

MINUTES
BOARD OF ELECTION JUDGES
Thursday, May 15, 2025, 9:00 am

The Board of Election Judges met on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at the Bel Air Town Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elaine Millard
Ruth Oswald
Wendy Ribbans
Alissa Wallace

IN ATTENDANCE: Michael Krantz, Director of HR & Administration
Kristine Reinhardt, Administrative Secretary
Stephanie Taylor, Director, Harford County Board of Elections
Jane Sudbrink, Recording Secretary

I. REVIEW/APPROVE AGENDA

Mr. Krantz opened the meeting at 9:03 am. He thanked members for being on the board, and he thanked Ms. Taylor for her assistance. Ms. Millard motioned to approve the agenda. Ms. Ribbans seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

II. TOWN OF BEL AIR MUNICIPAL ELECTION DAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2025

A. For Two Seats on the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners

Mr. Krantz discussed the last election and thanked the board for all their hard work during that election.

III. REVIEW STATE OF MARYLAND LEGISLATION HOUSE BILL 322 REGARDING ELECTION LAW MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Krantz said the state had recently tried to cease the assistance of local boards of elections to municipalities. Mr. Krantz enquired with the contractor Election Systems and Software and determined that it would cost the town almost \$18,000 to contract with this company to provide the equipment (scanner and tabulator). He said during the last state legislative session in Annapolis, MD; a law was passed that provides the State and Local Boards of Election the option to help Maryland municipalities. Ms. Taylor explained that the law states that the local board is only required to supply to municipalities the paper precinct register. She said that Harford County has always gone beyond that. Ms. Taylor said the new law gives election boards the *option* to enter into memorandums of understanding (MOU) with municipalities, the MOU is drafted, and the state then agrees with this MOU. She said there is also the option to use electronic poll books, which are very expensive, and for the town it would cost \$5,000 plus another \$5,000 for the ballot database. She said there are also rental costs for the equipment and voting booths. Ms. Taylor recommended that the town save \$5,000 and go with the paper register, which Ms. Taylor can supply. She noted that she does not have approval from the state yet for her assistance, and Mr. Krantz confirmed that he has not yet cancelled his contract with Election Systems and Software. She assured members that she will continue to follow up with the state.

Mr. Krantz confirmed the critical value of having Ms. Taylor and her team's assistance during the election. He also said there is a significant cost savings compared to contracting with Election Systems and Software. In addition, Mr. Krantz said he is very grateful for the expertise and assistance provided by Harford County Board of Elections. Ms. Taylor confirmed for the group that she felt strongly that the state will approve the MOU.

IV. REVIEW TOWN CHARTER ARTICLE V AND TOWN CODE CHAPTER 37 ELECTIONS

Mr. Krantz referred to 37-2 of the town code. He said Ms. Millard, Ms. Ribbans, and Ms. Wallace are the election judges and Ms. Oswald is the alternate. According to the code, election judges may appoint poll workers. Mr. Krantz discussed absentee voting/mail-in voting under section 37-18. Mr. Krantz and Ms. Reinhardt will distribute and collect the ballots, secure them, and check signatures, but will not open them. He said that on election day, these ballots will be given to the election judges and will be canvassed on Thursday after the election. Mr. Krantz read the absentee ballot rules and emphasized the importance of timeliness. Ms. Taylor asked if the code or charter will have to be changed because of this new law. Mr. Krantz affirmed there may be changes in the future.

V. REVIEW IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

A. Election Day

Mr. Krantz said a notice will be posted on the Town's website homepage and social media. He referred to the information he has posted on the website currently about the election, including past elections with official results, a sample ballot, candidate filing, voter registration, and the ballot drop box. He said he will complete the 2025 Election webpage by next week. Mr. Krantz added that this information will also be posted in The Aegis newspaper in September and will run almost weekly until November 4.

B. Candidate Filing

Mr. Krantz said the candidate filing deadline is September 19, 2025.

C. Voter Registration

Mr. Krantz said the voter registration deadline is October 14, 2025.

D. Absentee/Mail-In Voting

Mr. Krantz said the absentee/mail-in voting deadline is October 28, 2025.

E. Public Logic and Accuracy Test and Election Judge Training

1. Tentatively Scheduled for October 28, 2025, at 10:00 am

Mr. Krantz said this training and testing will take place at the Harford County Board of Elections location. He asked that all the board members commit to attending this day and noted that it will be published online in case anyone wants to observe the testing.

VI. REVIEW ELECTION JUDGE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Discuss Check-In, Provisional, Ballot, and Voting Judge Duties

Board members, Mr. Krantz, Ms. Taylor, and Ms. Reinhardt discussed the layout in the town hall main room for election day. They first went over last election's layout for the check-in judge, the provisional judge, and the ballot judge. They detailed what worked last election and what did not, and determined that Ms. Wallace, as ballot judge, needed a back-up. Ms. Wallace mentioned that she received complaints from voters that the layout was not conducive to privacy in the booths. The group determined the best possible booth setup in terms of maximum privacy. Ms. Taylor noted that it is permissible to move the booths around during the election. Ms. Wallace advised conducting a mock vote the morning of the election. Mr. Krantz said he is requesting ten booths.

