



**REGULAR SESSION
MINUTES**

**WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
January 14, 2025
17718 Virginia Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740
240-313-2050**

Present:

Board:

Tammy Downin, President
Kandace Carpenter, Vice President (arrived 3:17pm)
Donna Brightman, Secretary
Nancy Armstrong, Assistant Secretary
Claudia Martin, Member (arrived 3:06pm)
Brian Kane, Board Attorney

Staff:

Barry Jackson, Election Director II
Teresa Morningstar, Election Deputy Director II
Sarah Hall, Election Program Specialist II

Absent:

None

Guest:

Beth Harvey
Patrick Leone

President Tammy Downin called the meeting to order at 3:00pm at the Washington County Election Center, 17718 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

Declaration of Quorum Present:

President Tammy Downin declared that a quorum was present.

Approval of Draft Agenda:

Nancy Armstrong moved to accept the Draft Agenda as presented and Donna Brightman seconded. The agenda was unanimously accepted at 3:02pm.

Recess and Opening of Executive Session:

President Tammy Downin called for a motion to recess the Regular Board Meeting and open an Executive Session. Nancy Armstrong made a motion at 3:02pm to go into Executive Session. Donna Brightman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Guests were dismissed until the regular board meeting was reconvened.

SUMMARY OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON January 14, 2025

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:

Time of closed session: 3:02pm

Place (location) of closed session: Election Center 17718 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

Purpose of the closed session: (1) to discuss (i) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction.

2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:

Names of members voting aye: Tammy Downin, Donna Brightman, Nancy Armstrong. Kandace Carpenter and Claudia Martin arrived after the vote to join the meeting.

Members opposed: None

Abstaining: None

3. Statutory authority to close session:

This meeting was closed under the following provisions of General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b):

Topic #1: § 3-305(b) (1) **Topic #2:** § 3-305(b) () **Topic #3:** § 3-305(b) ()

4. Listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

Topic description	Persons present for discussion	Action Taken/Each Recorded Vote
#1: Director's Performance Evaluation	Tammy Downin, Kandace Carpenter, Donna Brightman, Nancy Armstrong, Claudia Martin, Brian Kane	None

After the discussion was completed, Nancy Armstrong made a motion to adjourn Executive Session and return to Regular Session at 3:41pm. Kandace Carpenter seconded, and all parties voted aye.

Reconvene Regular Meeting:

Tammy Downin called to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 3:41pm.

Donna Brightman made a motion to adjust the agenda to move the discussion of the Board of Canvassers to the end of the Regular meeting. Kandace Carpenter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 3:43pm.

Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes:

Donna Brightman made a motion to approve the October 8, 2024 Regular Session Minutes as presented. Kandace Carpenter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 3:45pm.

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Donna Brightman made a motion to approve the November 5, 2024 Organizational Meeting Minutes for the 6:35am meeting. Claudia Martin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 3:46pm.

Donna Brightman requested that the word "None" be added under "Guest" to both the Organizational Meeting Minutes and the Special Meeting Minutes.

Donna Brightman made a motion to approve the November 5, 2024 Scanning Unit Verification Minutes. Nancy Armstrong seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 3:47pm.

Donna Brightman made a motion to approve the November 5, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes. Kandace Carpenter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 3:47pm.

Correspondence:

None.

Reports:

I. Election Director

A. Personnel – PEPs will be mailed to SBE this week.

B. Meetings:

1. Director's Meetings:

1) No meeting in December.

b) Next Meeting: Thursday, January 16, 2025

2. Trainings: Barry and Teresa at iGO

C. Legislative Update: 447th Session convened on January 8th

1. SB0018 (Muse) – reduces Early Voting days to 5 (Thurs-Mon)

2. HB0091 (Long et al) – voter ID, either photo ID or current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document

3. HB0115 (Long) – Voter ID, either voter registration card, driver's license, or other government photo ID

4. HB0274 (Ways&Means Chair)/SB0259 (EEE Chair) – LBE Election Plan

a) Including a plan to maximize voter turnout

5. HB0253 (Harris) – requires SBE or LBEs to send mail in ballots to pre-trial detainees

6. HB0052 (Vogel) – allows 16 year olds to vote for Board of Ed

7. HB0215 (Fair et al) – ranked-choice voting for presidential nomination and certification of election-supporting technology

8. HB0201 (Wilkins)/SB0093 (Kramer) – LBEs to send mail-in ballot applications to eligible voters at least 60 days before each primary election

9. HB0044 (Wu) – makes circuit court judge race non-partisan

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10. SB0066 (Ellis) – accommodations for elderly and disabled voters at polling place.
11. HB0285 (Long) – requires SBE and/or LBEs to provide list of registered voters who have requested a mail-in ballot to a candidate upon request.
12. HB0067 (Long et al) – signature verification and prohibition from opening mail in ballot envelopes that have no signature (military and spouses excluded)
13. HB0153 (Fair et al) – change minimum registration age to 15 years, 9 months and requirement to send notice of eligibility to vote when voters will be 18 before the next statewide election
14. HB203 (Bouchat) – single-member districts and establishment of a redistricting convention
15. HB287 (Harris) – an individual simultaneously may not hold a party office and an elected public office
16. HB0096 (Bouchat) – constitutional amendment regarding the election of state senators
17. Curbside Voting [HB0317]– Barry Jackson noted that curbside voting has been reintroduced as a possible option for voters in future elections. The equipment required to accomplish this was discussed.

