

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, November 20, 2023**  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**Virtual Board Meeting via Zoom**

**In Person Attendance**

**Board Members:**

David A. Naimon, President  
Daniel A. Koroma, Vice President  
Amoretta M. (Amie) Hoeber, Secretary  
Keyna L. Anyiam, Board Member  
Diane Nash Dillon, Board Member  
Margie C. Delao, Substitute Member  
Alexander C. Vincent, Substitute Member

**Board Attorney:**

Kevin Karpinski

**In Person Staff Attendance:**

Boris Brajkovic, Director  
Janet Ross, IT Manager  
Chris Rzeszut, Operations Manager  
Charles (Chuck) Williams, Budget Specialist  
Mindy Williams, Operations Manager  
Lisa Merino-Dean, Administrative Specialist

A video of the meeting may be found on YouTube at the link below:  
[https://youtu.be/ffQz8z3hg8E?si=byBT57\\_96iTg7Tia](https://youtu.be/ffQz8z3hg8E?si=byBT57_96iTg7Tia)

**Convene Board Meeting (00:03)**

Mr. Naimon opened the meeting by declaring that a quorum was present.

**Board President's Remarks (00:49)**

Mr. Naimon announced that three staff members have retired or have announced their departure since the last meeting.

- Aarti Chumble [Office Services Coordinator] Vote by Mail Section, retired on November 4, 2023.
- Barbara Payne [Program Specialist] Vote by Mail Section, will be retiring December 1, 2023.
- Deputy Director Alysoun McLaughlin, who served as the acting Director in 2022, has submitted her resignation. She has served as the Deputy Director since 2012.

**Additions/Changes to the Agenda (02:21)**

Mr. Naimon stated that there will be a closed session after the Board meeting to discuss a future fiscal budgetary matter.

**Disclosure of Campaign Contributions/Attendance at Fundraisers (02:46)**

No contributions or attendance at fundraisers was disclosed.

**Public Comments (02:58)**

Mr. Michael Fletcher stated that he submitted a Public Information Act request to the Montgomery County Board of Elections requesting copies of reports that are generated by the electronic tabulators used during the election. In addition, he followed up on an item he addressed at the October Board meeting regarding blank ballots cast in Montgomery County in the 2020 and 2022 elections. Mr. Fletcher's comments can be found [here](#).

Mr. Karpinski addressed Mr. Fletcher, stating that he had submitted Mr. Fletcher's Public Information Act Request to the Maryland State Board of Elections (SBE), noting that he was under the impression that the SBE would respond to the request. Mr. Fletcher responded that other counties had heard from the State, and he presumed that Montgomery County would respond to the request. Mr. Brajkovic and Mr. Karpinski confirmed that the SBE would respond, and Mr. Brajkovic will follow up with the SBE to inquire about the status of the response.

Mr. Naimon commented on the blank ballot inquiry and stated that he would like to see what the law states is a blank ballot. In addition, he shared that as a Board member who sat through the canvass, it is highly unlikely that we had as many blank ballots as Mr. Fletcher reported, but more likely that there were blank pages where voters opted to not vote for specific contests.

Mr. Brajkovic added that the SBE had planned to provide a brief explanation on how blank ballots are calculated, noting that as of yesterday, no information has been posted to the SBE's website. He stated that he would follow up.

**Election Director's Report (11:08)**

Mr. Brajkovic reviewed his report, which can be found [here](#).

Mr. Naimon inquired if there were any issues regarding the 14 early voting centers proposed to the State, and Mr. Brajkovic responded that no issues had been brought to his attention.

Mr. Naimon complimented and expressed his gratitude to the Director and the Operations team in negotiating an agreement with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) that would accommodate simultaneous voting and IB Testing scheduled on the 2024 Primary Election Day.

Mr. Vincent asked about budget line items 60532, election worker management system, 63016 Imaging, 63200 Central Duplicating and 63634 Other Communication Services.

Mr. Brajkovic reported that the election worker system is an ongoing project and additional charges are expected through the next couple of fiscal years.

Mr. Williams addressed the Board, noting that central duplicating (inter-office mail) and imaging is operated by the County, and it is prorated based on the number of team members, adding that for inter-office mail, the cost is \$104.51 for each full-time employee and for records management and imaging, the cost is \$173.99 per employee. Mr. Williams shared that the budgeting process is challenging; however, moving forward, the Department will increase the line items to match the budget needs.

Mr. Brajkovic addressed line item 63634, stating that Montgomery County election workers had historically used the facility landlines to communicate with the BOE. However, like the rest of the local boards in Maryland, Montgomery County has moved to requiring election workers to use their cell phones when communicating with the BOE, so that landline phones were no longer

needed. In addition, the BOE purchased signal amplifying equipment to ensure better cellular reception at a number of polling places.

Ms. Delao also complimented the staff's work with MCPS in identifying a solution to accommodate voting and IB Testing in one building. Ms. Delao requested that when the election worker/future vote portal is completed, a brief presentation be provided to the Board. Mr. Brajkovic suggested that the Board test the system as an election worker would, to better understand the process through the eyes of those interested in applying to serve as election workers.

#### **Board Attorney Report (38:46)**

Mr. Karpinski reported that the right of entry agreements for the early voting sites are being finalized.

