

State of Maryland 

State Board of Elections – May 20, 2020 Emergency Meeting

Attendees (via conference call):

Michael R. Cogan, Chair
Patrick J. Hogan, Vice Chair
William G. Voelp, Member
Kelley A. Howells, Member
Malcolm L. Funn, Member
Linda Lamone, Administrator
Andrea Trento, Assistant Attorney General
Nikki Charlson, Deputy Administrator
Donna Duncan, Assistant Deputy, Election Policy
Tracey Hartman, Director of Special Projects
Fred Brechbiel, Chief Information Officer
Mary Cramer Wagner, Director, Voter Registration

Attendees (at SBE Office): Gary Hastings, IT Division

DECLARATION OF QUORUM PRESENT

Mr. Cogan called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm. After taking roll call, he stated that all members were present except Ms. Howells, and that there was a quorum. He stated that the meeting was being livestreamed.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

Ms. Howells joined the meeting at 4:34 pm.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION (JUNE 2, 2020)

Closed Session

Mr. Cogan requested a motion to close the board meeting under General Provisions Article, §3-305(b) (7) and (8), which permits closing a meeting to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice and with staff about pending or potential litigation. Meeting in closed session allows the members to consult with Board counsel without waiving attorney-client privilege and obtain information relevant to pending or potential litigation. Mr. Voelp made a motion to convene in closed session under General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)(7) and (8), and Mr. Hogan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The motion having passed, the Board met in closed session in accordance with exemptions defined in (b)(7) and (8) of Section 3-305 of the Open Meetings Act to receive advice from counsel and consult with staff about pending or potential litigation.

The closed session began at 4:36 pm. Mr. Cogan, Mr. Hogan, Ms. Howells, Mr. Voelp, and Mr. Funn attended the closed meeting. In addition to the board members, Linda Lamone, Nikki Charlson, Andrea Trento, Donna Duncan and Erin Perrone attended the closed meeting.

Staff provided information and Mr. Trento provided advice about pending or potential litigation.

No action was taken.

The closed meeting adjourned at 5:17 pm.

RECOVERING OF OPEN MEETING

The open meeting reconvened at 5:20 pm. After confirming that all members were present, he stated that there was a quorum, and that the meeting was being livestreamed.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION (JUNE 2, 2020) (Continued)

Review Number of In-Person Voting Locations for Baltimore City

Ms. Charlson stated that SBE and the local boards have been working diligently to implement a vote by mail election in accordance to the comprehensive plan that the Board approved and the Governor adopted. Most voters in Maryland have received their ballots and some have already started to be returned to local board offices. She stated that Baltimore City voters began to receive their ballots over the weekend of May 16th, and those continue to arrive daily. SBE has been working and in contact with the United States Postal Service (USPS) many times a day to ensure the prompt and secure delivery of all ballots. She stated that she was continually impressed with the level of commitment and sophistication from the USPS to assist SBE with the delivery of ballots. The USPS has been using a combination of measures to guarantee delivery, including traditional mail service, overnight shipping, and directly picking up ballots from multiple out of state mail houses and getting them to Maryland. In the case of Baltimore City, Ms. Charlson expressed disappointment that the vendor failed to deliver ballots according to the schedule that had been laid out, and for failing to notify SBE of those delays.

She stated that the purpose of the emergency meeting is to increase the number of vote centers in Baltimore City from four to six. The Board previously set a maximum of four vote centers, but in light of the ballots being delivered later than originally planned, she asked that the Board consider adding two additional vote centers for Baltimore City for the primary election on June 2, 2020.

In response to a question from Mr. Hogan regarding additional ballot drop off boxes for Baltimore City, Ms. Charlson stated that SBE is providing an additional 10 ballot drop off boxes from the manufacturer, and they are expected to be delivered [to the transportation company's warehouse] on Friday, May 29th. With the addition of the new boxes, there will be 15 ballot drop off boxes total, including one in each council district plus one at the local board of elections office.

In response to two questions from Mr. Voelp, Ms. Charlson stated that the Baltimore City Board of Elections has identified the two additional locations for the vote centers and has the staff to run the vote centers on election day. She identified the two locations as Northwestern High School on Park Heights Avenue, and Northwood Elementary School on Loch Raven Boulevard. She also stated, in response to a question from Mr. Voelp, that the locations for the additional ballot drop off boxes have been identified and that the Baltimore City Board of Elections is working out the logistics including 24-hour security.

In response to questions from Mr. Hogan, Ms. Charlson confirmed that the location of the additional vote centers were at the discretion of the Baltimore City Board of Elections, and that she was not sure of the geographic disbursement of them. Ms. Charlson stated, in response to Mr. Voelp's earlier question, that she was informed that all ten of the additional ballot drop off boxes would be under surveillance.

Mr. Cogan stated that in his authority as Chairman of the State Board of Elections, he determined that the issue of additional vote centers for the City of Baltimore is an issue which requires immediate

board action that could not wait until the next regularly scheduled board meeting. He stated that the issue is whether the Baltimore City Board of Elections should be authorized two additional vote centers for the 2020 Primary Election. He then directed the SBE staff to poll the members on the issue.

Ms. Charlson stated that she had just received word that the six vote center locations are geographically disbursed within the City boundaries.

Ms. Charlson polled each member, and each responded yes, that they supported two additional vote centers for Baltimore City. Mr. Cogan stated that on the authority of the board, Baltimore City was authorized two additional vote centers.

Mr. Cogan stated that the next agenda items- Old Business, New Business, and Disclosure of Campaign Contributions- were not pertinent to the emergency meeting, and unless there were objections, he would remove those items from the agenda. There were no objections.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

Mr. Cogan stated that the next regular meeting is already scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 2020, at 2:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hogan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Howells seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Cogan adjourned the meeting at 5: 30 pm.