

**Caroline County Board of Elections
Monthly Board Meeting
Friday, February 14, 2025
9:30 a.m.**

In Attendance:

Allison Murphy, Election Director
Tammy Willis, Election Program Specialist
Debra Brohawn, Election Program Assistant
James Bilbrough II, Vice President

Margaret Thompson, Member
Suzanne Campos, Member
Dana Callahan, Member
Walter Palmer, Attorney

Declaration of Quorum Present

Mr. Bilbrough called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and stated that there was a quorum present.

Mr. Walter Palmer was asked to attend today's meeting so we could celebrate his time as Board Attorney following his retirement announcement at January's meeting. Mr. Bilbrough presented Mr. Palmer with citations from the Governor's Office and the County Commissioners, recognizing his service as Board Attorney for the past seven years. Mr. Palmer expressed his appreciation to the Board and staff.

Mr. Bilbrough read a letter from Mr. Jack Keats, Board President, in his absence citing his need to retire from the Board, effective immediately. The Board and staff expressed their sadness in Mr. Keats' resignation and acknowledged his incredible 24 years of service as a Board member.

The Board needed to fill the position of Board President due to Mr. Keats' resignation. Mr. Bilbrough asked for nominations. Mrs. Thompson nominated Mr. Bilbrough, he accepted, and all the members voted unanimously in favor. Mr. Bilbrough asked for nominations for Vice President, Mrs. Thompson nominated Ms. Campos, she accepted, and all the members voted unanimously in favor.

Ratification of Meeting Minutes from January 17, 2025

Mrs. Thompson made a motion to ratify the meeting minutes as amended, Ms. Campos seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

There were none.

Reports

a. Election Director's Report

Mrs. Murphy reported that she and the staff have attended several virtual and in-person meetings since the last Board meeting. She shared a recap of the 2024 Post Election Manual Audit. We had help from seven counties from the Eastern Shore which served as a refresher for those counties since we were among the first to complete the audit.

Mrs. Murphy shared that Ms. Willis and Mrs. Brohawn went to Talbot County to help with their audit. She and Ms. Willis went to Worcester County to help with theirs.

b. Board Attorney's Report

Mr. Palmer recommended getting SBE to change the law, removing the requirement that the board attorney must be a county resident. Mrs. Murphy stated that she has reached out to SBE and was told that it is too late for this legislative session. She will reach out to MAEO as well.

c. Board Member's Report

No report.

d. Board Member Campaign Contribution Report/Paraphernalia Disclosures

No report

Old Business

No old business.

New Business/Correspondence

a. Voter Registration Figures as of February 3, 2025.

No comment.

b. County Bulletins – Vol. 21, Issues 1 & 2

Mrs. Murphy confirmed that the Battery Charging Acknowledgement was completed. She does not intend to utilize AI.

c. FY2025 Budget Detail as of February 3, 2025

Mrs. Murphy explained that some line items were moved that qualified to be paid for by the grant of \$20,000. She was given an extension until 6/30/2025 to spend the funds.

d. FY2026 Proposed Budget Request

Mrs. Thompson said that she thought the letter Mrs. Murphy wrote to the Commissioners was very well done. Mrs. Murphy noted that it's difficult to estimate expenses that could be incurred because of the current legislative session since the budget is due before session ends.

Pending SBE regulations will affect office storage space. It is currently in the public comment phase. She sent an email and met with the County Administrator and Deputy Administrator to notify them of the pending regulations. She notified the Deputy Administrator that she did not include funding in the FY26 budget request and asked for suggestions on how to address it within the proposed budget. She has not received a response.

e. Caroline County FY2026 Budget Calendar

Mrs. Murphy will be out of town for the County Commissioners' Budget Roundtable meeting. She informed Mr. Fox, Finance Director, that she is unable to attend. He will forward any questions from the Commissioners to her.

f. PG24 Post Election Manual Audit Results Email + results enclosed

Mrs. Murphy reviewed the results spreadsheet and the process. SBE chose the contest and election day precinct to be audited. We had eight bipartisan teams of LBE staff perform the manual audit. There were no discrepancies.

g. 2025 Board Member Calendar of Events

No comments.

Closed Session

At 10:25 a.m., on a motion by Mrs. Callahan, seconded by Ms. Campos, the Board adjourned regular session and convened in closed session for the following purpose: to discuss, before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal.; under authority of Maryland Code, State Government §3-305(b) (14); with Mr. Bilbrough, Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Callahan, Ms. Campos, Mrs. Murphy, Ms. Willis and Mrs. Brohawn. Closed session adjourned at 11:08 a.m. on a motion by Mrs. Thompson, seconded by Mrs. Callahan, unanimously approved.

Confirmation of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be March 14, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. Meetings are held at the Health & Public Services Building, 403 S. 7th Street, Suite 206, Denton, Maryland. An appreciation luncheon for Mr. Keats will be held at the Chesapeake Culinary Center following the March 14th meeting at noon.

Adjournment

Ms. Campos made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mrs. Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Bilbrough adjourned the meeting at 11:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Signed: Debra Brohawn
Mrs. Debra Brohawn,
Election Program Assistant

Approved: James Bilbrough
Mr. James Bilbrough,
Board President

Dated: 3/14/2025

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