

COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516
Regular Meeting Minutes, January 8, 2020
9:00AM

I. Meeting Called to Order

Vice Chair Jeanette Deese called the meeting to order at 9:00AM.

Board Members Present: Vice Chair Jeanette Deese, Secretary Dale Gillikin, Member Marjorie Holland, and Member Gerald Godette

Board Members Absent: Chair Susan Cuthrell

Staff Members Present: Director Caitlin Sabadish and Deputy Director Margot Burke

Others Present: Jackie Starkey, News-Times

II. Approval of Agenda

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to amend the agenda to include the approval of minutes from October 2, 2019, October 9, 2019, October 15, 2019, October 16, 2019, and October 29, 2019 and the minutes from December 4, 2019 as amended and add a closed session under item XI. This motion was seconded by Member Holland and the motion was passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

No comments made by the public.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Director Sabadish presented minutes for approval from the regular Board meeting on December 4, 2019. Secretary Gillikin clarified that the minutes from October 2, 2019, October 9, 2019, October 15, 2019, October 16, 2019, and October 29, 2019 were tabled due to the fact that the Board was not presented an electronic or hard copy in advance of the meeting. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the minutes from October 2, 2019, October 9, 2019, October 15, 2019, October 16, 2019, and October 29, 2019 December 4, 2019 as amended. This motion was seconded by Member Holland, and the motion was passed unanimously.

V. 2020 Regular Board Meeting Schedule

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the regular monthly Board meetings scheduled as follows: February 11, 2020 at 3:00PM, March 11, 2020 at 9:00AM, April 1, 2020 at 9:00AM, May 6, 2020 at 9:00AM, June 3, 2020 at 9:00AM, July 1, 2020 at 9:00AM, August 5, 2020 at 9:00AM, September 2, 2020 at 9:00AM, October 7, 2020 at 9:00AM, November 10, 2020 at 9:00AM, and December 2,

2020 at 9:00AM. This motion was seconded by Member Godette and the motion was carried unanimously.

VI. Discuss number of precinct officials needed in March Primary

Previous discussion included increasing the number of precinct officials to balance the demand due to new photo ID requirements. Since photo ID is no longer required for the March primary, the Board determined that there is still a need to increase the number of precinct officials at all voting location to combat the high volume and nature of the 2020 presidential primary election. Secretary Gillikin referenced a list that broke down the total number of voters from the 2016 general by precinct (38,000). Deputy Director Burke agreed to provide the Board with an updated list of registered voters per precinct in order to determine how many precinct officials will be needed at each location. Deputy Director Burke pointed out that she had been in contact with the chief judges regarding their attendance at training and that staff will be able to determine the number of precinct officials to be assigned at each precinct after training is completed and we have the final number of available officials. Vice Chair Deese requested that staff research the number of precinct officials in the 2016 presidential primary as a comparison for determining the number of officials needed in the 2020 presidential primary and provide a recommendation to the Board at the next regular meeting. Member Godette made a motion to table this agenda item and add it to the agenda for our next Board meeting to be held on February 11, 2020 at 3:00PM. This motion was seconded by Member Holland and the motion was passed unanimously.

VII. Director's Report

a. Update on billing for municipal election

Director Sabadish presented the Board with a report of which municipalities have paid the County for the November 5, 2019 municipal election. All municipalities have paid except for the Town of Morehead City, who called and explained that they needed to get a budget amendment and they would pay their invoice as soon as they could.

b. Update on information regarding use of High School/ College Interns

Director Sabadish updated the Board on conversations she had with the NCSBE and the County HR department. The State Board provided Director Sabadish with statute §163-42.1 which outlined the restrictions and regulations of having student precinct officials. This statute states that student precinct officials, "shall be compensated in the same manner as precinct assistants". Due to this clause, the Board of Elections office is unable to participate in this particular internship program with HR because the students enrolled in the program are compensated with credits. Teresa from HR said that she would update Director Sabadish with any opportunities that will fit in with the regulations outlined by statute §163-42.1.