Ms. Taylor said the town could use stanchions to physically guide voters through the process. After Ms. Wallace said there must be power cords at the check-in table, she indicated a different place for the table and the group agreed. Ms. Taylor noted that the layout is adjustable except for the scanners. Mr. Krantz pointed out that a few problems with mismarked ballots at the scanner backed up the process and asked whether it would be better to have two scanners. Ms. Taylor said that it is required to have one person (a voting judge) per scanner, explained the procedure, and said the scanners must be separated for privacy. Mr. Krantz said a privacy bin is provided to drop ballots if the scanner is not functioning. He confessed that he was worried about adding the complexity of two scanners. Ms. Taylor explained that the chief judge or an election judge would assist people to booths so as not to have the voting judge leave the scanner. Ms. Taylor said the scanner must not be left unattended.

Ms. Taylor advised that there should be an extra election judge or poll worker available to provide assistance. Ms. Millard said that this person could be the back-up for Ms. Wallace and the back-up for the scanner. Mr. Krantz and the board members concluded that an extra scanner would not be needed. Ms. Taylor added that her office is only ten minutes away should there be any issues and offered to have a staff member on site to assist. The board members agreed with this offer. Mr. Krantz noted that the town *is* contracting with the board of elections for their assistance.

B. Nominate and Elect a Chief Judge

Ms. Millard nominated Ms. Ribbans to be chief judge. Ms. Oswald seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed. Mr. Krantz noted that duties and responsibilities can alternated on election day, and Ms. Taylor said Ms. Ribbans could direct this as needed.

Mr. Krantz asked the group if they agree with ten voting booths. He said with the layout change, there could be up to fourteen booths. Ms. Taylor said it is possible to add booths during the day. Ms. Wallace said the new staging area will prevent people from collecting en masse. Members then discussed and decided on the location of the provisional area. Mr. Krantz noted that another meeting could be called prior to October 28, 2025, if necessary.

VII. DESIGNATE ELECTION JUDGES FOR CANVASSING OF ABSENTEE AND PROVISIONAL BALLOTS ON:

A. November 6, 2025, at 10:00 am

Mr. Krantz said the canvassing takes place in Town Hall.

B. November 14, 2025, at 10:00 am

Mr. Krantz said the second canvass to count absentee ballots occurs on the second Friday after the election. He said the election results are not official until after this second canvass. He asked board members if they are all available on October 28, November 4, November 6, and November 14. Ms. Wallace said there may be an employment conflict for her on November 6 and 14. Mr. Krantz said Ms. Oswald could fill her role if needed.

VIII. DISCUSS AND REVIEW ELECTION DAY STAFFING

Mr. Krantz said there are two seats on the Board of Commissioners up for election. He said he would prefer to have seven election judges and poll workers on duty on election day. He said for that scenario there would be two check-in judges, a provisional judge, a voting judge, and a voting judge at the scanner for a total of five plus two poll workers. Mr. Krantz said that with the four board members and the two poll workers, the total number at this point is six and questioned the board if six is enough. Mr. Krantz said the poll worker duties can be alternated, and Ms. Ribbans can assign them tasks. Ms. Ribbans said six may be enough. Mr. Krantz said he would prefer that workers be able to take breaks on election day whenever and for as long as needed so he felt seven would be necessary. He asked the board members if they knew someone who would like to be a poll worker on election day with the caveat that this person must live in town.

IX. CLOSED SESSION

A. This portion of the meeting will be closed under the provisions of the Maryland Open Meetings Act General Provisions Art. §3-305(1).

B. Topics of Discussion:

1. To Discuss the Appointment of Poll Workers

Mr. Krantz and the board members decided not to close the meeting. He said Stephen Burdette and Lisa Spelker submitted their applications to be poll workers. Mr. Krantz listed Mr. Burdette's numerous contributions to the town and recommended his appointment.

Mr. Krantz said Ms. Spelker is currently a Harford County election judge so she has a lot of election experience. He also highly recommended her appointment. The board had no follow-up questions.

C. Reasons for Closed-Session Discussion of Above Topics

1. Because public discussion of candidates’ names, qualifications, experience, and background could discourage people from volunteering for public service or compromise their privacy rights.

X. NOMINATE AND APPOINT POLL WORKER(S)

Ms. Wallace motioned to appoint Stephen Burdette as a poll worker. Ms. Ribbans seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Ms. Oswald motioned to appoint Lisa Spelker as a poll worker. Ms. Millard seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mr. Krantz said Ms. Reinhardt will email the board with specific dates regarding the election. He noted that he preferred not to have the poll workers canvass, although the code dictates that poll workers can step in with the authority of the election judges.

Mr. Krantz showed the board the town website, the election webpage, and the committees and commissions webpage. He specifically pointed out the application for poll workers. He another meeting may needed if there were multiple candidates for additional poll workers. He said the poll worker candidates must commit to October 28 and November 4.

XI. MISCELLANEOUS

Ms. Oswald asked if the board members rotated positions on election day two years ago. Ms. Millard said that is the normal procedure but there was not enough time last election.

Mr. Krantz said this election is for two seats on the Board of Commissioners, moreover, the last election was for three seats on the Board of Commissioners resulting in higher voter turnout. He said nevertheless voter turnout could again be strong.

Mr. Krantz thanked the board for helping to conduct a fair, honest, and transparent election leading to a good municipal government.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ribbans motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Millard seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:07 am.

Signature on file

Wendy Ribbans, Chief Election Judge

Signature on file

Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk