

Legislative Budget Analysis  
Proposed FY 2017 Operating and Capital Budgets  
Office of the County Auditor  
Baltimore County, Maryland  
**May 6, 2016**



**Board of Elections**

*Director: Katie Brown*

*Budget Office Analyst: Joy Schaefer*

*Legislative Analyst: Ronit Rubin*

Questions to Department Sent	Tuesday, April 19
Responses Requested By	Wednesday, April 27
Responses Received	Wednesday, April 27*
Analysis Due for Review	Friday, April 29
Analysis Completed	Friday, May 6

\*Due to the timing of the primary election on April 26<sup>th</sup>, the Budget Office responded to key questions on behalf of the Board. **An additional response is requested to provide a detailed explanation of the Board's FY 2015 unexpended fund balance.**

BALTIMORE COUNTY  
FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET ANALYSIS

**BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)**

BUDGET SUMMARY				
\$ in Thousands				
	GENERAL	SPECIAL	TOTAL	% Change Prior Year
<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>				
FY 2016 - 2017 Change	\$ (66.5)	\$ -	\$ (66.5)	
<b>BUDGET TRENDS</b>				
FY 2015 Actual	\$ 3,564.1	\$ -	\$ 3,564.1	
FY 2016 Approp.	5,249.7	-	5,249.7	47.3%
FY 2017 Proposed	5,183.2	-	5,183.2	-1.3%
<b>FY 2017 Budget Analysis</b>	<b>5,183.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,183.2</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>
<b>POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

PERSONNEL				
	GENERAL		SPECIAL	
	FULL-TIME <sup>1</sup>	PART-TIME <sup>2</sup>	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME
<b>PROPOSED CHANGE</b>				
FY 2016 - 2017 Change	0	0	0	0
<b>BUDGET TRENDS</b>				
FY 2015 Actual	26	12	0	0
FY 2016 Approp.	26	12	0	0
FY 2017 Proposed	26	12	0	0
<b>FY 2017 Budget Analysis</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>VACANCY DATA</b>				
Positions Vacant as of April 30, 2016*	1	1	0	0

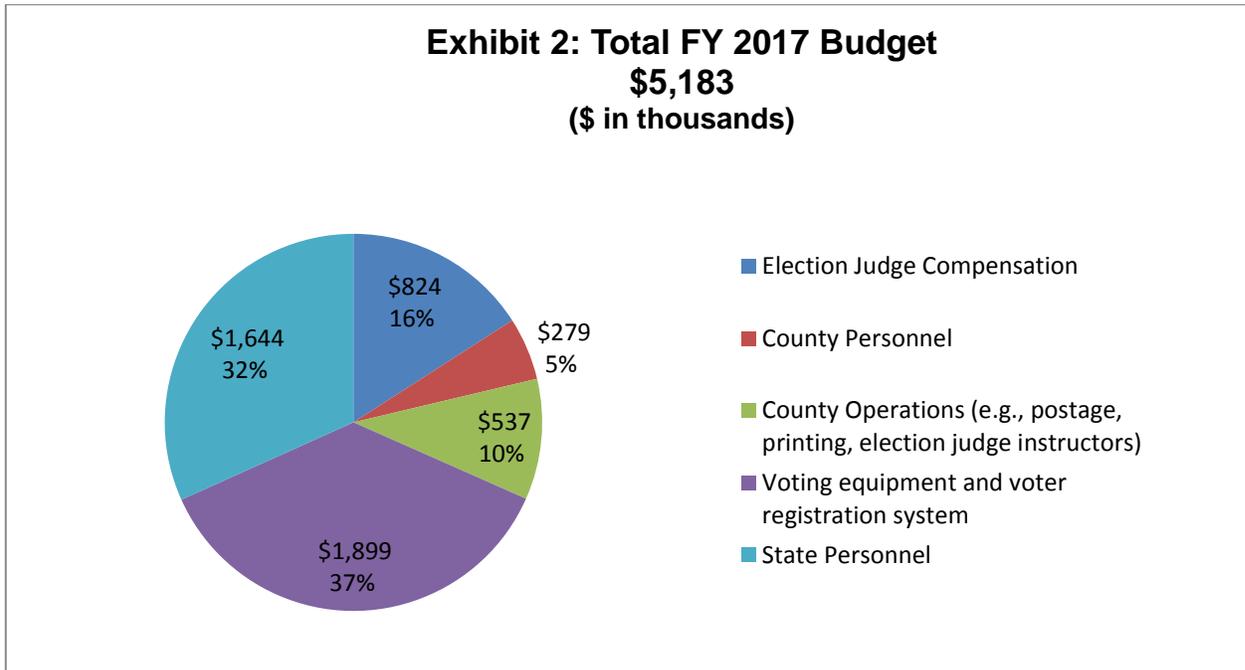
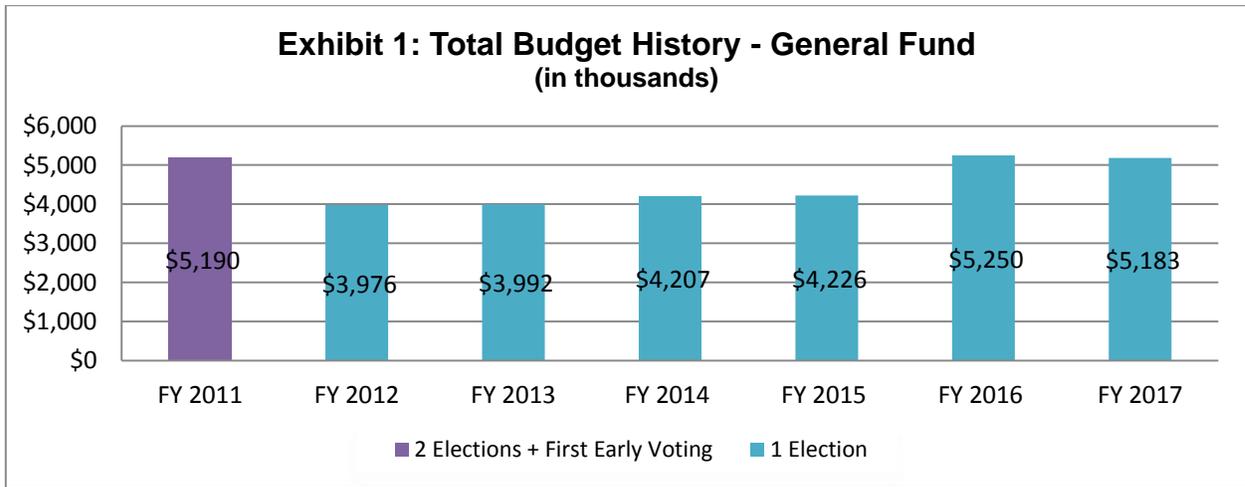
<sup>1</sup> State positions (funded by the County)

