

St. Mary's County Board of Elections

23250 Leonardtown Hollywood Road
Leonardtown, MD 20650

Board Meeting Minutes of 25 February 2025

Present:

Board Members:

Rebecca Wathen, Board President (D)
Mary Coombs, Board Secretary (R)
Jack Payne, Member (R)
Ann Raley, Member (D)

Staff Members:

Wendy Adkins, Director
Susan Julian, Deputy Director

Cynthia Panos, Board Attorney

Absent: Darlene Johnson, Member (D)

At 9:02 AM, Ms. Rebecca Wathen, Board President, determined that there was a quorum present and called the meeting to order. President Wathen announced that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of preparing the minutes.

Guests Present: Ann Marie Abell

Documents Distributed:

- Board Meeting Minutes for December 10, 2024
- 2026 Candidate Filing Checklist
- Audit Worksheet
- Legislative Bills impacting Elections
- MAEO Tentative Agenda
- 2026 Gubernatorial Election Information Sheet

Approval of Minutes:

- A motion was made by Ms. Coombs to accept the minutes from the December 10, 2024 meeting, seconded by Mr. Jack Payne. Motion carried.

Meeting Agenda: The meeting agenda was reviewed. No changes were made.

Director's Report: Ms. Adkins reported the following:

- **2026 Election Information Sheet:** Ms. Adkins provided this sheet to Board members so that they can have tentative dates and events for their planning calendars.
- **Candidate Filing:** Candidate Filing for the 2026 Election begins today. The office staff has developed a checklist (copy provided) that can be used by anyone wishing to file for office. The checklist will aide them and the office to ensure that they completely understand the rules and requirements required to file for specific offices. The copy provided is a DRAFT and will be finalized in the near future. The checklist will be forwarded to the County Attorney to verify the qualifications for the local offices and the Board of Education. Once all feedback is received and incorporated into the checklist, it will be posted on the website. Ms. Atkins advised that she has a meeting to create the page on the website.

Old Business:

- **2024 Presidential General Election Manual Audit:** Ms. Adkins provided the final audit report that only indicated one (1) discrepancy. This was an Early Voting discrepancy that showed the circle was selected for a Write-In candidate on the ballot, but no candidate was entered. During the Manual Audit, the auditor took this as a Blank Vote and not a vote for any candidate.

New Business:

- **2025 Legislation:** Ms. Adkins provided a complete list of bills that were being followed relating to Elections. The current session will end on April 7, 2025. She highlighted the following bills:
 - **HB412/SB0337:** Impacts the Boards of Elections and Board of Canvassers - Relating to the Open Meeting Requirements. This bill would require that all meetings and canvasses be live streamed on the website. It will also require that all information be archived for five (5) years.
 - **SB0257/B0199:** Election Law Notice to permanent Absentee Voters - This bill will require the State Board of Elections (SBE) to send notices starting 120 days prior and ending 90 days prior to the election to all permanent absentee voters. This process is currently being done, but this bill changes the number of days.
 - **HB0945/SB0645:** Election Law Gubernatorial Primary Election Date - This bill would require the Gubernatorial Primary date to fall on the fourth Tuesday of the month rather than the Last Tuesday of the month.
- **2025 MAEO & Biennial Meeting:** The conference will be combined with the SBE mandated Biennial Meeting and will be held May 4th through May 9th, 2025. The Biennial Meeting is scheduled to start on Sunday, May 4th and go into Monday, May 5th. The draft agenda was provided. The final agenda will be provided once available. If you are unable to attend, Board Members must address a letter to the State Administration providing an explanation as to why you are unavailable to attend. The registration information will be coming out very soon. Ms. Adkins requested that that Board members let her know if we plan on attending before we leave today. Ms. Adkins will have the reservations made as a group.

CLOSED SESSION: The Board members entered a Closed Session at 9:55 AM. The Closed Session ended at 10:32 AM.

Next Meeting:

There will be no meeting in March. The next monthly Board meeting will be on April 2, 2025 at 9:00 AM.

A motion was made by Ms. Coombs to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Raley. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 AM. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,


Mary Coombs
Board Secretary