffe thanked the public for their attendance and introduced the Board members, staff, student volunteers, and parents. She briefed the public on the Board of Elections' activity and the upcoming election. She stated that Board members would briefly discuss items with an opportunity for the public to ask questions and provide comments.

Ms. Keeffe provided information on Voter Registration; she stated the deadline for party affiliation change and voter registration is June 3, 2014. She provided three options to vote, on Election Day, during Early Voting, and by Mail. She added that Vote by Mail, previously known as Absentee Voting, is a great opportunity to vote.

Ms. Keeffe asked if there were any questions to begin with and one of the attendees stated that he prefers to vote by mail and enjoys the opportunity he has to vote at his leisure with no need to wait in line; he asked for further information. Mrs. Jeter summarized information noting the deadline to request an absentee ballot is June 17, 2014. She stated there are several ways to request an application - in person, by mail, fax, or on-line - and noted the absentee ballot must be date stamped or delivered to the Board of Elections by June 24, 2014.

An attendee asked for a comparison of vote by mail requests four years ago in the Primary versus the expectation of vote by mail requests this election with the additional early voting sites. Ms. Jurgensen stated that she did not readily have the numbers available; however, results from past elections can be found on the Montgomery County Board of Elections website. She invited the attendee to view the information on the website or purchase a CD with all registered voter information from the office. The attendee asked what Ms. Jurgensen's predictions for early voting and vote by mail were. She responded that in the past voter turnout predictions were made; however, with the introduction of Early Voting and Vote by Mail, it is no longer possible due to the multiple voting options. She added that her goal would be to have 20-25% vote by mail, 30-45% vote during Early Voting, and the balance to vote on Election Day. She noted it is a challenge to have voters vote prior to Election Day. Four years ago an estimated 2.7% of voters cast their ballot during Early Voting, and in 2012 an estimated 22% voted during Early Voting.

APPROVED

Ms. Herrera from DTS noted that by the end of the month a mobile application for cell phones will be available to help individuals access voter registration, find a polling place, and see wait times in real time for all nine Early Voting sites. Ms. Jurgensen noted that after each day of Early Voting, you may visit the State Board of Elections' website and voter turn-out will be posted by political party.

Ms. Keeffe stated that the Board is trying to increase funding for outreach at community centers, etc. Mr. Zelaya added that the outreach program reaches out to libraries, community centers, and schools throughout the county to promote Early Voting and vote by mail. Ms. Jurgensen added that the Board currently trains 17 and 18 year olds as registrars to assist in registering students to vote at high schools. An attendee asked if the Board of Elections targets by cultural sets; Mr. Zelaya responded yes, that he works with several organizations that translate information provided by the Board to be placed in their newsletters, programs, and newspapers. He added that Section 203 of the Help America Vote Act states that the Montgomery County Board of Elections is required to provide all information in English and Spanish.

Mr. Naimon explained that the Future Vote Program focuses on sixth through twelfth graders grade students to serve as volunteers using the opportunity to acquire Student Service Learning (SSL) hours, with the hopes that they may later become paid experienced Election Judges by the age of 17. He noted that it is difficult to recruit individuals and all volunteers are welcomed. Mr. Naimon thinks this is a great program, with the focus to have individuals interested, and participating in the democratic process.

Mrs. Dacek noted that there is always a need for Election Judges for Election Day and Early Voting. She stated that individuals tend to believe that it's a long day to serve; however, there are several part time positions one can serve in - opening, closing, or greeter judges. It's a wonderful opportunity to see and assist neighbors in the electoral process if one wants to serve in their precinct. Mrs. Dacek encouraged those in attendance to assist the Board in spreading the word.

Ms. Phillips provided information regarding how voters are taken off the rolls. She stated that in Montgomery County you may submit a copy of the death certificate or relocation information for those who have moved out of State. She added that it is imperative to keep the voter roll accurate and one must provide information promptly. If a death or relocation occurs, information that is mailed to a voter should be returned to the Board of Elections if the voter is no longer available to receive it. The same would apply if a death occurs out of State. Ms. Keeffe added that if neither death nor relocation occurs a voter continues to stay on the roll until there has been no activity for two Federal elections. Ms. McLaughlin added that Montgomery County is involved with the ERIC program (Electronic Registration Information Center) which is an 11-state effort to match voter records to eliminate duplicates and promote accuracy with the voter rolls.

Ms. Khozeimeh provided information on Early Voting. She stated that Early Voting for the Primary Election will be held from June 12 through June 19, and for the General Election from October 23 through October 30. An additional four sites have been added for a total of nine Early Voting sites for voter ease. She listed all the early voting sites and a flyer was made available to the public. Ms. McLaughlin noted that two of Montgomery County's early voting sites were number one and number three in the entire State, noting that all our early voting sites were in the top 15 busiest sites in Maryland.

APPROVED

Ms. Keeffe stated that if vote by mail becomes more popular, it may be the voting method of the future. She encouraged the visitors to walk around and see the information available and thanked the staff and attendees for coming.

April 21, 2014

Date

Mary Ann Keeffe

Mary Ann Keeffe, President