<sup>2</sup> County positions

\* Provided by the Board of Elections

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

**BUDGET SUMMARY:** The proposed FY 2017 budget for the Board of Elections totals \$5.2 million, a decrease of \$67 thousand, or 1.3%, from the FY 2016 budget. The decrease is primarily attributable to a reduction of \$187 thousand in appropriations set by the State Board of Elections for State salary and benefit reimbursement costs and voting system-related costs. These reductions are offset by an increase in election-related operating costs, primarily to cover an increase in the number of election judges required to operate 9 early voting sites. More than one-third of the proposed budget funds the County's share of the new voting and voter registration system costs; more than one-third funds personnel costs; and the remaining one-quarter funds election judge compensation and other costs associated with the November 8, 2016 presidential general election. **See Exhibits 1-3 for additional detail.**



## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

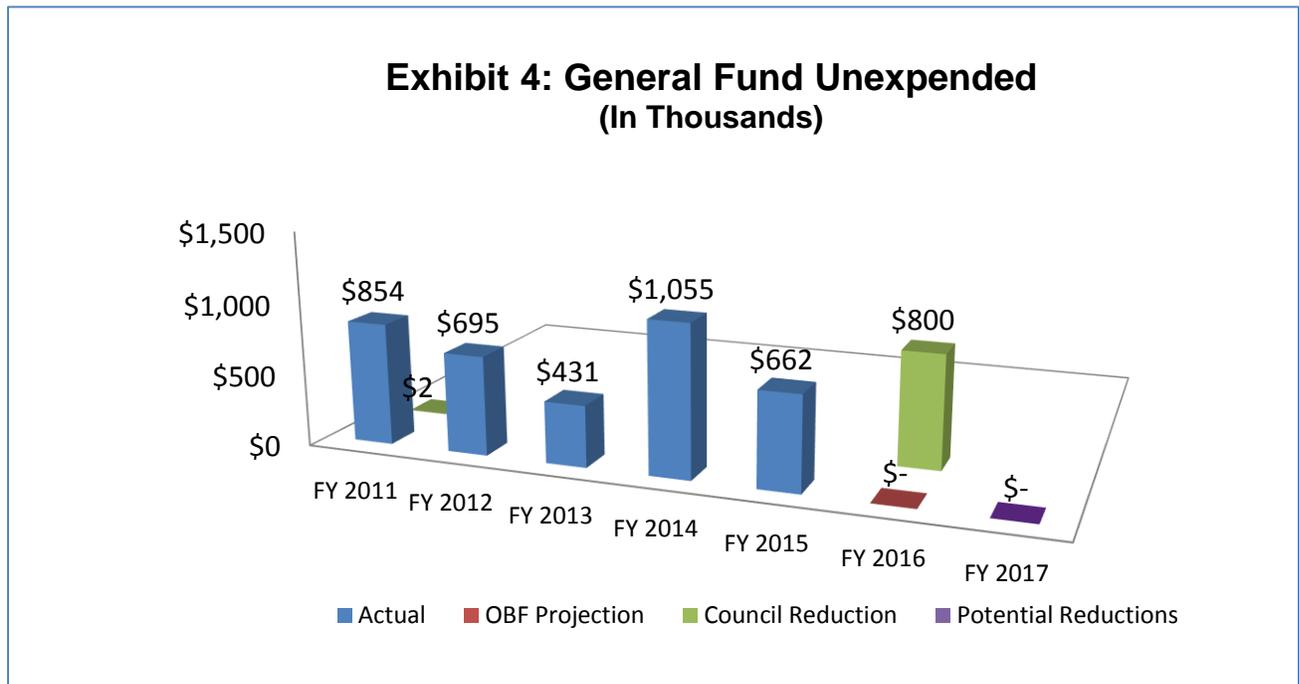
<b>Exhibit 3</b>			
<b>FY 2017 Proposed Budget (\$ in 000's)</b>			
<b>How Much it Grows:</b>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Special Fund</u>	<u>Total</u>
2016 Appropriation	\$ 5,250	\$ -	\$ 5,250
2017 Request	<u>5,183</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,183</u>
\$ (Decrease)	\$ (67)	\$ -	\$ (67)
% (Decrease)	-1.3%		-1.3%
<b>Where it Goes:</b>			
<u>Direct County Costs</u> .....			\$ 120
Personnel Expenses.....			105
Salaries for 3,023 election judges.....	120		
(236 additional early voting judges (total 356) to accommodate 9th early voting site, same day registration, and split shifts - \$86) (158 additional election day poll judges (total 2,667) to accommodate new voting system operations - \$34)			
2% COLA (excludes election judges and temporary help).....		4	
Increments & Longevities.....		1	
Temporary Help.....		(20)	
Operating Expenses.....			15
Reproduction, Postage and Shipping.....	22		
Training.....		6	
Facilities.....		2	
Other (Supplies, Operational equipment).....		(15)	
<u>County Reimbursements to State*</u> .....			(187)
Salary Reimbursements & Benefit Payments for 26 State Employees.....			(166)
Voting System and Voter Registration System Costs.....			(21)
<b>Total</b> .....			<b>\$ (67)</b>
 <i>*Costs determined by the Maryland State Board of Elections</i>			

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

### POTENTIAL BUDGET REDUCTIONS

The Board's budget has historically been greater than needed. For FY 2011 through FY 2015, the Board ended each fiscal year with a minimum of \$400,000 in unexpended funds. As part of the FY 2016 budget process, the Council reduced the Board's budget by \$800,000 to reflect the most recent State Board of Elections' cost estimates. Due to the conservative nature of the Council's reduction, as well as other line items that were overstated, the adopted FY 2016 budget included a "cushion" of funding, which has allowed the Board to absorb the cost of adding a 9<sup>th</sup> early voting site, as well as other unbudgeted costs (e.g., reproduction and postage costs driven by the switch to paper ballots, the changed date of the primary election, enhanced election judge recruitment efforts, and increased signage). As a result, the Office of Budget and Finance estimates that the Board's FY 2016 appropriation is sufficient to cover its FY 2016 expenses.

