



Washington County Board of Elections

Public Hearing

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

September 9, 2025

17718 Virginia Avenue

Hagerstown, MD 21740

240-313-2050

Present:

Board:

Tammy Downin, President

Donna Brightman, Board Secretary

Nancy Armstrong, Assistant Secretary

Claudia Martin, Member

Brian Kane, Board Counsel

Staff:

Barry Jackson, Election Deputy Director II

Teresa Morningstar, Acting Deputy Director II

Cory Green, Election Program Supervisor I

Absent:

Kandace Carpenter, Vice President

President Tammy Downin called the meeting to order at 7:00pm at the Washington County Election Center, 17718 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

Declaration of Quorum Present:

President Tammy Downin declared that a quorum was present.

Early Voting Site Selection Presentation by Board of Elections Staff:

Barry Jackson went over Election Law 10.301.1 regarding the number of early voting sites counties must have based on the number of registered voters. Barry Jackson presented COMAR 33.17.02.02 and the criteria that needs to be considered when selecting early voting sites. Barry Jackson went over Senate Bill 259 and discussed the Election Plan within the bill that must be submitted to the state that encompasses polling places, early voting, and ballot drop boxes. Barry Jackson presented various early voting locations that the Board has evaluated as possible sites for the upcoming 2026 Gubernatorial Election and how each site was evaluated pursuant to COMAR 33.17.02.02.

Public Comments:

Written Comments: See Attached to the public hearing.

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Leslie Allen had two questions. 1. After the contentious matter in 2024 if the state would allow more leeway to Washington County due to the shape of the county? The other question was regarding a prior meeting and voter participation statistics were previously distributed at the meeting and Smithsburg's turnout seemed lower than the other 2 early voting sites.

Dick Ebersole suggested that the Washington County Election Center not be used as an early voting site and a polling place on election day due to the number of provisionals that were generated on election day which were 252 just for this polling place on election day.

Ethan Lowen stated that if you look at the county it is split up into 4 sectors: 1 being the south, 2 being the northeastern part of the county which is the Smithsburg area, 3 being the western part of the county, and 4 being the center of the county and the city proper area. Mr. Lowen stated that if it is his understanding from the 2022 election that approximately 70% of the voters in the city of Hagerstown voted at the Election Center during early voting. It is for these reasons that the early voting sites should be spread throughout the county and there should not be one downtown as the residents downtown come to the election center to vote.

Marc Mignogna is in favor of adding a 4th early voting site as the county budget already has this cost factored into the budget and he would like the sites to be in Smithsburg, Boonsboro, The Election Center, and one in Clear Spring. Marc Mignogna stated that, since the Election Center is less than 2 miles from the city of Hagerstown, this site covers the city of Hagerstown.

Derek Harvey is an advocate for having as many early voting sites as possible that the county can legally have while focusing on the inclusion and equitable coverage throughout the county. Mr. Harvey stated that it is 14 miles from Cascade to the Election Center and Hancock is 28 miles. Mr. Harvey stated that the city residents have public transportation, while other residents in the county do not have this opportunity. Mr. Harvey stated that in 2024 it was "rather divisively stated" that the residents that do not live close to an early voting site can always vote by mail, however, the same thing can be said for city residents as well. Mr. Harvey also pointed out all the construction projects that will be occurring during the 2026 election and would like the board to take this into consideration as well with travel paths being altered.

Taj Smith urged the board to prioritize the early voting sites for accessibility and inclusion of residents. Ms. Smith stated this is particularly important for those from historically disenfranchised communities including cultural, ethnic, and minority groups. The city of Hagerstown has the largest number of seniors unhoused, people of color, and other groups that have limited access to essential resources. Ms. Smith stated the Election Center is outside of the city limits which could make it difficult for voters to vote even though there is public transportation as they could wait hours for a bus while being exposed to the elements. Ms. Smith urges the board to select at least one early voting site downtown as the city of Hagerstown is the only municipality that meets all the requirements when selecting a site.

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Angela Batista stated that city of Hagerstown has been discussed a lot in the past two years and that you can create as many maps as you would like, but the population, especially of the historically disenfranchised voters reside within the city limits. She urges the board that the city of Hagerstown needs a site for early voting.

Mike Barnes stated that, with the construction projects that will be going on throughout the county, there should be one site in the western part of the county in the Clear Spring or Maugansville area.

Peter Perini wanted to ask a question for clarification: Is there anywhere in the law that avoiding construction or traffic is a factor in the law when selecting early voting sites? Mr. Perini stated that the geographical locations of the early voting sites is not even a consideration until you get to the 4th early voting site so there is a specific list of criteria that must be considered for the 3 required early voting sites.

Adjournment of Public Hearing:

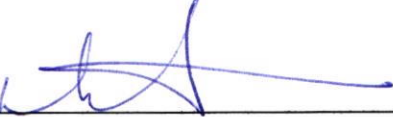
Seeing no other comments from the public, Tammy Downin called the Public Hearing to a close at 7:51pm.

Compiled by Cory Green
Election Program Supervisor I

Respectfully Submitted,

 11/13/25

Tammy Downin, President Date

 11/13/25

Donna Brightman, Secretary Date