Donna Brightman reminded the Board that Delegate Grossman was to bring forward legislation regarding their pay schedule but was no longer a delegate at this time. The delegate who has filled her vacancy has been in contact with Donna Brightman to follow up on the pre-filed bill by Grossman. Donna Brightman asked the Board if it would be acceptable to the members that the bill only be submitted if the language put forth in the bill was “just right?” The board members agreed.

Barry Jackson explained to the guests present that this proposed bill was concerning the current law governing the Board members’ pay schedule. The intention of the new bill was to establish consistency across all counties of the minimum compensation for the Board members.

D. Voter Registration Activities and Statistics:

1. Registration Statistics for December 2024 were distributed to the Board.
 - a) HB0274 was discussed regarding ways to maximize voter turnout. Teresa Morningstar noted that the added cost of an additional Early Voting Center (4 total Early Voting Centers) was requested in the budget for the next election year. Tammy Downin inquired if the legislation were to pass what

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would be some other options for Washington County to ensure maximization of voter turnout?

E. Candidate Filings: N/A

F. Voting System Activities:

1. Post Election Maintenance (PEM) to begin week of January 20th.

G. Projects:

1. Three Clearie Award submissions.

2. Flying Boxcars game will be Friday, June 6, 2025.

a) Tammy Downin noted that there could be a drawing or lottery for an election worker to throw out the first pitch. This idea will be addressed for the 2026 game.

II. Attorney
No report.

Unfinished Business:

I. Christmas Party

a. The Board agreed that the turnout for the event was good. The event was enjoyed by all and the service at the venue was also good.

New Business:

I. Review of 2024 General Election

Barry Jackson noted that the turnout for the 2024 General Election was over 70% for Washington County. Statewide one third (1/3) of all voters who voted in the General Election voted each by mail, early, and on election day.

Donna Brightman expressed that the biggest issue of the 2024 General Election that needed to be addressed appeared to be provisional judges and their training. Kandace Carpenter agreed and believed more people needed to be available who understood how to help voters complete the provisional process. Donna Brightman mentioned that she would be willing to attend the provisional training so she could be helpful to the provisional judges at the polling places on election day. Brian Kane noted that the training for a provisional judge requires a lot from the election worker and many can become easily confused by the process. Brian Kane also found that most questions asked of the board members at the polling places were concerning how to help provisional voters. Barry Jackson mentioned that part of the uptick in provisional voters was due to many voters being confused that there were no longer vote centers for election day and so voters needed to go to their regular polling places. Nancy Armstrong would like more training for the provisional judges and more preparation for the chief judges to be able to competently help the provisional election judges. Tammy Downin requested that the provisional forms contain highlighting for the specific places where the provisional judges need to be completing.

Donna Brightman commented that in her experience on election day, it appeared that many voters in "south county" had been exposed to "disinformation that the marking devices were changing votes." The rest of the board members expressed that they had lines of voters for the ballot marking devices at the polling places where they had

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visited.

Donna Brightman also mentioned that she had been made aware that many write-in candidate lists were still in the voting booths after the polling places had been informed to remove them. Barry Jackson explained the history of the write-in candidate lists in the voting booths in Washington County and the specific laws governing the availability of the lists for the voters.

At this time, guest Beth Harvey was introduced. Beth Harvey had three questions for the Board members:

1. What is the policy regarding the write-in candidate lists and posting them in the voting booths? She found that there were inconsistencies among the polling places. Some polling places had the write-in candidate lists posted in voting booths and others did not.
 - a. Barry Jackson explained that the original intent of posting the write-in candidate list in the voting booths was to prevent voters from walking around the polling place with their ballot looking for the list elsewhere. Barry Jackson then explained that the requirement for the write-in candidate list is only to post it in the polling place somewhere. During Early Voting, there had been complaints concerning the placement of the candidate write-in list in the voting booths, so President Tammy Downin directed Barry Jackson to remove the write-in candidate lists from the voting booths and only post them with the sample ballot at the front of the polling room. The policy moving forward will be uniform across the polling places. There will not be candidate write-in lists available in the voting booths, but the list will be made available to all voters in the polling place.
2. If a voter would like to participate in "day of voting" [same-day registration], where should a voter go to be able to do it? Were people turned away from the election board office and asked to go to their own polling place to register?
 - a. Kandace Carpenter replied that it may have been explained to the voter(s) that if they register and vote in their own polling place, the process will be much quicker, and they will receive the correct ballot style. However, if they are to register at their incorrect polling place, they will have to vote provisionally and may not receive the most accurate ballot for them. Donna Brightman asked Beth if the complaint was made because the voter had been turned away from registering to vote as a Same Day Registration voter? Beth Harvey answered, "yes." Beth explained that she was told that a voter had been asked to go to the election board for same day registration but was then turned away and told to go to his/her polling place instead. Donna Brightman asked Beth if she had contact information for the voter? If so, can that person contact the board and explain his/her concern? The board members would like to speak to the voter(s) and be sure any confusion was cleared up.
3. If there are multiple candidates running for an office, can all the candidates appear on the same screen on the Ballot Marking Device? And if not, can the candidates appear in a random order instead of alphabetically, so the same