**For FY 2017, the State Board of Elections recently advised that the cost estimates originally provided to the County were understated; therefore, this analysis identifies no potential reductions for FY 2017.**



## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

### SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM/POLICY INITIATIVES AND/OR CHANGES:

1. Voting Process Changes \$0

The proposed FY 2017 budget provides level funding (from FY 2016) of \$1.9 million for all costs related to the State's new voting system, which provides a voter-verifiable paper record, as mandated by the General Assembly in 2007. The new voting system first appeared in the County's budget in FY 2016. The system was designed to rely on the use of paper ballots on Election Day and, due to the number of ballot styles that would be required at each early voting site, touchscreen ballot marking devices (similar in appearance to the legacy devices that County citizens were accustomed to using) during early voting. However, on February 4, 2016, out of concern for the inability of the new touchscreen devices to show all candidates on a single screen, the Maryland State Board of Elections announced a change to how new voting system equipment was to be used during early voting for the 2016 presidential primary election. This change resulted in the use of paper ballots at early voting sites, despite original concerns about the practicality and cost of supplying the early voting sites with a sufficient stock of pre-printed ballot styles necessary to accommodate voters from different precincts. Each early voting site was equipped with a limited number of touchscreen ballot marking devices to accommodate voters with disabilities. All voters were able to review their marked paper ballots and insert them into an optical scanner. The ballots automatically dropped into the secure ballot box. For privacy purposes, the Board provided all voters with paper sleeves to cover the ballots from the voting booth to the optical scanner.

***The Board should be prepared to discuss:***

- ***Challenges faced in implementing the State-required change with such little notice;***
- ***New system implementation experience;***
- ***Plans for the voting process for the general election; and***
- ***The potential for any significant changes in new system lease costs in light of the touchscreen issue that arose.***

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

### 2. New Personnel Costs \$120,085

The proposed FY 2017 budget includes \$824,458 for election judge compensation, an increase of \$120,085 from FY 2016. Baltimore County compensates election judges at the rate of \$225 per early voting/election day for chief judges and \$162.50 per early voting/election day for provisional judges as well as \$40 to attend training, which is a requirement prior to each election. Separate classes are held to train judges for early voting and election day. Compensation rates are unchanged since July 2007 (see Issue #4). The increase in the budgeted amount for election judge compensation is due to the following factors:

- The addition of a 9<sup>th</sup> early voting site;
- The need for additional judges to manage same-day registration during early voting (as required by State legislation enacted in 2013, beginning with the 2016 presidential primary election);
- The need for additional judges associated with the Board's restructuring of election judge responsibilities to manage the new voting system (see Issue #1); and
- Additional training compensation resulting from the decision to split coverage of early voting dates across two groups of judges (4-day maximum shift per judge).

During the 2013 legislative session, the General Assembly enacted legislation that required the County to establish three additional early voting centers (an increase from five to eight) and to extend the number of early voting days by two, from six to eight days, to improve citizens' access to voting. Accordingly, the County secured three additional early voting sites. The legislation also provided counties with the option to establish one early voting center in addition to the number required by law. The Board advised that the Woodlawn Community Center was added as a ninth site during the 2016 presidential primary election to reduce the wait time at the Randallstown Community Center. According to the "Wait Time Observations from the Maryland 2014 General Election" report (dated January 15, 2015 and issued by the Schaefer Center for Public Policy), the Randallstown Community Center handled the most voters in the 2014 gubernatorial general election early voting period in the State (11,489 voters). This Center also had the second largest number of people in line (156) at the close of the last day of early voting in the State.

The same nine early voting sites used for the presidential primary election will be used for the general election, as follows:

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

- Arbutus Community Center;
- Randallstown Community Center;
- Reisterstown Senior Center - Hannah More Campus;
- Woodlawn Community Center;
- Center for MD Agriculture & Farm Park (in Hunt Valley);
- Towson University - Administration Building;
- Honeygo Run Community Center;
- Sollers Point Multi-Purpose Center; and
- Victory Villa Community Center.

With changes implemented since 2012 to increase the number of early voting sites, expand hours of operation, and implement same-day registration during early voting, the \$254,640 budgeted in FY 2017 for election judge compensation to operate nine early voting sites during the 2016 presidential general election is more than double the compensation incurred for election judges to operate five early voting sites during the 2012 presidential general election (\$104,971).

In 2016, the General Assembly enacted (and the Governor signed) legislation that further increases the number of early voting sites that Baltimore County, and other large counties, are required to establish, from the current 8 (with the option of 1 additional site), to 11 (with no option for an additional site), beginning with the 2018 elections.

