



**OCEAN PINES ASSOCIATION  
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (EC) REPORT  
2025 Board of Directors Election**

SUBMITTED TO: The Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors

SUBMITTED BY: Steve Ransdell, Chairperson

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Steve Ransdell	April 15, 2023	1	Appointed Chair June 2024
Cheryl Jacobs	June 15, 2024	1	
Tom McElroy	December 21, 2024	1	
Pat Lehnerd	June 15, 2024	1	
Marlene Ott	December 21, 2024	1	
Board Liaison: Secretary John Latham			

**1. Detailed results and certification of the voting: in ballot order (see Appendices A and B)**

		Paper		Online		Total
Monica Rakowski		1512		573		2085
Steve Jacobs		1393		542		1935
Stuart Lakernick		1275		455		1730
Amy Peck		1075		389		1464
Total Ballots Received		2824				
Invalid		83				
	Total Ballots Counted	2741				

The candidates re-elected to serve three-year terms on the Ocean Pines Board of Directors are Monica Rakowski, Steve Jacobs and Stuart Lakernick.

**Referendum Results**

	<b>Paper</b>		<b>Online</b>		<b>Total</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>1559</b>		<b>586</b>		<b>2145</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>389</b>		<b>148</b>		<b>537</b>
			<b>Total</b>		<b>2682</b>

## 2. 2024 Election Statistics

	Ballot Packages Mailed		7524				
	Ballots Returned Paper		2079			Response rate Paper	27.63%
	Ballots Returned Online		745			Response rate online	9.90%
	Total Ballots Returned		2824			Overall response rate	37.53%
<b>Ballots Cast</b>							
		Paper votes	2079		73.62%		
		Online votes		745		26.38%	
		Total Ballots Cast		2824			
<b>Ballots not counted</b>							
		Ballots received after deadline		8	approx.		
		Ballots voided (no ID) [Not counted]		49			
		Total Ballots not counted		57			
<b>Ballot rejected during count</b>							
		Ballots voided (returned more than 1)		1			
		Return envelopes with no ballots		1			
		Ballots voided (defaced)		81			
		Total ballots not counted		83			
<b>Ballots counted</b>					2741		

### 3. Election Recap

The Elections Committee conducted an extensive search for a new Election Vendor. Requests for proposals were sent to five potential vendors. On a 3-2 vote, the committee recommended that Ace Printing of Berlin MD being chosen to administer our hybrid Election. MK Elections was recommended as a second choice. These results were presented to the Board at a regular Board Meeting on August 11, 2025. The Board members raised several questions about the capability of one of the vendors and asked the committee to pose those questions to the vendor. Prior to a meeting being scheduled the vendor in question withdrew their bid. As a result, the committee's second recommended vendor, MK Elections, was selected as the vendor of choice. The Board voted to sign a contract with MK Elections.

At the deadline for candidate applications, only 4 candidates were identified. Per our governing documents, the application period was extended until June 20, 2025. At the conclusion of that extension, no further candidates had been found.

The Candidate Draw was conducted on June 23, 2025, and the Candidate Forum scheduled for June 27, 2025. Other key milestones were:

- Initial Ballot Packages mailed and emailed on ..... July 8, 2025
- Voting closed on ..... August 06, 2025
- Tabulating and observable count ..... August 08, 2025
- Adjudication of discrepant ballots and Results announced ..... August 08, 2025
- Annual Meeting ..... August 9, 2025
- Special Meeting to certify 2025 Election..... August 12, 2025

### 4. Conduct of the Election/Communications

- 7524 ballot packages were issued in the initial mailing on July 8, 2025
- A total of 159 mailed ballots were returned as undeliverable.
- 35 ballots were reprinted and sent to voters due to either bad or missing mail information or missing email on file with OPA.
- 213 Added Voters

### 5. Member Contacts with Election Committee

A total of 16 incoming communications, either voicemail or email were received by the committee from OPA members regarding the election process. Communications type and number:

- Process Questions ..... 7

- Other (eligibility) ..... 4
- Request for replacement ballot ..... 5

## 6. Lessons Learned

- Initial mailing
  - Consider modifying M-06 to clarify “single mailing” means one package with ballot and biographies delivered via USPS and e-mail. (Recommended in 2024 report as well)
- Ballot Material
  - Clarify packaging requirements for dropped-off ballots.
  - Coordinate voting deadlines across all ballot materials and communications
  - Remove MK Elections contact info from ballots. Replace with EC contact info
  - Electronic materials must include a link to candidate photos, bios and statements
  - Materials must explicitly state the drop box location, and deadline
  - Secret ballot envelope said to “place all ballots in this envelope.” Change verbiage to indicate only one ballot per envelope.
  - Need to better scrutinize ballot materials
  - Add a notation to ballot explaining barcode. Removing the barcode or modifying the official ballot in any way will cause disqualification of the votes on that ballot
  - Need to clarify separate envelopes for owners of multiple properties.
  - Better publicize the process for requesting a replacement ballot by voice or email
  - Add a notation: Vote is final once received and cannot be changed. If duplicate votes are received, only the first is counted.
- Communications
  - Ballot package must include drop-box location and deadline
  - Must strengthen message to voters to only vote one way. (No duplicate votes)
  - Should include ways to contact the elections committee
  - Materials should indicate 3 ways of voting: online, by mail or drop box in Police Station

- Must include voting deadlines for all methods of voting
- Review/coordinate reminder emails with MK. (mixed messages, discrepant closing times, etc.)
- Consider an Elections FAQ page for OPA website
- Drop box
  - Ensure Drop box has proper signage
- Need a campaign to educate voters to update OPA records.

