

Board of Supervisors of Election (BOSOE)

Update on the Town Election 2025
Town Council Meeting, October 14, 2024

What to expect?

Overview of the Presentation: The presentation will take on the following aspects that were assigned to the Board and Town staff to address deficiencies in the previous elections.

Addressing the
Issues from 2023 -
Town Administrator

Developing
Processes and
Guidelines with
BOSOE - **BOSOE**

Ongoing Actions
and Tasks of the
Town Clerk – **Town
Clerk**

Addressing Issues Raised

Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth, Town Administrator

Election 2023



On October 2, 2023, an Election was held in the Town of Bladensburg. There were issues in the following areas:

- Candidate Process and Certification
- Notifications and Deadlines
- Absentee Ballots and Certification
- Mail Delivery Notification
- Public Trust in the Process



In November 2023, a BOSOE meeting was held, and staff was requested to investigate internal procedures to ensure transparency and the timely qualification of candidates.



Town Staff conducted research with other agencies and obtained

- Election process and procedures
- Vendors and Sources
- Candidate Materials
- Ballot Handling Process

Process | Key Issues Addressed

Review of Town Procedures and Documents – November 2023
– May 2024

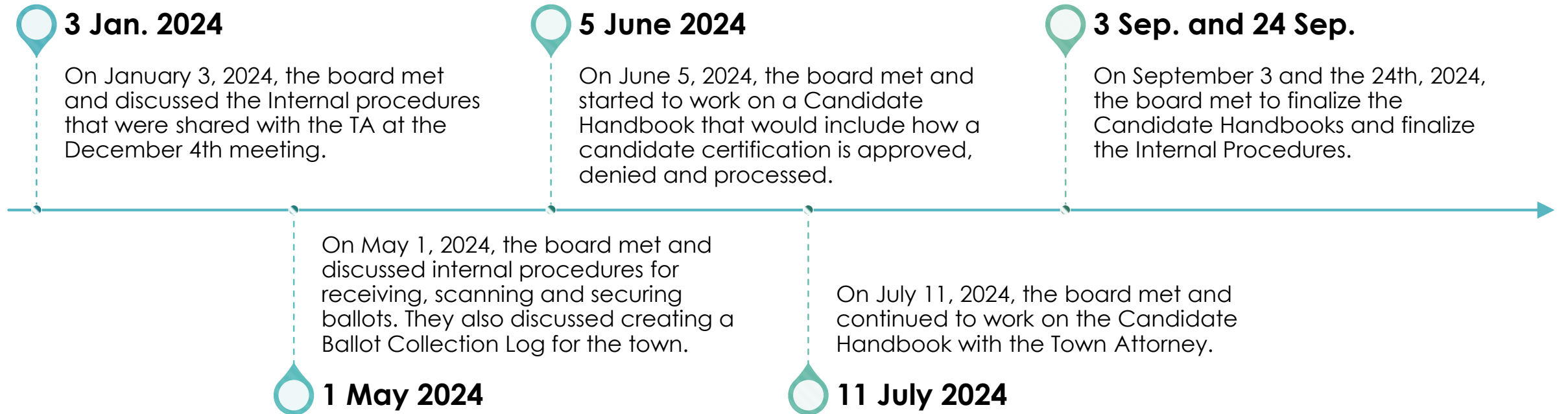
Meetings with BOSOE on DRAFT Materials – November 2023 –
October 2024

Review of Documents and Materials with Town Attorney –
Jan – October 2024

Hiring of Town Clerk to Manage the Process – August 2024

Updating Council on Progress – November 2023 – October
2024

BOSOE Timeline and Meetings 2024



Proposed Internal Town Election Timeline 2025 July and August

- Monday, July 21, 2025: Application packet materials are ready for candidates to be provided (12 weeks before the election)
- Friday, August 22, 2025, by 4:00 pm: To file as a Candidate: Submit a Candidate Certificate and Financial Disclosure Form to the Town Clerk's Office (45 days before election per Charter)
- Friday, August 22, 2025, at 4:00 pm: Candidate Bios Due Where is this required
- Monday, August 25, 2025: Absentee Ballot applications become available
- Monday, August 25, 2025: Ballot information for the draft ballot is sent to the election machine/ballot vendor
- Tuesday, August 26, 2025: Board of Supervisors of Elections Meeting 1
- Thursday, August 28, 2025: The draft ballot was emailed to me for review
- Friday, August 29, 2025: Ballots are approved and sent to print