### ***The Board should be prepared to discuss:***

- ***The changing titles (and roles) of election judges necessitated by the new voting system and same-day registration during early voting;***
- ***How increased early voting affects Election Day demands and costs;***
- ***Whether the length of the current training session is sufficient to meet the needs of inexperienced judges; and***
- ***Any initial thoughts on potential locations for the County's two new early voting sites for 2018.***

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

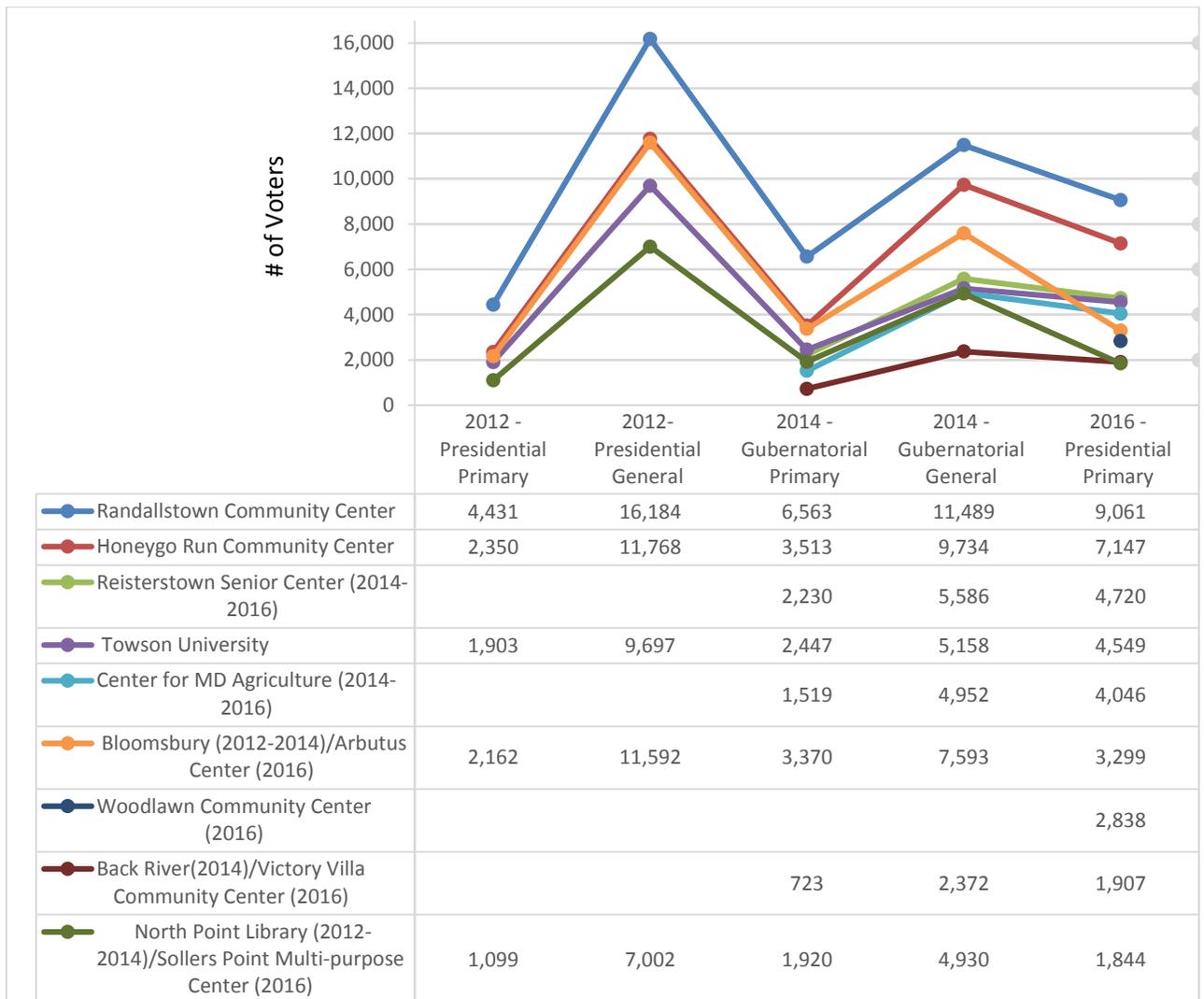
### OTHER ISSUES:

#### 3. Early Voting Patterns

Exhibit 5, below, reflects early voting population by voting site since the 2012 presidential primary election.