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names are not always delegated to the next page? It is a disadvantage to alphabetically leave a candidate on the second screen.

- a. Barry Jackson explained that the purpose of the button "More" on the ballot marking device was added to solve this problem. The ballot marking device requires the voter to click "more" and see all the candidates before they can move on to the next contest. The State Board of Elections is looking into how to streamline this process with the next election software for all counties. The software decisions are made at the State level as far as how many candidates can appear on the screen of the ballot marking device at one time. Barry Jackson said that the alphabetical order of the candidates as well as the multiple pages of candidates can be brought to the attention of the State Board. Brian Kane asked Beth if it would be an acceptable solution to list at the top of the contest how many candidates there are, so the voter will know that they may want to look through multiple pages of candidates before making a voting decision. Beth Harvey agreed that that would be an acceptable solution if all candidates cannot fit on a single page.

The discussion was completed, and Beth Harvey thanked the Board for their time and for answering her questions.

Members Remarks:

None

Guests Remarks:

None

Confirmation of Next Meeting:

The next Regular Meeting of the Washington County Board of Elections will be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2024 at 3:00 pm. The location is Washington County Election Center, 17718 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, MD; as pursuant to the Bylaws of the Washington County Board of Elections, Article 3, Section 3.3(A) 8.

Distributed Information:

Board Packet

Future Events:

Manual Audit of 2024 General Election – January 29, 2025 at 9:00 am

Recess for Board of Canvassers (approve canvass minutes):

Nancy Armstrong made a motion to recess the regular meeting and convene the Board of Canvassers in 5 minutes. Kandace Carpenter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 5:00pm.

Kandace Carpenter made a motion to accept the Canvass Minutes for the October 15, 2024 Mail-in Ballot Canvass 1 Day 1. Nancy Armstrong seconded. Brian Kane requested that a typo be corrected. The word "council" should be changed to "counsel." After the correction, the motion passed unanimously at 5:02pm.

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Kandace Carpenter made a motion to accept the Canvass Minutes for the October 21, 2024 Mail-in Ballot Canvass 1 Day 1 cont'd. Claudia Martin seconded. Donna Brightman inquired into whether notification of any canvass date changes had been made on the website's public notice. The canvass dates for each canvass were available through a link on the front page of the website as well as in the posted public notice. [There were no corrections that needed to be made to the October 4, 2024 public notice.] After the discussion was complete, the motion passed unanimously at 5:04pm.

Kandace Carpenter made a motion to accept the November 1, 2024 Canvass Minutes for Mail-in Ballot Canvass 1 Day 1 cont'd. Nancy Armstrong seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 5:05pm.

Kandace Carpenter made a motion to accept the November 7, 2024 Canvass Minutes for Mail-in Ballot Canvass 1 Day 2. Claudia Martin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 5:06pm.

Kandace Carpenter made a motion to accept the November 13, 2024 Canvass Minutes from the Provisional Canvass. Donna Brightman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 5:07pm.

Kandace Carpenter made a motion to accept the November 14, 2024 Canvass Minutes for the Combined Provisional cont'd and Mail-in Canvass 2, Day 1. Claudia Martin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 5:07pm.

Kandace Carpenter made a motion to accept the November 15, 2024 Canvass Minutes from the Combined Provisional/Mail-in Ballot Canvass 2 Day 2. Nancy Armstrong seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 5:08pm.

Reconvene Regular Meeting:

Kandace Carpenter made a motion to adjourn the Board of Canvassers and reconvene the Regular meeting. Donna Brightman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously at 5:08pm.

Adjournment:

Tammy Downin called for a motion to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting, Kandace Carpenter made the motion and Claudia Martin seconded. The motion passed and the Regular Meeting concluded at 5:09pm.

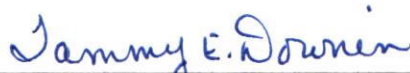
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Compiled by Sarah Hall
Election Program Specialist II

Respectfully Submitted,

 2/18/25

Tammy Downin, President Date

 2/18/25

Donna Brightman, Secretary Date