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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
DATA APPLICATION SPECIALIST

JESSICA R. NORANBROCK
DATA APPLICATION SPECIALIST

KIMBERLY K. JONES
ELECTION INFORMATION
SYSTEMS SPECIALIST

SLOANE P. HURLEY
DATA APPLICATION SPECIALIST

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

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

ABSENT: None

GUESTS: Barbara Knepp
Donna Towers

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING September 24, 2019

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all, and prayer recited by Mr. Batson.

Call to Order and Determine Quorum:

President Detmer called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM; quorum was determined.

Welcome any Guests:

President Detmer welcomed guests. Guests Barbara Knepp and Donna Towers introduced themselves.

Report any Board or Staff Absences:

None

Approval of Minutes:

June 11, 2019 Minutes – Mr. Corkran motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Lewis, approved.

Additions to Agenda:

Mr. Detmer advised the Board he did not have anything to add to the agenda, but had a personal announcement for the end of the meeting.

Election Director's Report:

- **Budget: FY 2020– June, July & August 2019 year/date/monthly expenditures.**
Director Dales distributed the monthly budget.

Old Business:

- **SBE Approved Bylaws**
Director Dales provided the Board with a copy of the approval of bylaws from SBE.
- **Use of Hurlock Fire Hall's Break Room**
Director Dales informed the Board that Jessica went to a meeting at the Hurlock Fire Department to ask if our Election Judges could use the break room during the 2020 Elections. The Hurlock Fire Department approved the request and signed the form at the meeting.

Our Election Judges were not allowed to use the break room in 2018 because of an issue with garbage being left behind Election Night. Director Dales would like to send one or two garbage bags to each polling place in their supplies because this just wasn't something we had thought of before.

New Business:

- **Early Voting Center Agreement (To Be Signed)**
Director Dales asked President Detmer to sign the agreement, and stated the only thing that changed was where we emphasized the No Electioneering Zone information. President Detmer signed the agreement. It will be forwarded to the County Council.
- **Hurlock Election Lease Agreement – Nov. 2nd @ Community Center (Sign)**
Director Dales informed the Board the 2019 Hurlock Election will be held at the Hurlock Community Center instead of the Hurlock Fire Hall. There were no other changes from the last election agreement. We will place a sign directing voters to the Community Center. President Detmer signed the agreement. It will be forwarded to the Town of Hurlock.
- **CSD High School polling location from Commons Area to Cafeteria (Vote)**
Director Dales asked the Board to vote on moving the polling place at Cambridge – South Dorchester High School (CSD) from the Commons Area to the Cafeteria, in order to provide voters more privacy. We would need to post accessible parking signs because there are no spots already marked in the parking lot outside of the cafeteria.

President Detmer asked if individuals would walk through the area because it is a thoroughfare. Director Dales offered to let it be a test run. Also, while the Board is out visiting sites on Election Day they can assess the location. Mr. Lewis motioned to approve the change on a trial basis and to reassess after the Election, Mr. Corkran seconded the motion. Approved.

- **Web Page – Include 100 foot No Electioneering Zone (Approve)**

Director Dales informed the Board we will launch a new, more secure, web page soon. The web page will include No Electioneering Zone Maps for each polling place, an idea Ms. Willey suggested. A sample was provided for the Board to approve. Mr. Detmer asked if it was possible to zoom in more and if a semi-circle could be used. Ms. Dales said we will look into it. Mr. Detmer suggested giving Judges a copy to post at polling places. Director Dales said we will talk to the County GIS and see if this is something they can help us with.

Mr. Corkran said they have had problems with people electioneering in a building before, we may want to keep the whole circles, to be safe. Ms. Willey motioned to add the maps to the website, Mr. Batson seconded the motion. New maps will be provided at the next Board Meeting to compare and/or approve.

- **Cambridge 2020 Election Status**

Director Dales recapped the ongoing conversation with the Cambridge City Manager regarding their 2020 Election. In order for us to administer their Election, they would need to change the dates of their Election in their charter from November back to June/July. We gave a deadline of October 31 to request our services for their 2020 Election.

The previous Cambridge administration contacted Ms. Dales after their 2016 Election about getting on the state ballot. They changed the dates in their charter to coincide with the State Presidential Election in November, but once certain people left/retired, things stopped. Mr. Detmer asked if this is not our preference. Ms. Dales said that it would add ballot styles to the Presidential Election and that it's completely up to the state to allow them on a state ballot.

Ms. Dales told the City Manager the only other timeframe that would work for us, other than June and July, would be the 1st week in August and last week in August, and that would still have to be approved by SBE.

- **Bradford House**

Director Dales described the Bradford House to the Board as “not officially a retirement community”. There have been concerns about people going there to get residents to complete absentee ballots and possibly swing the outcome of elections. We had the idea to treat the Bradford House as we would a nursing home. We would go out there, and register voters and help them with absentees. We have spoken to the coordinator and seem happy to have us come.

In order to do this for the Cambridge Election, if we do administer it, we would reach out to other nursing homes in the city and offer the same services. Ms. Dales told the Board we came up with this idea to try to mitigate any past controversy. During a State Election we go out to all nursing homes to help people vote who can't get to the polls. Mr. Detmer asked if this is an information session. Ms. Dales explained that we go out as an

impartial body with bipartisan representation. We coordinate with the person who runs the programs.