**Exhibit 5 – Early Voting Population by Voting Site (#Voters)**

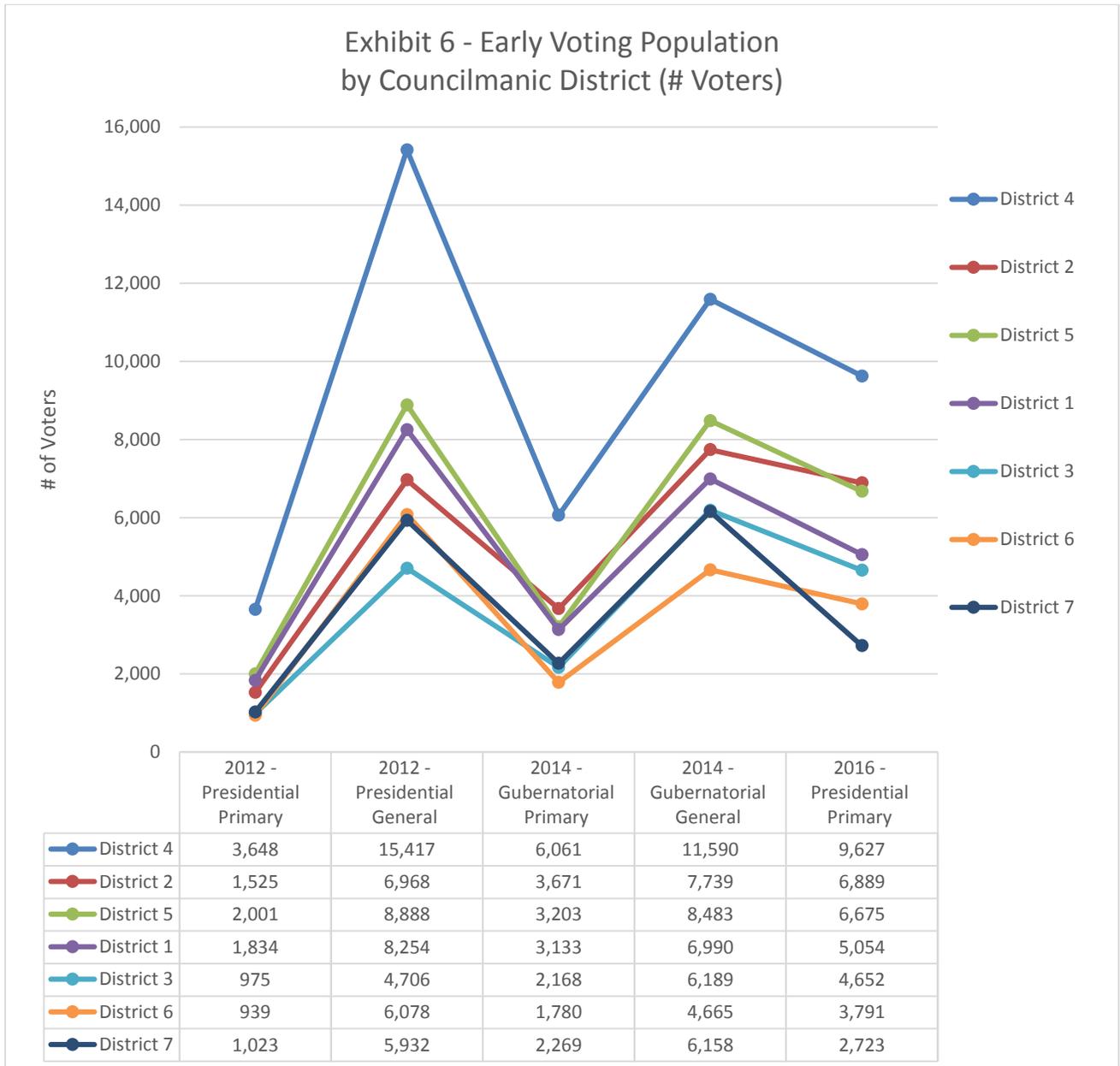
**2012-2016**



## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

Exhibit 5 shows that the Randallstown Community Center consistently ranked above all other early voting sites in terms of early voting activity.