c. Update on progress of precinct safety assessments

Director Sabadish updated the Board on the progress of the precinct safety assessments. Director Sabadish, Deputy Director Burke, and HR County Safety Representative Jerome Shepard visited the Atlantic/Sea Level, Cedar Island, and Otway/Straits/Bettie/Gloucester precincts on December 19, 2019. At the Woodville Baptist Church – Otway/Straits/Bettie – staff scheduled the visit, but no one was available. The outside of the precinct was assessed, however staff will need to return to assess the inside of the facility. Mr. Shepard seemed to be worried about the steps leading up to the precinct. Will reschedule for further assessment. At the Atlantic Fire Department – Atlantic/Sea Level – Staff met with Mr. Winston Heal and provided access to the building. Mr. Shepard was not pleased that the voters may need to park on one side of road and cross street in order to enter the precinct. Mr. Shepard was also not pleased with precinct entrance as there is a slight step-up with no sign to inform voter or yellow paint to show voter there is a step-up. Next, staff visited the Cedar Island Community Center – Cedar Island – Mr. Shepard did not seem to have concerns with this site. Staff had originally planned to visit the rest of the Down East precinct, however Mr. Shepard had to get back to town for a meeting. Staff plans to reschedule an additional visit to the precincts Down East at a later date.

Director Sabadish took photographs of each precinct location and uploaded them to SEIMS. Director Sabadish also completed the NCSBE Voting Place Accessibility Survey for each precinct location. The Board expressed gratitude for Mr. Shepard's opinions concerning the safety of our precincts and his experience and trained eye to make our precincts as safe as possible. The Board also expressed their concerns that Mr. Shepard may be slightly overzealous in his assessment of our precinct locations and that alternate voting sites are limited in many of the districts. The Board suggested that Director Sabadish may ultimately need to reach out to the County Manager for his intervention regarding this matter should any precincts need to be changed due to safety issues.

The next day allotted to conduct further precinct safety assessments is scheduled for January 27, 2020 in which Director Sabadish, Deputy Director Burke, and Safety Officer Shepard plan to visit the Morehead City area and surrounding precincts.

Status of requested name change of the Otway/Straits/Bettie voting precinct

Director Sabadish provided the Board with a copy of the letter from the NCSBE confirming the name change of voting precinct Otway/Straits/Bettie to be changed to Otway/Straits/Bettie/Gloucester. The voting precinct name change was confirmed by the NCSBE on December 11, 2019 and Director Sabadish updated all precinct information in SEIMS and agreed to update the BOE website and any inter-office materials to include this name change

d. Training dates scheduled and number of officials signed up

Director Sabadish provided the Board with the currently scheduled precinct official training dates and how many precinct officials are currently signed up for each session. Previously scheduled training dates set for January 6, 2020 and January 9, 2020 were cancelled due to SBE software updates and mandated voter ID updates. These classes were rescheduled and included below. Director Sabadish agreed to distribute a revised training schedule to the Board.

The One-Stop training dates are scheduled for January 16, 2020 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM with 18 precinct officials signed up, January 21, 2020 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM with 14 precinct officials signed up, and from 2:00PM to 5:00PM with eight precinct officials signed up, and January 22, 2020 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM with 12 precinct officials signed up.

The Election Day training for seasoned workers is scheduled for January 11, 2020 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM with 19 precinct officials signed up, January 14, 2020 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM with 24 precinct officials signed up, January 15, 2020 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM with 17 precinct officials signed up, and from 2:00PM to 5:00PM with 14 precinct officials signed up, January 16, 2020 from 5:30PM to 8:30PM with ten precinct officials signed up, and January 22, 2020 from 2:00PM to 5:00PM with 12 precinct officials signed up.

