

Takoma Park's board of elections met on 6/17/2019 at 7500 Maple Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland. Present: Brian Ernst (board chair); Arthur David Olson (board vice chair); Lori Grazio (board member); Curtis Antonucci (board member); Jennifer Domagal-Goldman (board member); Jessie Carpenter (city clerk).

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

We approved the agenda.

We approved the minutes of our 5/6/2019 meeting.

Brian reported that Greg Lebel has resigned from the board. Brian reported having moved from Ward 3 to Ward 4; Brian has reapplied for board membership. Lori reported having yet to reapply for board membership.

We agreed to move the next board meeting to 7/22/2019.

Arthur David reported that the Maryland bill implementing election-day voter registration was neither signed nor vetoed by the governor, so it has become law; it specifies that folks who show up at the right precinct with the right documentation can cast regular ballots; other folks can cast provisional ballots.

Arthur David reported on the Hyattsville election; the report is attached.

Arthur David reported that a modest number of voters completed registration forms at Celebrate Takoma; about a dozen people used an election worker sign-up sheet.

Jessie reported that on-line election worker forms have been received.

Jessie reported on the 5/22/2019 Maryland election officials meeting. Jessie met vendors and county election workers; vendors were present to promote products with the prospect of Maryland state equipment changes in 2022. Jessie noted one state official who addressed electioneering boundaries and campaign signs; the official stated that the 100-foot figure for boundaries is the maximum that should be applied; it's okay to establish smaller boundaries. (The Montgomery County limit is 25 feet). The official noted that campaign signs that lack authority information are to be left undisturbed at polling places if they represent individual, uncoordinated effort. Jessie saw the Knowink iPad poll books of the type used by the District of Columbia; they are networkable. Jessie mentioned affordability and security as poll book matters of concern. Jessie noted that the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) does not certify poll books.

We considered election equipment. Jessie noted that in 2012, the city issued a request for proposals which eventually resulted in a contract with ES&S. Jessie noted that the board might consider whether to require EAC certification when relevant; Jessie mentioned that non-certified equipment is available from some vendors (in particular, those who handle union elections). Jen undertook to research election equipment vendors. We agreed on the desirability of meeting with vendors in September or October of this year.

We considered charter and code amendments. On campaign finance, Brian noted the usefulness of finding out what comparable nearby jurisdictions (Greenbelt, College Park, Hyattsville, Laurel, and Rockville) require; Jessie undertook to find out. Jessie noted that charter and code recommendations are to be considered again by the council in September; there is sentiment for an event allowing for public input before legally required public hearings.

We considered campaign signs. Jessie noted that Greenbelt sets up zones where signs can be placed. We agreed to eliminate election-specific recommendations regarding signs.

We agreed to continue recommending dealing with final-round ties by lot.

Jessie noted that Councilmember Smith advocates for moving to a vote-at-home system; Councilmember Searcy has also expressed interest in this. Councilmember Kostiuik has sent questions; other councilmembers have yet to write to the board.

Brian undertook to research petition percentage requirements and time limits in nearby comparable jurisdictions. Jessie undertook to contact the city attorney about state limitations on petition percentage requirements and time limits. Brian undertook to research what other jurisdictions specify on when referenda can be deferred to regular elections (rather than being voted on in special elections).

Jessie noted that a Takoma Park ranked-choice-voting advocate had no problems with recommended changes regarded ranked-choice voting.

We adopted a suggest change of "Officials" to "The Mayor and Councilmembers" in section 606(b); Jessie undertook to thank the suggester.

Jessie reported that a county board of elections person has indicated that the memorandum of understanding is to be discussed in a staff meeting; there is no need to attend a county board meeting at this time.

With Greg's resignation, Jen undertook to contact former councilmember Michael Moore to see if Michael might help with developing instructional and motivational materials for candidates.

We considered scheduling of work in preparation for the 2020 election. Brian sees visiting polling places as a priority for the next couple of months. Jessie is visiting the county board on 6/20/2019 and plans to address scheduling visits with folks there.

Jen undertook to see if folks at the Center for Creative Citizenship of the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore will design an election tee shirt for us.

We adjourned at 8:58 p.m., to meet next on 7/22/2019 at 7:00 p.m. at 7500 Maple Avenue.

Brian Ernst, presiding

Arthur David Olson, recording

Curtis and Arthur David observed on May 7, 2019 at Hyattsville polling places. Unorganized points follow.