**A word about recounts of online votes**

Although many commenters on social media and elsewhere cite the inability to conduct a recount of electronic votes, this is factually inaccurate. In the final documentation provided by MK elections Ocean pines receives the physical paper ballots, and an excel spreadsheet detailing every vote cast online. Similarly, the online votes (uniquely marked with individual codes) can be counted and the vote count verified. Combining these two counts provides verification of the vote totals.

**7. Summary of Committee activities**

- Original deadline for candidate applications March 12, 2025
- Voter Eligibility Deadline July 5, 2025
- Candidate draw June 9, 2025
- Extended deadline for Candidates June 20, 2025
- Final list of eligible candidates announced June 23, 2025
- Candidate Forum June 27, 2025
- Voter eligibility deadline July 5, 2025 Ballots mailed July 8
- Voting closed August 6, 2025. Ballots counted and vote totals announced August 8
- Annual Meeting – Saturday, August 9, 2025
- Ballot count and totals announced August 8, 2025

**8. Recommendations**

- Timeline

- The Election Committee recommends that voting close at noon on the final day. That will facilitate closing the drop-box allowing enough time for pick-up, packaging and shipping to the vendor.
- Communications
  - Create a webpage on the OPA website for Frequently Asked Question (FAQs.) Include instructions for contacting the Election Committee if you did not receive a ballot, received an incomplete ballot package, or any other election issue. This webpage should include:
    - Election committee contact information (both voicemail and email)
    - Reminder that the property owner is responsible for making sure OPA has the correct address and email. It would be helpful to be able to point to this on the web when the inevitable questions come up on social media or the press.
  - Revise M-06 to allow a limited time and specified process for challenging election results.
  - Add a recount process to M-06
  - Consider modifying M-06 to clarify “single mailing” means one package with ballot and biographies delivered via USPS and e-mail.
- Create a public forum explaining how the election process works and how a recount would happen.

## **9. Recommendation of contractor for Next Election.**

MK Elections (MK) was the successful bidder for the 2025 election process. MK has an outstanding reputation and serves many public and private organizations. Coordination meetings were successful and contractually agreed upon timelines were put in place. MK’s services were outstanding – the materials and ballot instructions were clear, their periodic updates to the EC kept us informed of voting numbers. The live final tally and adjudication was extremely detailed and undisputable. Unfortunately, many OP Members still do not have an email address on file with the Membership Office and a large percentage of those emails on file are obsolete which caused multiple bounce-back emails.

Based on their successful performance in the last OPA BOD Election, we recommend contracting with MK Elections again for the 2026 BOD election.

## **10. Other remarks.**

- Due to the extended candidate search process, eligible and ineligible member notices were mailed on the same day.

- The ballot drop box at the Police Administration Building has been in use for years and worked very well. The EC will continue its use.

#### **11. Fiscal performance.**

The 2025 election was accomplished at the cost of: \$31,094.73.

#### **12. Action Plan.**

- Coordinate with the By-Laws and Resolutions Committee on recommended changes to M-06.
- Coordinate with the Communications Committee to communicate messages related to the election.

**Appendix A: Certification Letter**



**MK ELECTION SERVICES, LLC**  
441 42nd Street, Pittsburgh PA 15201  
(412) 219-4647

Steve Ransdell  
Chair, Election Committee  
Ocean Pines Association

RE: Ocean Pines Association  
2025 Board of Directors Election  
MK Elections #1972501  
Completed August 8, 2025, 5:00PM

Dear Mr. Ransdell,

Attached please find true and correct final information concerning the Ocean Pines Association 2025 Board of Directors Election.

The ballot was conducted under the supervision of MK Elections using the Electionbuddy internet voting system and the MK Elections paper voting system. Voters opted whether to paper ballots or to receive login credentials for the internet system by email.

MK Elections mailed paper ballots on July 8, 2025, and sent internet voting credentials at 9:30AM on that same day, to all voters qualified as of that date. A second mailing of voters who qualified after the original mailing list was provided was done on July 9, 2025. MK Elections tracked the return of undeliverable ballots and mailed replacement ballots or emailed replacement credentials to voters upon their request and/or the request of the organization.

MK Elections completed the ballot count at our office in Pittsburgh on August 8, 2025. During the open period, most of the paper ballots were returned to a post office box in Pittsburgh and remained in our custody. Some additional ballots were delivered to a lock box at Ocean Pines and shipped to us. The scanning and counting processes were audited to ensure a correct final count. A crosscheck was performed to ensure that no voter voted on both paper and electronic systems.

Complete information about voters, undeliverables, replacement ballots sent, and other detailed information is attached to this letter and available in the electronic files that accompany this report.

We certify that the attached results and ballot information attached are true and correct, and that they properly reflect the paper record of the election which has been sealed and will be shipped to you for your custody.

Yours,

Kenneth Mostern

## Appendix B: Final Report

Final Report: Ocean Pines Association, Inc.: 2025 Board Election and Referendum

MK Election Services, LLC: Election 1972501

Report Date: 08/08/25 04:53 PM

Total Ballots:

2824

	Paper	Online	Total
Member, Board of Directors - 3 elected			
Monica Rakowski	1512	573	2085
Steve Jacobs	1393	542	1935
Stuart Lakernick	1275	455	1730
Amy Peck	1075	389	1464
Referendum Question - 1 elected			
Yes	1559	586	2145
No	389	148	537

End of Report