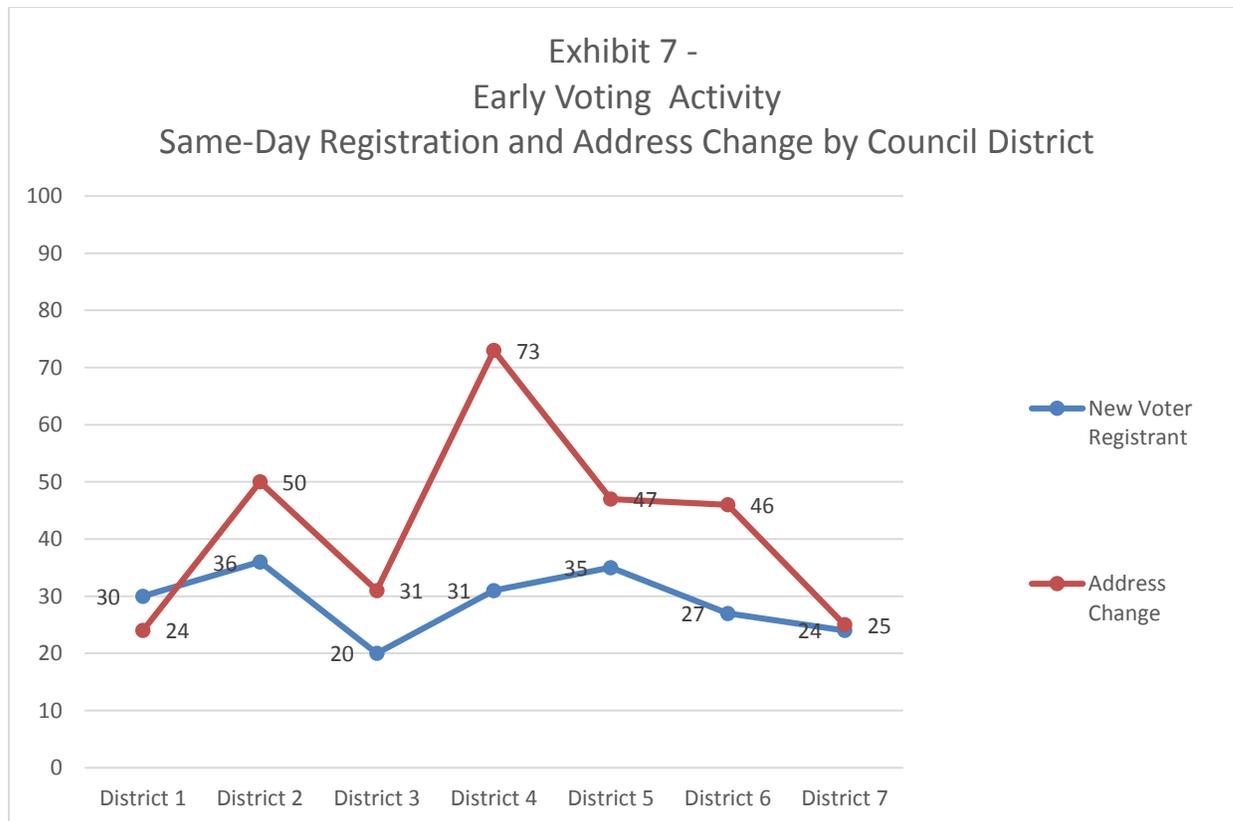
Exhibit 6, below, reflects early voting turnout figures provided by the State Board of Elections by Councilmanic District since the 2012 presidential primary election.



## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

Exhibit 6 indicates that early voter turnout more than doubled both in total and for each Councilmanic District from the 2014 gubernatorial primary election to the 2014 gubernatorial general election. The same trend is also evident when comparing early voter turnout by Councilmanic District from the 2012 presidential primary election to the 2016 presidential primary election. Based on these trends, assuming increases in early voting activity relative to the 2012 presidential general election, voting may increase significantly during the 2016 presidential general election.

As required by State legislation enacted in 2013, beginning with the 2016 presidential primary election, same-day registration became available during early voting. Exhibit 7, below, reflects same-day voter registration and address change activity that occurred at early voting sites during the 2016 presidential primary election.



During the 2010 and 2012 primary and general elections, concerns were raised regarding wait times experienced by voters throughout the State. According to the Survey of the Performance of

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

American Elections (SPAЕ), long delays were not widespread across the country but were limited to certain states and localities, including Maryland. Nationally, the average wait time to vote in 2012 was 14 minutes, while voters in Maryland waited 29 minutes on average. According to a recent study by the Schaefer Center for Public Policy (“Wait Time Observations from the Maryland 2014 General Election” report), the most common bottleneck in the 2012 general election was the time the voter spent at the touchscreen voting unit, which could be affected by various factors (length of ballot, preparedness of voter, familiarity with voting equipment, etc.).