Proposed Internal Town Election Timeline 2025 September/ October

- Thursday, September 4, 2025: Absentee ballots are taken to the post office
- Tuesday, September 9, 2025: Board of Supervisors of Elections Meeting 2
- Monday, September 22, 2025, by 4:00 pm: Applications for absentee ballots must be received by the Town Clerk.
- Monday, September 29, 2025, by 4:00 pm: Deadline to be a qualified write-in candidate. Write-in candidates must file a declaration of intent and the required financial disclosure form.
- Monday, October 6, 2025, by 7:00 pm: Deadline to vote for an Absentee Ballot
- Monday, October 6, 2025: Town Election Date 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

Developing Processes and Guidelines with BOSOE

BOSOE Members

Internal Policies and Procedures

The BOSOE worked diligently to create Internal Policies and Procedures for Staff and the BOSOE to follow during the election period. Highlights from the documents include:

- The Qualification of Candidates
- Ballot Issuance
- Collection Procedure
- Receiving and Securing Ballots Received



Election Candidate Handbook

Purpose: The Town of Bladensburg Candidate Handbook is a guide for all candidates wanting to run for Town Council.

Overview:

- General Information and Qualifications
- Election Rules & Regulations
- Campaign Finance Reporting for Candidates
- Campaign Signs and Other Political Matters
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Campaign Contribution Limitations



Election Judge Manual

Purpose:

The Town of Bladensburg Election Judge Manual is a guide for all election judges appointed to oversee the Town Council.

Guide Overview:

General Information and Judge Roles

Security Rules & Awareness

Voter Assistance & Voter Diversity

People & Activities in the Polling Place

Ballot Judges



Input from the BOSOE

The Board made suggestions on the following specific items:

- Resources to candidates by the Town
- Clarity on timelines and requirements
- Review of materials by the board and chair during the process
- Swearing in of staff participating in collection efforts



Ongoing Actions and Tasks of the Town Clerk

Regine Watson, Town Clerk

Moving Forward



Professional Development and Training

Attending Municipal Clerk Meetings – Ongoing
Interfacing with the County Board of Elections – Ongoing
Training Town Staff and Board Members - Ongoing



Working with the Council on the Appointments for the following Boards

Board of Supervisors of Election: Must be appointed - by March 2025
Ethics Commission Members: The Town needs more members for Spring 2025



Evaluating Vendors for Ballots and Elections Equipment

Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes – Fall 2024
Vendor Selection: Absentee and General Ballot Printing – January 2025
Vendor Selection: Voting Machine – January – March 2025



Voter and Candidate Information

Working on Publications and Information for Town Elections – January – March 2025
Posting Candidate Material and Timelines – June / July 2025
Holding Informational Sessions for Candidates – June / July 2025
Conducting the Election – July – October 2025

BOSOE and Town Next Steps

The Board will meet in November to review the last part of their task, which is Guidelines for Election Judges. This information will also be shared with the Council for review.

The Town Clerk will also frequently update the Council on the 2025 Election process.

Presentation Summary

- Staff has addressed and made recommendations for many of the concerns raised in October 2023.
- The informal adoption of procedures in other towns is a staff process guided by the BOSOE. Policies are modified and updated over time to reflect the following:
 - Changes in local law/state statute
 - To address questions and issues that arise
 - To streamline and improve processes
- Staff recommends that BOSOE adopt these policies and review them each Election cycle. Thus, the Town Clerk will complete an After-Action Report after every election to be presented at the December meeting following the election.
- Staff further recommends that the BOSOE review the Candidate Handbook for each election cycle and update it to reflect any modifications or questions raised in the previous election cycle.

Questions

Thank you – Regine Watson, Town Clerk