Election Day training sessions for new precinct officials are scheduled for January 14, 2020 from 1:00PM to 5:00PM with 20 precinct officials signed up, January 16, 2020 from 5:30PM to 8:30PM with ten precinct officials signed up, January 17, 2020 from 9:00AM to 1:00PM with 18 precinct officials signed up, and January 23, 2020 from 9:00AM to 1:00PM with 14 precinct officials signed up.

e. Strategic plan for Commissioner's meeting

Director Sabadish informed the Board that she met with Stephanie from Mr. Burns' office on January 7, 2020 who informed her that the Board of Elections is exempt from submitting a 5 year strategic plan to the Board of Commissioners. Member Holland shared suggestions that may impact the Board of Elections in the next 5 years including the 2020 census which may require additional and new voting equipment and additional staff to meet the County's voting needs. The Board also confirmed that Member Holland's points were relevant to budget planning. Director Sabadish informed the Board that there will be a department head budget meeting held on January 15, 2020 that she will attend.

f. February Elections Conference packet

Director Sabadish provided the Board with conference packets including the County travel form, the Conference agenda, emails from the NCSBE, and training registration confirmation. The Board confirmed that they had always received their per diem and mileage reimbursements prior to the conference dates and preferred to continue this practice. The Board asked that the packets be redistributed to include hotel confirmations and copies of the County travel forms when completed. Deputy Director Burke will mail updated conference packets to attending Board members.

VIII. Board Comments

Vice Chair Jeanette Deese opened the floor for Board comments.

Member Holland

Member Holland reiterated her points concerning the strategic plan and asked that they be presented to the County Manager.

Vice Chair Deese

Vice Chair Deese asked that staff walk the board through the candidate filing process. Director Sabadish explained that each candidate is required to fill out a notice of candidacy form as well as additional campaign finance documents depending on whether they plan to be over or under the \$1,000.00 threshold. Director Sabadish explained that all members of the staff contribute to this process in explaining and providing candidates with the appropriate documentation, apart from a section at the bottom of the notice of candidacy form which requires the Director and Chair of the Board to review and complete which requires the above to certify that the person filing notice of candidacy is in fact a registered voter and eligible to run in the race that they are filing for. Vice Chair Deese brought up an incident in which Mr. Bell, an unaffiliated voter, filled out the paper work to file for candidacy for one of the Board of Education races. Mr. Bell did not officially file for candidacy in this race, as the paperwork was not completed or approved by the Director or Chair of the Board. In order to remedy this situation, Director Sabadish contacted and informed Mr. Bell that his notice of candidacy was not filed, and also explained the process of what he would need to do in order to petition as an unaffiliated candidate to run in the general election. Director Sabadish confirmed all information with the State Board of Elections before relaying it to Mr. Bell. Mr. Bell confirmed that he would pursue the petitioning process and was very understanding and appreciative of CBOE information. Director Sabadish confirmed that Mr. Bell would need to get signatures of 4% of the registered voters in the County and submit his petition filing form by 12:00 noon on March 3, 2020.

Vice Chair Deese' second comment involved another unaffiliated voter inquiring about the process of petitioning. Director Sabadish explained that Mr. Newton, Beaufort Mayor, stopped by the office and asked what the process would be for an unaffiliated voter to petition for candidacy. Director Sabadish explained the process to him after consulting the State Board of Elections and sent him additional literature from the State Board concerning the petition process. Director Sabadish never received a response or any form of confirmation that Mr. Newton was going to pursue petition filing.

IX. Closed Session to approve December 4, 2020 closed session minutes

Vice-Chair Deese moved to go into closed session in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11 for the permitted purpose of discussing confidential information in order to approve the December 4, 2019 closed session minutes. Secretary Gillikin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approved the December 4, 2019 closed session minutes. Member Holland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

X. Return to Open Session

Member Holland made a motion to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Secretary Gillikin and the motion was passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Godette seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

ABSENT
Susan Cuthrell, Chair

Jeanette Deese, Vice Chair

Dale Gillikin, Secretary

Marjorie Holland, Member

Gerald Godette, Member