

**COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes, February 11, 2020**  
**3:00PM**

**I. Meeting Called to Order**

Chair Susan Cuthrell called the meeting to order at 3:00PM.

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

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

**Others Present:** Elise Clouser, News-Times

**II. Approval of Agenda**

Vice Chair Deese made a motion to approve the agenda as amended to add agenda item VII to include improvements of the agenda packet process. 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 January 8, 2020 Minutes**

Director Sabadish presented minutes for approval from the regular Board meeting on January 8, 2020. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the minutes. This motion was seconded by Member Godette and the motion was passed unanimously.

**V. Determine number of precinct officials needed in March primary**

Director Sabadish and Deputy Director Burke presented a list to the Board to determine the number of precinct officials needed in the March primary. The list presented to the Board was based off of the number of precinct officials worked in the 2016 primary election, but were increased in some precincts to accommodate for the anticipated increase in number of registered voters in the County. The Board expressed concerns about having enough precinct officials to meet staff's recommendation of 196 precinct officials. Deputy Director Burke justified the increase with the number of new precinct officials that had been trained and also explained that the list provided set a goal for staffing precincts. Member Holland stressed the importance and the need for a backup list of precinct officials in case of an emergency. Deputy Director Burke and Member Holland will continue to

work to finalize the Election Day precinct official assignments. No action was required by the Board.

**VI. Board logic and accuracy testing**

Chair Cuthrell, Vice Chair Deese, Secretary Gillikin, Member Holland, and Member Godette tested five DS200 machines for logic and accuracy, overseen by Director Sabadish and Deputy Director Burke. The DS200s that were tested were Election Day tabulators for Emerald Isle, Peletier, North River, Beaufort 2, and Bogue precincts. Each machine was tested for logic and accuracy and test ballots were fed into each machine. The tapes from the test were printed, verified, and signed by Chair Cuthrell, Vice Chair Deese, Secretary Gillikin, Member Holland and Member Godette. No action was required by the Board.

**VII. Improvement of agenda packet processing**

Vice Chair Deese suggested that a cover sheet, printed on colored paper, be placed between each of the agenda items to include the date of the meeting, the name of the agenda item, who it was submitted by (staff or a Board Member), and additional background information on the each agenda item explaining what the agenda item includes and whether or not it requires formal action. If the agenda item requires formal action by the Board, staff should also provide their recommendation on the agenda item. Vice Chair Deese provided Director Sabadish with a copy of the cover sheet for reference. The Board recommended staff use the suggested cover sheet for future agenda packets to keep everyone on the same page and improve organization. No action was required by the Board.

**VIII. Director's Report**

**a. Precinct safety report**

Director Sabadish presented the Board with a hard copy of an email drafted by Deputy Director Burke summarizing the precinct safety visits that occurred on January 27, 2020. On January 27, 2020, Director Sabadish, Deputy Director Burke, and HR Safety Advisor Jerome Shepard visited Beaufort 2 precinct, Beaufort 1 precinct, Morehead 1 precinct, Morehead 2 precinct, Morehead 4 precinct, and Newport 1 precinct. Mr. Shepard made an assessment of each precinct location and will be providing the Board of Elections with a report when complete. Director Sabadish advised the Board that no precinct safety visits would be scheduled until after the primary election was over and that the precinct safety project is ongoing. No action was required by the Board.

**b. Mock election results**

Director Sabadish reported that 32 DS200 tabulators were used to conduct the Mock Election including the provisional tabulator, absentee tabulator, supplemental absentee tabulator, as well as each Election Day and One-Stop

tabulator. Out of the 32 machines tested, the Merrimon DS200 and the Newport 2 DS200 flashed errors stating that the ballots were too long. Director Sabadish reported that she made a call to ES&S requesting maintenance on the machines and that maintenance will be scheduled to service the machines soon.

