

BOARD MEMBERS

MICHAEL W. DETMER
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VICE PRESIDENT

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WILLIAM E. BATSON
BOARD MEMBER

ROBIN A. WILLEY
BOARD MEMBER



**DORCHESTER COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

HUBERT H. WRIGHT, IV
ATTORNEY

GWENDOLYN H. DALES
ELECTION DIRECTOR

BRITTANY M. PHILLIPS
ELECTION PROGRAM ASSISTANT

JESSICA R. NORANBROCK
ELECTION PROGRAM ASSISTANT

KIMBERLY K. JONES
ELECTION PROGRAM IT SPECIALIST II

SLOANE P. HURLEY
ELECTION PROGRAM ASSISTANT

ATTENDEES: Michael W. Detmer, President
Thomas M. Corkran, Vice President
Ralph C. Lewis, Secretary
William Batson, Member
Robin Willey, Member
Hubert H. Wright, IV, Attorney

Gwendolyn H. Dales, Election Director
Jessica Noranbrock, Data Apps. II

ABSENT: None

GUESTS: None

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING June 12, 2020

Call to Order and Determine Quorum:

President Detmer called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM; quorum was determined.

Welcome any Guests:

None

Report any Board or Staff Absences:

None

Additions to Agenda:

At the request of President Detmer, Director Dales added a draft letter to SBE to the agenda, under "New Business".

Approval of Minutes:

• **2.19.20 Minutes**

Mr. Lewis motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Corkran, approved.

• **4.9.20 Minutes**

Mr. Corkran motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Lewis, approved.

Election Director's Report:

• **Budget: FY2020 – Feb, Mar, April, May 2020 year/date/monthly expenditures**

Director Dales presented the monthly budgets. Ms. Dales explained there is normally \$60,000 – \$80,000 allocated to election judges, but the current FY2020 judge portion is less than \$10,000. Postage is over \$6,000 because of emergency legislation requiring return postage to be paid for returning vote by mail ballots.

Old Business:

• **FY2021 Budget Presentation Approved**

Director Dales presented the approved FY2021 Budget request. It looks different than what was submitted. Mr. Detmer asked what was different. Ms. Dales said that it appeared the first two (2) items match what was requested, every other item matches FY20, like they reverted back to last years' budget and gave us those numbers. Normally a statement is sent every month, but one hasn't been received since the County's system was hacked. Mr. Detmer mentioned the budget sessions have been different because of COVID-19.

New Business:

• **Discuss Primary Election**

Director Dales presented the Chief Judges' Logs from the Election Day Vote Center. Nothing stands out; there were no issues. 267 people voted in person, almost 1,000 used the drop boxes.

• **Draft Letter to the Maryland State Board of Elections (SBE)**

Mr. Detmer previously asked Director Dales what she thought about the Election and asked her to draft this letter. Mr. Detmer said there should be strong consideration for vote by mail elections in the future. Voter turnout was not much different; there was a more controlled environment for Election officials. There's less chance of a polling place going down, less moving parts, SDR/provisional voting went through legislation, and staff is there to address any issue. It all seemed less frantic. This was way more secure than having multiple different "targets" throughout the County.

Mr. Detmer asked the Board to consider supporting SBE, should they chose to vote by mail in November. SBE should strongly consider building on this method, instead of going back. Mr. Detmer would not want to send this letter to SBE on behalf of this Board, without unanimous support from this Board. Mr. Detmer had concerns that have been mitigated through this process.

Mr. Detmer asked Ms. Dales what the timeframe was for SBE's decision. Ms. Dales said our Regional Manager asked for feedback from the Local Boards (LBEs) and recommended sending the letter before the SBE Board meeting on Thursday, June 18, 2020. Mr. Corkran said it would be nice to know what you're doing.

Mr. Lewis asked Director Dales if SBE decides on an in-person election, can we still do vote by mail. Ms. Dales said Maryland has a statewide system, we must be consistent. Mr. Corkran asked if all the policy changes were only for the Primary Election. Ms. Dales said the legislators may have to pass emergency items for November like they did for the Primary. It would behoove SBE to make plans and recommendations to the Governor and/or legislature. Mr. Detmer said that, at a minimum, they shouldn't deviate for this election. It's all about voter accessibility. Mr. Lewis said this all makes sense and is far more secure and safer.

Ms. Willey asked Ms. Dales if she spoke with other counties about the election. Ms. Dales said she had. She talks with a lot of similarly sized counties and they all feel it was much more controlled. There were a lot of variables and a lot of things to consider; but in the end, it turned out great. Our variances have never been zero. Mr. Batson agreed that after evaluating both methods, he would like to send the letter to SBE.

Mr. Detmer asked if anyone had anything they would like to add or subtract from the letter, before he asked for a motion to send the letter. There were no additions or subtractions. Mr. Lewis motioned to send the letter to the State Board of Elections, seconded by Mr. Batson, the motion passed unanimously.

FYI:

- **Business Reply Postage Total**

Director Dales informed the Board a Business Reply Postage account had to be set up when emergency legislation passed for all return postage to be paid for vote by mail ballots. The total spent is almost \$8,000, but the County will get 50 percent of this back from the State as a credit in our County Billing. Ms. Dales was unsure of the cost of mailing ballots through the State-procured vendor, SeaChange.

- **Local Election Certified Today**

Mrs. Kim Jones was uploading results to SBE during this Board Meeting and will notify the Board of Canvassers Chair and Secretary when the Canvass Sheets are ready to be signed.

- **New MAEO Conference Dates Aug. 23 – 26th**

Director Dales informed the Board of the new conference dates. Mr. Corkran is unable to attend.

Closed Session:

• **Personnel**

- Mr. Lewis motioned to close the regular Board Meeting to move into a closed session, seconded by Mr. Batson. The Board went into a closed session at 1:33 PM.
- The Board resumed the Regular Board Meeting at 1:49 PM

Confirmation of Next Meeting:

Director Dales said the only thing left is to sign the Canvass Sheets to certify the election, and that we will call the Chair and Secretary to sign. Ms. Dales said it is up to the Board to evaluate and see where we are for the next Board Meeting, if things come up that require one before the MAEO conference in August. Mr. Detmer asked if they could have a meeting at the MAEO conference. Ms. Dales said they can, there just needs to be notice posted for the public and a way for the public to observe. Ms. Dales suggested having the next meeting in September, but it's too far out to decide a date. Mr. Detmer agreed. Ms. Dales said that if we all can go to MAEO it can be decided then.

Adjournment:

Mr. Corkran motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Batson. The meeting adjourned at 2:12 PM.

APPROVED:

Michael Reston

William E. Batson

Robin Willey

Tom Mah

R.C. Lipp

jrn