He noted that additional meetings are needed to determine the logistics of ballot drop boxes at MCPS facilities.

#### **Old Business (40:00)**

##### **Discussion and possible adoption of Board of Elections' Social Media Policy**

Mr. Brajkovic noted that the BOE has had a social media presence for more than a decade with no official policy in place that would guide interaction on social media platforms. He stated that it has always been important to communicate with the voters and share election-related information in every format. Currently the BOE is following over 2,100 individual accounts on X, formally known as *Twitter*, over 500 accounts on *Facebook*, and 148 accounts on *Instagram*. He added that the number of accounts that we follow is significantly higher than any comparable Board of Elections in the State of Maryland.

He acknowledged the importance of emphasizing whenever possible that the BOE is a nonpartisan organization and that following some accounts and not others might create a perception that the BOE supports particular individuals or causes. He also recognized the importance of social media platforms to sustain robust information dissemination, maintain neutrality, sustain the position of being a trusted source, and promote nonpartisan engagement in the election process. With the above conditions in mind, the staff proposes to unfollow all accounts/profiles across all social media platforms but remain open to engagement with anyone on any platform to share election information.

Ms. Anyiam moved to approve the staff's proposal regarding the social media policy going forward. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hoeber and passed unanimously. Staff's proposal regarding the social media policy can be found [here](#).

Mr. Naimon requested that the social media policy be shared on the BOE's social media outlets/website, Mr. Brajkovic confirmed that a press release and communication will be distributed after the Board meeting.

Mr. Vincent noted that the policy promotes neutrality and non-partisan engagement. He also noted that there are no policies in place for staff and board members' individual use of social media, acknowledging that there are First Amendment concerns but encouraged additional discussions on the matter.

Mr. Karpinski stated that it is a complicated issue and suggested that there be a thorough analysis of individual rights regarding the use of social media. Mr. Naimon agreed and said that

it might make sense to do some more background work or even appoint a committee for further review.

**Website (58:41)**

Mr. Brajkovic presented website trends and usage from October 1 to October 30. A full statistical report can be found [here](#).

The Board members inquired about mobile users searching the site. Further information was provided in the course of Dr. Zelaya's presentation.

**Outreach (1:12:48)**

Dr. Zelaya reported that the early fall visits to MCPS are coming to a close; however, additional visits are scheduled for the first week of December and again when winter break is over. In addition, outreach staff will conduct events at private schools. Dates and logistics are pending.

Dr. Zelaya reported on recent engagements with the Montgomery County Republican Party that included presentations at the Leisure World GOP, the Upper Montgomery County Republican Women's Club, and a guest speaker engagement at the MCGOP headquarters in Rockville.

He reported that he works closely with the regional services center of different Advisory Councils and the Office of Community Partnership on ongoing events.

He announced that January 30 is National Help America Vote Day and that outreach events will be occurring in multiple locations.

Dr. Zelaya addressed Mr. Naimon's SMS inquiry, adding that if the QR code is used it takes the inquirer to the direct site on the web page.

**New Business (01:27:40)**

**Discussion of Board's Possible Legislative Proposals**

Mr. Naimon circulated proposed legislative recommendations to the Board. The list of proposals can be found [here](#).

Mr. Naimon moved to accept the proposed legislative recommendations in its entirety. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hoeber.

The Board discussed the proposals in groups. The Board unanimously supported proposals 1 through 8 and 11.

The Board recessed at time stamp 1:40:27 due to computer issues. The Board reconvened at time stamp 1:49:28.

The Board discussed proposal 9 to allow voters who vote the wrong party ballot in the primary election to have their ballots accepted in part, rather than rejected in full, so that their votes for the nonpartisan Board of Education races to be counted. Mr. Naimon, Mr. Koroma, Ms. Hoeber, and Ms. Anyiam voted in favor of the proposal. Ms. Nash Dillon opposed the proposal.

The Board discussed proposal 10 to eliminate the rejection of ballots for identifying marks under section 16-206(a)(1) of the Election Article. Mr. Naimon, Mr. Koroma, and Ms. Anyiam voted in favor of the proposal. Ms. Hoeber and Ms. Nash Dillon opposed the proposal.

Mr. Vincent proposed to eliminate any legislative restrictions placed on the Board to decrease or increase the number of polling places on Election Day. Ms. Nash Dillon seconded.

The Board voted on the proposal, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Naimon announced to the Board his plans to share the list with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Montgomery County legislative delegation and the legislators who represent Montgomery County and serve on the relevant state legislative committees, including some who are the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the relevant committees and sub-committees.

**List of Future Action Items from Today's Meeting (03:15:15)**

- Staff to follow up and clarify information provided regarding website visits.
- Director to follow up with Mr. Fletcher regarding his inquiry to SBE.
- Staff to distribute a news release regarding the new social medial policy.

**Approval of Minutes (03:16:48)**

Mr. Naimon moved to approve the October 16, 2023 Board meeting minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Koroma and passed unanimously.

**Future Meetings (03:17:32)**

The December 18, 2023, virtual Board meeting will be held at 3:00pm.

**Adjournment for an Executive Session**

Mr. Naimon adjourned the Board meeting at 6:30 p.m. and moved into Executive Session to discuss the future budget. At 7:25 p.m., the Executive Session was adjourned.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD

  
David A. Naimon  
Board President