- The city used poll books provided by Prince George's county; ballot scanners and ballot marking devices were provided by ES&S under contract. All the equipment was the same as that used by Montgomery County.
- There was lots of early voting which made for a less-hecktic-than-in-the-past election day. Early voting included "popup" voting which, on election night, was claimed to be a first in Maryland. (Folks who voted in Sligo Creek Park in Takoma Park in 2015 would beg to differ.) Metro stations were used as popup voting sites.
- On election day there were five "regular" polling places, one for each ward in the city—one was on the ground floor of their city hall. In addition, all same day registrants were sent to city hall to vote, and did so on the second floor of the city hall, where the city clerk and their deputy handled matters.
- Members of the board of elections (formally, the "board of supervisors of elections") do not serve as election workers; they do roam the polling places and handle tabulation and announcement of results.
- The polling place I visited had 6 workers: a chief judge; three folks handling check-in; one person issuing ballots; and one person staffing the scanner. The chief judge filled other roles as needed during the day.
- Election workers were eligible for \$150 for the day; the chief judge was eligible for \$175 for the day. Total election day pay per polling place: \$925. Total for five polling places: \$4,625.
- Procedures for check-in were largely identical to those used by Montgomery County; the only difference ADO saw was that folks were not asked for their month and date of birth.
- Voter authority cards were initialed at check-in, at the ballot table, and at the scanner. Fastest check-in ADO measured was 36 seconds.
- Folks who showed up at the wrong polling place were advised to go to the correct polling place, but provisional ballots were available.
- Per the chief judge at one polling place, all ballots cast by same-day registrants were provisional.
- There were four checks a day (at noon, 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m.) of poll book counts and scanner counts.
- Voter authority cards are bundled and kept, but if poll book counts and scanner counts match at the end of the day, the voter authority cards are not counted.
- Ballots were bundled in plastic-wrapped sets of 100. Ballots did not have stubs (thus eliminating the need to keep stubs and reconcile stub counts with other counts).
- Montgomery-county style privacy envelopes were used.
- Voters did not receive detailed Montgomery-County-style instructions when their ballots were issued; neither check-in workers nor ballot issuers mentioned the availability of the ballot marking device.
- All election workers wore "HVL Vote Local" tee shirts that included details on the election (in particular, the date) on the back.
- The chief judge at the polling place ADO visited did (on at least one occasion) enforce the "no pictures" dictum.
- The chief judge at the polling place ADO visited mentioned not having received training on handling spoiled ballots (a deficiency corrected on election day itself).
- By way of training, chief judges do get pamphlets, instructions, and hands-on training at early voting.
- At the end of the day, memory sticks from the scanners were fetched from the polling places and brought to city by hall by an ES&S technician and a board of elections member.
- Election workers receive electronic mail in advance with training materials; they receive printed copies at training.
- ES&S technicians attended election worker training.
- The board did no special work on educating or motivating candidates.
- The board has not yet thought about switching to unified or side-by-side elections with the county. (Sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds are eligible to vote in Hyattsville, which would complicate things.)
- Ties are resolved with a special election.
- Poll books were set up for "polling center" ("anybody can vote") use for early voting; they were reprogrammed by ES&S between then and election day for ward-only voting.
- Oddly, the "how to mark" section of the ballot included the name "Ann" used as a write-in; this might give someone named Ann an advantage in Hyattsville elections.
- At the polling place ADO visited, the flow of voters tapered after 7:00 p.m.; there was one case between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. where all four polling booths were in use.
- At the polling place ADO visited, the phone ban was not strictly enforced.
- Absentee ballots must be postmarked (not received) by election day; that means that final certification of election results must wait for about a week after the election (to allow for delivery of absentee ballots).
- A Montgomery-county-style bag was used for provisional ballots. (However: ADO observed one chief judge to take a provisional ballot from a voter, seal the envelope, and place the envelope in the bag.)
- A city election guide was produced for the election (and was available online); sample ballots were not mailed out.
- Hyattsville polling places have yellow vests to be issued to the last person in line at 8:00 p.m. closing time.
- Ballots are in English and Spanish.
- At least while ADO was at one polling place, election workers did not rotate jobs.
- ES&S technicians handled (or directed): removal of memory sticks from scanners; printing of final scanner and poll book reports; shutdown of scanners, ballot marking devices, and poll books; removal of ballot bins from scanners; and locking and sealing of ballot boxes (before which unopened ballot packs were placed in the ballot boxes).