

**City of Mount Rainier
Board of Elections
State of Maryland
Volunteer Voter Registration Training
and Meeting
23 February 2015**

Minutes

Attendees:

Orphelia Baxter; Maxine Drakeford; Abby Greenwell (via teleconference); Karl Jones; Nichole Logan; Malinda Miles; Veronica Owens; Matthew Weber; and Dina Williams

The City of Mount Rainier, Board of Elections (BOE) met at City Hall at 8:00am on Monday, February 23, 2015, to attend the State of Maryland Volunteer Voter Registration Training held at Prince George's County Board of Elections headquarters in Largo, MD. All BOE members were present except Abby Greenwell, who will attend an future training session. Mayor, Malinda Mikes was in attendance. Transportation was provided the City.

Productive training occurred, whereby all trainees were certified and became effectively equipped to serve as Volunteer Voter Registration Registrars. The session ended at 10:55 a.m.

The BOE was transported back to City Hall to discuss the calendar of events, in general; voter registration efforts, in particular. Abby Greenwell attended via teleconference.

Mayor Miles thanked everyone for their time, especially noting her appreciation for the newly-appointed Board. This was the BOE's first official meeting since becoming certified on February 17, 2015.

"We are setting a precedent on how to effectively run our Board of Elections," remarked Mayor Miles. "This is a new day, with new processes. Everyone here will bring stuff to the table," she added. The Mayor also stated that though she is the BOE's assigned liaison, the members are the decision-makers. Because of her mayoral duties and other activities, the Mayor will not be able to attend all meetings, but is available through email and telephone.

The Mayor and all attendees agreed that the 2013 election had major issues. The BOE will not only serve as judges, but will create and execute plans and procedures, as well as publish an Election training manual. Since the election is just 10 weeks away, there is no time to waste. The BOE must hit the ground running. The Board must stop playing inclusion and include.

Agenda Approval

Mayor Miles noted the calendar was out of her brain, and had gone through the Charter to determine dates and events.

Since April 4th is a Saturday, the voter registration deadline was changed to April 3rd. The calendar will be posted on the City's website (<http://www.mountrainiermd.org>) and cable channels (Verizon Fios, 21 and Comcast Xfinity, 71).

Veronica Owens, Assistant City Manager, distributed the draft for the Election Central News section of the newsletter. The BOE will compare the Election Calendar and Schedule of Events to the proposed listed dates and revise accordingly. Key dates for the public and candidates

must be accurate and included in the next City newsletter. Suggestions, additions, and deletions will be forwarded to Veronica before start of business, Tuesday, February 24.

Mayor Miles pointed out the Mount Rainier Business Association (MRBA) is built in the schedule, but the BOE is not responsible for promoting the event.

Registration Booklet

The BOE Supervisor, Maxine Drakeford, is the official "picker-upper" of this document. She will work with the County BOE and alert Mount Rainier's BOE when it has been retrieved.

Post Office Box

Dina Williams, will order the PO Box at the Mount Rainier Post Office. The box is being established to receive absentee ballots.

New Voter Registration Strategies

- Numbers and projections were discussed. Out of approximately 7,000 possible voters, having 60-70 percent registered voters is the goal.
- Orphelia Baxter suggested establishing voter registration drives at the three main apartment complexes (Kaywood, Queenstown, and Queens Manor) and the Seniors living facility, Rainier Manor. Complex managers could be contacted to learn if community rooms would be available to host drives.
- Apartment residents would probably not attend drives. Knocking on doors and inviting residents to participate will achieve better results.
- Abby Greenwell suggested working in teams of two at apartment complexes.
- Those residents without cable and who do not read the newsletter must be informed and included.
- The BOE will work with Northwestern High School to seek students who can volunteer with voter registration efforts. Community service hours will be given to students.
- Mayor Miles discussed a friendly competition, with the BOE member registering the most residents receiving a gift card, appropriate reward. The Mayor wants each BOE member to register 200 new voters, and work to get them to the polls to vote. While increasing voter registration is crucial, getting to the polls to vote is the ultimate goal.
- Transportation to the polls will be provided by the City.

Marketing Products

Dina noted (and all attendees agreed) about the importance of branding, and how having the same colors, logo, and tag lines make a difference.

Flyers

- Karl Owens has drafted a flyer. The Board applauded his efforts, noting the design needs to be red, white, and blue versus green and pink.
- Flyers will include dates.
- Fifteen hundred flyers will be ordered from the City's printing vendor, who offers a 50 percent discount.

Yard Signs

- Specifications are: 17 x 24, double sided, and requiring wired stakes.
- Abby recommended not dating the signs so they could be used for future elections. The BOE agreed the signs will read, "first Monday in May."
- There will be no signs for voter registration, only the election.

- The BOE must not post candidate signs on their property or wear any paraphernalia. The election must remain credible. There is only neutral territory in the City. Information about the election, including dates and voter registration can be placed on the properties of BOE members.
- Dina asked if the neon street sign used for Mount Rainier Day (located in Rhode Island Avenue) could be used for the election. Mayor Miles mentioned the State provided the sign. Veronica will request use of the State street signs two weeks before the election; 1 would be nice, 2 much better.

Banners

- Banners are quite pricey, roughly \$1,500 each.
- Orphelia suggested soliciting local businesses to donate a banner.
- While the City has never had banners posted for elections, this would be a great time to have banner placement.
- Suggested sites would be Queens Chapel Road (near 7-11); Varnum Road; and Rhode Island Avenue in the circle.
- Veronica and Dina were charged with obtaining banner prices.
- Dina was asked to write a solicitation letter.

Buttons

- The BOE will wear the voter registration button provided by the County BOE.
- Members agreed that if affordable, buttons could be designed to correspond with the other printing materials.
- Orphelia suggested offering new registered voters a button as a thank you token and marketing tool.

Social Media

- FaceBook and Twitter accounts will be used to promote voter registration and voting.

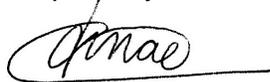
Next Meeting

The next BOE meeting is scheduled for 7:00pm on Wednesday, February 25, 2015, at City Hall.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 1:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Dina Estelle Williams
24 February 2015

/DEW