Mr. Detmer thanked Director Dales for fielding all of the questions. He was aware we are trying to find a solution, but had reservations about it. Ms. Dales explained we have been doing voter registration volunteer training in the office. People at the Bradford House can call in and request absentees. Ms. Willey said they are more like an assisted living place rather than a nursing home. Ms. Dales said we will look at what criteria may be applicable to the Bradford House. Mr. Lewis said to investigate that point and see what the City says about us running their Election. He suggested talking to the state and Ms. Willey suggested talking to other counties. Ms. Dales told the Board we will look at the law and see if it is up to our discretion.

Public Comment:

- **Donna Towers, resident of Cambridge**

Ms. Towers commended the Board for having this conversation about the Bradford House, because it has been a constant conversation on the street. She wanted to know how to deal with the problem of a commissioner living in one ward and representing another. As a citizen they need to know what to do and who polices the elections. She is aware it is against the law to do certain things when going to vote and understands there are Watchers and such. Another topic involved an agent wearing a police uniform to go around to voters getting them to vote absentee, which could be problematic.

Mr. Lewis asked if anyone went to the City Council about this. A lot has changed. Ms. Towers said they have. Mr. Detmer asked Board Counsel, Mr. Wright, if the process of how to handle this would be in the Cambridge Charter. He agreed. Ms. Dales said that if something were to happen during our elections, we would go to the State and State's Attorney. People sign an oath saying where they live. Mr. Detmer said he believes the answers to their questions are in the charter, how to remediate this.

Ms. Towers said the problem is not voter registration, it is getting people to the polls to vote. Mr. Detmer said this is not advice, we are just trying to help problem solve, we understand the situation.

- **Barbara Knepp, resident of Cambridge**

Ms. Knepp thanked the Board for considering the idea of going out to the Bradford House. Conversation happens every day, and morale is so low she fears voter turnout will be low. Everybody is covering for them and she can't get them to answer emails. They can't get the Mayor to do anything. She understands the Boards' hands are tied, having an election in Cambridge is like throwing a big party and no one showing up.

Ms. Knepp asked who else runs elections besides us. Ms. Dales said she knows the company ES&S does. Ms. Knepp asked if we ever turn anyone down. Ms. Dales informed her that we only run two (2) municipal elections.

Ms. Knepp said that if it happens again she doesn't know what will happen. The Bradford House seems to be the source of the problem. Ms. Dales said that has been the source in the past, we don't know what the future holds, but the best way to win elections is with people and voters. Her advice is to get as many people to vote as possible.

Ms. Knepp said they are working on it and have people volunteering to drive people to the polls. Mr. Corkran said the key is a good candidate. Ms. Knepp asked when they have to declare. The charter says 45 days before the Election. Ms. Dales believes that's what's in their charter. The way the charter reads they have to have the Election the same day we have ours. Mr. Corkran said the voters would have to go to one polling place to vote the City Election and go to another to vote the Presidential Election. Mr. Detmer reiterated we are just trying to give information and some speculation.

FYI:

- **Biennial – Oct. 17th @ Crowne Plaza Hotel**
Director Dales reminded everyone this meeting is mandatory.
- **2018 Gubernatorial Election Audit Findings**
The document from SBE was distributed.
- **2020 Presidential Election Calendar**
A hard copy was distributed.
- **New BMD policy (from 2 to 5 voters by 11:00 am)**
Director Dales informed the Board this policy has changed, and voters will also be asked at the ballot table if they want to vote on the BMD or by hand, instead of at check-in.
- **Absentee Ballots can now be turned in at Polling Places**
Director Dales informed the Board there will be a special bag for Absentee ballots turned in at the polling place. They will be canvassed as usual.
- **Hurlock Election – Approved Judges List**
The Town of Hurlock approved the list of Judges. The list was distributed.
- **Judges Interest Form**
The Board was given a copy of the 2020 Interest form and letter sent to Election Judges around September 1st. Jessica reported that 109 Election Judges have responded, out of over 200 sent. We also have received 79 applications from voters interested in working as an Election Judge. Ms. Willey stated, as a former Chief Judge she really liked the Interest form. Director Dales informed the Board we have been mailing applications in with every Voter Notification Card (VNC) that goes out, an idea we got from the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections.

Mr. Detmer asked if we asked if no training could be held at any of the schools we use on Election Day as polling places. Jessica informed the Board we have been in communication with the Board of Education and they have assured us there will be no

trainings at any of the schools we use. Mr. Detmer suggested putting a sign at the new North Dorchester High School directing voters to the middle school.

- **Cell Signal Testing**

Director Dales informed the Board that the staff went around to every polling place to test the cell signal for Same Day Registration (SDR) on Election Day. The State has decided the larger 6 counties in Maryland will be the test counties that will do SDR at their polling places in the 2020 Primary. We haven't heard yet about the General, but Ms. Dales predicts it will be expensive, when implemented.

- **IGO Info. (Handling the Press)**

Director Dales shared the presentation with the Board, she thought it was a good summary of how to handle the press.

Additions to the Agenda:

Mr. Detmer will be providing an updated address soon.

Public Comment:

None

Confirmation of Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held in Room #110, County Office Building on Tuesday, November 26, 2019 at 5:30 pm.

Adjournment:

Mr. Batson motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Corkran. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.

APPROVED:

Michael Petros

[Signature]

Robin Willey

William E. Batson

Rep. C. L. [Signature]

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