



**City of Mount Rainier  
Board of Elections Meeting  
Fire Station  
3716 Rhode Island Avenue  
Brentwood, Maryland  
7:15pm  
7 April 2015**

**Minutes**

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**Attendees:**

Ophelia Baxer; Maxine Drakeford; Abby Greenwell; Karl Jones; Nichole Logan; and Matt Weber

**Candidate Petitions**

- Candidate petitions were held and filed based on the City Charter and Elections Procedures stipulations, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at City Hall.
- Four candidates were determined eligible and were certified: two candidates for Ward 2, where two positions are available, and two candidates for Ward 1, where one position is available.
- The ballot order was drawn and finalized as follows:
  - ✓ Bryan Knedler (Ward 2)
  - ✓ Shivali Shah (Ward 2)
  - ✓ Charnette Robinson (Ward 1)
  - ✓ Tracy Loh (Ward 1)
- Two additional candidates- Vivian Ledbetter and Markita Bryant-were not certified due to not properly following petition guidelines as stated in the City Charter and Elections Procedures.
- Markita Bryant attended the Mount Rainier Business Association (MRBA) forum on Wednesday, April 8, held at the Mediterranean Café and announced her decision to run as a write-in candidate. The MRBA allowed Ms. Bryant to briefly speak at the forum and distribute materials.

**Signs**

- Sign rules have been clarified with Election Board members and Candidate Shivali Shah who contacted the Board with concerns. Candidate Shah has been instructed to direct any further concerns and questions to MRBOE's Gmail account.

**Candidate Forums**

- Matt will be the Board contact for the first forum, scheduled for April 18, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at City Hall.
- Maxine will be the Board contact for the second forum, scheduled for April 25, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Nature Center.
- The League of Women Voters need candidate bios and contact information.
- MRBOE will have representation at the April 8 MRBA scheduled for 7:00pm.

**Absentee Ballots**

- The email sent by City attorney, Linda Perlman, was reviewed by the Board. It is still unclear how much discretion the Board has to set up a PO Box.
- The Board would like to set up a PO Box as an additional option to the City Hall drop-off.
- The PO Box idea came from voter complaints during and after the 2013 election where there were concerns that absentee ballots were not properly handled by the City.
- The Mayor requested MRBOE to establish a PO Box to receive absentee ballots.

- MRBOE purchased a PO Box and would like to receive guidance from Attorney Perlman if it is permissible to use.
- MRBOE recommends election procedures are amended for next election to clarify rules relevant to absentee ballots.

### **City Council Meeting**

- The Assistant City Manager sent an email at 2:23pm, April 7, asking who would be in attendance to present the Candidates at the City Council meeting scheduled for 7:00pm on the same night.
- The Supervisor of Elections, Maxine Drakeford, attended the meeting and presented the candidates to the Council.
- Concerns were raised by a disqualified candidate, Ms. Vivian Ledbetter, because her petition was accepted at City Hall before 6:00pm, but disqualified by the MRBOE due to procedures not being followed. It is written in the City Charter and Elections Procedures that "Nominating petitions must be presented by the petitioner to the Supervisor of Elections sitting at City Hall between the hours of 6:00pm and 8:00pm on the first Monday in April of every odd-numbered year."
- Ms. Ledbetter requested her bio printed in the City's newsletter, *The Message*.
- According to the City Charter and Elections Procedures, "Each candidate certified by the Mount Rainier Board of Elections may have a picture, brief profile that includes information on their position or reason for running for office, and other information that will help the voter to make an intelligent decision about their candidacy.
- The City Charter and Elections Procedures manual does not address a policy or provision for write-in candidates to have their bio in the City newsletter, nor is it stated that write-in candidates may participate in City-sponsored forums. As such, it is the unanimous decision of the MRBOE to disallow write-in candidates to have bios included in *The Message*. Moreover, the MRBOE has agreed that write-in candidates will be excluded from participation in City-sponsored forums. Our consensus is based on the fact that write-in candidates have not followed proper procedures to have the full privileges of those who have taken the appropriate steps to become certified candidates.
- The Board discussed the need to document a set of recommendations after the 2015 election to help the City administer future elections.
- One suggestion was to abolish the write-in candidate option (similar to College Park), with the reasoning being that they circumvent the vetting process that certified candidates go through.

### **Action Items**

- Contact Assistant City Manager to reserve City Hall for next meeting scheduled for April 13 at 7:00pm.
- Invite City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Clerk, and Mayor to April 13 meeting to address any unresolved concerns.
- Email Attorney Perlman (cc Mayor) to learn what discretion the Board can have about the PO Box for absentee ballots.
- Nichole: Obtain candidate bios from Assistant City Manager to provide to League of Women Voters.
- Matt: Connect with Tammy of the League of Women Voters.
- Dina (and maybe Matt) will attend MRBA forum.
- Nichole: Request the ballot box from the Mayor.
- All Board members: Review ballots from last year (standard and absentee) and bring marked up copies with comments for next meeting.
- All Board members: Finalize procedure for requesting, delivering, and receiving absentee ballots.
- Dina: Edit and format last two meeting minutes for review and approval by the Board.

**Next Meeting**

- The BOE will meet at 7:00pm on Monday, April 13, at City Hall.

**Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 9:25pm.