***The Board should be prepared to discuss:***

- ***How Election Day waiting times have changed since the introduction of early voting;***
- ***Early voting sites and precincts that experienced wait times greater than 30 minutes, if any, during the 2016 presidential primary election;***
- ***The impact of a 9<sup>th</sup> early voting site at the Woodlawn Community Center on reducing wait times at the Randallstown Community Center during the 2016 presidential primary election; and***
- ***First-time implementation challenges associated with same-day voter registration.***

#### 4. Election Judge Recruitment, Retention and Training

Baltimore County presently compensates election judges at the rate of \$225 per early voting/election day for chief judges and \$162.50 for provisional and assistant judges (implemented July 1, 2007), as well as \$40 to attend training. Last year the Board advised that it would like to see the daily pay rate increased for election judges, as it has been losing judges to other jurisdictions paying higher rates (e.g., Prince George’s, Queen Anne’s and Caroline counties pay a rate of approximately \$300 per day for chief judges with Prince George’s County also paying \$50 for training) and because election judges work long hours (e.g., 12-14 hours). The Board also advised of its desire to increase the pay for election judges to attend the training class as the Board had expected to increase the length of the class by 1 hour, from 3 to 4 hours. The Board further advised that in 2014, 450 judges did not show up to work on Election Day, which may have happened in part due to recruits becoming overwhelmed during training; the Board surmised that higher compensation for election judges could reduce this occurrence.

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

Exhibit 8, below, provides a comparison of Baltimore County's salary rates to the rates paid by the other 23 Maryland jurisdictions (based on information obtained from local election board websites and local board personnel).

Exhibit 8 – Election Judge Pay (Including Training) Among Local Jurisdictions

<u>Chief Judge Pay</u>		
Jurisdictions with Lower Pay Rate (\$175-\$255)	<b>Baltimore County Pay Rate</b>	Jurisdictions with Higher Pay Rate (\$275-\$350)
Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Caroline (Early Voting), Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Somerset, St. Mary's, Washington		<b>\$265</b>

<u>Other Election Judge Pay</u>		
Jurisdictions with Lower Pay Rate (\$175-\$200)	<b>Baltimore County Pay Rate</b>	Jurisdictions with Higher Pay Rate (\$205-\$250)
Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Calvert, Caroline (Early Voting), Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's County, Washington		<b>\$202.50</b>

The Board advised of several changes that occurred in FY 2016 to enhance election judge recruitment efforts. Consistent with how other local jurisdictions staff early voting centers, it was determined that due to the demands of the job, early voting election judges would work a maximum of four days during the eight-day early voting period, necessitating recruitment for twice the number of early voting judges. These early voting judges typically serve as chief judges on election day. Recently, the County's Office of Information Technology assisted the Board in switching to a new online tool for scheduling election judge training class registration.

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)

***The Board should be prepared to discuss:***

- ***Whether it had greater success in reducing the number of election judge “no-shows” from the experience in 2014;***
- ***The number of judges still needed for the 2016 presidential general election (broken out by Republican and Democrat);***
- ***The benefits of the new online scheduling tool for election judge training registration;***
- ***Dates and duration of training sessions, as well as the prior notice given to potential judges; and***
- ***Any challenges in recruiting twice as many judges associated with the decision to split coverage of early voting dates across two groups of judges (4-day maximum per judge).***

### 5. Office Relocation

On August 31, 2015, the Board relocated its main office from Bloomsbury Avenue in Catonsville to Gilroy Road in Hunt Valley. The new location allows all Board staff to be located on a single floor and provides on-site warehouse space. The Board is utilizing its current Hunt Valley office as one of five training sites. Other training sites include the Western Hills Park Multi-Purpose Building in Catonsville, the Sollers Point Multi-Purpose Center in Dundalk, the Fullerton Community Center in Overlea, and the Owings Mills Library.

***The Board should be prepared to discuss:***

- ***Training sites added or removed in FY 2016, how these changes have benefited election judge recruitment efforts, and if there are plans to make changes to training sites for FY 2017; and***
- ***Its general thoughts about the impact of the office relocation on agency operations.***

BALTIMORE COUNTY  
FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET ANALYSIS

**BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)**

APPROPRIATION DETAIL
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	<u>FY 2015 ACTUAL</u>	<u>FY 2016 APPROP</u>	<u>FY 2017 REQUEST</u>	<u>NET CHANGE</u>	
				<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>%</u>
0501 Register Voters/ Conduct Elections	<u>\$ 3,564,138</u>	<u>\$ 5,249,706</u>	<u>\$ 5,183,170</u>	<u>\$ (66,536)</u>	<u>-1.3%</u>

BALTIMORE COUNTY  
FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET ANALYSIS

**BOARD OF ELECTIONS (005)**

PERSONNEL DETAIL
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	FY 2015 ACTUAL		FY 2016 APPROP		FY 2017 REQUEST		NET CHANGE	
	FULL	PART	FULL	PART	FULL	PART	FULL	PART
	APPROP		RECOMM		RECOMM		CHANGE	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
0501 Register Voters/ Conduct Elections	<u>26</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>