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BOARD MEMBER

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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: Thomas M. Corkran, Vice President
Ralph C. Lewis, Secretary
William Batson, Member
Hubert H. Wright, IV, Attorney

Gwendolyn H. Dales, Election Director
Jessica Noranbrock, Election Asst.

ABSENT: Michael W. Detmer, President
Robin Willey, Member

GUESTS: Mrs. Donna Towers

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING March 23, 2021

Call to Order and Determine Quorum:

Vice – President Corkran called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM; quorum was determined.

Welcome any Guests:

Mr. Corkran welcomed Mrs. Towers.

Report any Board or Staff Absences:

Michael W. Detmer, President, and Robin Willey, Board Member

Additions to Agenda:

Director Dales would like to congratulate Mr. Batson for receiving the *Living Black History Award* from Bowie State University, and the *Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Achievement Award* from the Tri County MLK Coalition.

Mrs. Towers would like to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

• **12.22.20 Minutes**

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

Election Director's Report:

- **Budget: FY2021 – December 2020; January & February 2021 year/date/monthly expenditures**

Director Dales presented the monthly budgets. Ms. Dales explained the new format of the budget reports, and that we now enter most transactions in the new finance system.

Old Business:

- **Grant Update \$22,251.50 spent**

Director Dales informed the Board that the total grant received from the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) has been spent.

New Business:

- **Manual Audit 0% Discrepancies**

Director Dales presented a spreadsheet from the Manual Audit, held on February 9, 2021, showing zero discrepancies between the manual count and machine count.

- **Legislative Update**

Director Dales presented a summary of current legislation relevant to elections. We will know next month what Bills pass. Ms. Dales will provide an update at the next Board Meeting.

FYI:

- **Pollbooks and Hurlock Election (Nov. 6, 2021)**

Director Dales informed the Board of the date for the upcoming 2021 Hurlock Municipal Election. The State is looking at replacing the current pollbooks. We are not able to use the current pollbooks at the Hurlock Election. Because this is a smaller election, we can use a paper precinct register to check voters in, and will have a staff member available at the office to look people up in the system, if needed.

- **2022 Gubernatorial Election Calendar**

Director Dales presented the Board with copies of the 2022 Gubernatorial Election Calendar.

- **Candidate Filing began Feb. 23, 2021**

Director Dales informed the Board that candidate filing has begun. We have had no one, as of yet, that has registered locally. Most candidates wait until after the end of the year to file in Dorchester County.

Additions to the Agenda:

- **Public Comment**

Mrs. Towers thanked everyone for all the work they do and for patience. In the past year, Mrs. Towers became trained to register voters and joined Common Cause – Election Protection. Her job was to make sure there was no voter suppression at the polls, and she congratulated the Board for a job well done.

Mrs. Towers attended City Council meetings and was a poll watcher at the 2020 City of Cambridge Election. She has been paying a lot of attention to elections and became

aware, early on, about confusion between the County and City elections, and the City hiring an outside firm to run their election.

Mrs. Towers had two (2) questions for the Board. She asked the Board to tell her the circumstances that lead to changes in the City's 2020 election. Director Dales explained the City of Cambridge modified their Charter after their last City election to state they would be on the 2020 Presidential ballot. All they did was change the Charter; they didn't do anything to make it an actuality. Her understanding was that the new City Manager and Council Members were unaware there were still steps that needed to be taken. They didn't know they wouldn't be on the ballot.

The City asked us to run their election in November. Normally we run their election in July, and we would have done that, but they were unwilling to move it back to July. They wanted to have us run their election in October, but our Presidential General is in November, it would not have been possible.

Mr. Lewis said all of that was done by the old Council, and asked if the new Council is aware. Mrs. Towers said that was why she was here. Ms. Dales said she believes they are still trying to get on the Presidential ballot. Mrs. Towers is not privy to know if that's what is underway, but she is starting to ask questions. The next City election is in 2024. She is aware this is a long process and the Council needs to get on it.

Director Dales offered her suggestion, that if the City were to ask us to run their next election, they consider moving the date a few months into the next year. We would not be against running their election in an "off-year". Elections aren't going to look like they did before. We, pretty much, ran two (2) simultaneous elections at once; by mail and in person. Ms. Dales doesn't see that changing. Our office was very busy for nine (9) months straight.

Vice-President Corkran asked if that could mislead the City, if we say we'll run their election. They still need to change their Charter. Mr. Lewis asked who should reach out first. Mr. Wright said the City should. Director Dales agreed; the City needs to discuss with their Council and decide what they want to do. Ms. Dales was just suggesting that, if they can't get on the Presidential ballot, they push the date back a few months. Mr. Corkran said they can do that or hire someone else.

Mr. Lewis said that at this juncture it is up to them to contact us. Ms. Dales agreed. Mrs. Towers said she just doesn't want a situation like last time, trying to vote in a tiny polling place and having to call the Election Office all the time for help. Mrs. Towers is thankful for the Election Office's help. Ms. Dales said our office spoke with the City Manager and City Attorney a lot. Mrs. Towers said it wouldn't have happened without the Election Office's help. She was aware of most of this before but added a few pieces to her notes.

Mrs. Towers' 2nd question was to ask the Board how they thought the 2024 City Election would look, but understood the Board can't answer that because the City has to change their Charter. Mr. Corkran said that, as it is right now, their Charter states otherwise. Ms. Dales said the City can run their election how they want. They can change their Charter but there are more steps involved if they are trying to get on the Presidential ballot.

Mrs. Towers would be glad to be an intermediary person; she will provide her Council Member any information that needs to get to them. When she was working for Common Cause during the 2020 Presidential Election, people would come up to her and ask what she was doing. She said there wasn't a single issue that she heard about how the election was run. She commended the Board and Election Judges for a smooth election.

Director Dales thanked Mrs. Towers for coming to us to answer her questions. Mrs. Towers said that it was too bad Ms. Dales couldn't have been at the City Council meeting and provided them this information. Ms. Dales said that many of the Board Members and office staff live in the City and want what's best for the City, but she felt that would have been inappropriate because we were hired contractually to run their election in the past.

Confirmation of Next Meeting:

The next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 10:00 AM, in Room 110 of the Dorchester County Office Building, 501 Court Lane, Cambridge, MD 21613.

Mr. Lewis stated that he approves of the office staff keeping the door locked when there is only one person working. Director Dales agreed.

Adjournment:

Mr. Lewis motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Batson. The meeting adjourned at 10:42 AM.

APPROVED:





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