**c. Budget**

Director Sabadish noted that there was about \$40,000.00 allotted for small equipment to purchase ballot scanners for FY19-20. The State Board later recommended that the scanners not be purchased. Director Sabadish suggested that the money budgeted for small equipment be used to purchase 20 curbside bells for handicap voting, costing approximately \$2,000.00, to provide one handicap bell for each voting precinct. The Board of Elections currently has ten curbside bells. Purchasing additional handicap bells would improve accessibility at the voting precincts. Vice Chair Deese suggested that staff make the County aware of why there is a surplus of funds remaining under the line item for small equipment to clarify that the Board of Elections did not budget unnecessarily and the money was originally budgeted for the scanners. Member Holland made a motion to approve the purchase of 20 assist bell sign sets. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Deese and the motion was passed unanimously. Vice Chair Deese suggested that the staff reach out to other Counties in the State to see how many full time staff comparable Counties had to justify budgeting for an additional full time position. Staff agreed and will follow up. Vice Chair Deese recommended having a special meeting to approve the FY20-21 budget. The Board agreed to schedule a special meeting on February 18, 2020 immediately following the absentee meeting for the purpose of approving the FY20-21 budget.

Vice Chair Deese made a motion to recess the regular meeting in order to conduct the absentee meeting at 4:00PM and reconvene immediately after to finish the regular meeting. This motion was seconded by Member Godette, and the motion was passed unanimously. The regular meeting was called back to order by Chair Cuthrell at approximately 4:27PM.

**d. Election Day plans**

The Board and staff briefly discussed the Election Day schedule and Election Day plans. No action was required by the Board.

**e. Stella precinct**

Director Sabadish explained that the Assistant County Manager, Gene Foxworth, suggested that voting in Stella should be moved from the Stella Community Building to the Stella Fire/Rescue Building. Mr. Foxworth made this suggestion with the intention to improve the voting facility for the registered voters in Stella

and to also combat numerous complaints of black mold and deterioration. Mr. Foxworth explained that the County is not willing to put money towards the repair of the community building, as its use is obsolete aside from voting. Mr. Foxworth offered to arrange a site visit to view the facility upon the Board's approval. Secretary Gillikin referenced prior conversations from 2019 relating to moving the voting in Stella from the rundown community building to the nicer EMT building next door. Member Holland expressed her concerns about the County's involvement in determining precinct sites. The Board approved Director Sabadish to make a site visit and requested that she take photographs, report her findings to the Board, and make a recommendation to the Board based on her findings. No action was required by the Board.

## **IX. Board Comments**

Chair Cuthrell opened the floor for Board comments. No action was required by the Board.

### Vice Chair Deese

Vice Chair Deese commented that the State Board Conference was excellent and informative, referencing the session on public meeting laws and legal updates as well as the session on unconscious bias.

Vice Chair Deese commented on the offline discussions about campaign finance reports and whether or not they should be posted on the County website. Vice Chair Deese suggested that the campaign finance reports be made available to the public on the County website. Director Sabadish agreed to look at Craven County's website and post a link to the State site as suggested by the Board.

Vice Chair Deese referenced the November 12, 2019 meeting concerning the project to combine the Cedar Island precinct with the Atlantic/Sea Level precinct and the Indian Beach/Salter Path precinct with the Pine Knoll Shores precinct. The resolution to combine these precincts was adopted in October, 2019 and Vice Chair Deese wanted an update on the project. Director Sabadish explained that the project was presented in October, however the deadline to alter precincts was too close to the November municipal election. The Board advised Director Sabadish to consult the State about the project when she was at training in Raleigh in mid-November. While at training, Director Sabadish consulted the State and was advised to put the project on hold until after the March 2020 primary election due to the scale of the election and how new she was. Chair Cuthrell recommended the precinct project be added to the March regular meeting agenda to discuss the topic further. Director Sabadish agreed to note it on the next regular agenda for further discussion.

Vice Chair Deese asked that the website be updated to reflect current meeting minutes and voter registration statistics. Director Sabadish agreed to work on getting the website up to date.

Vice Chair Deese inquired as to whether or not new precinct officials would be working One-Stop. Deputy Director Burke informed the Board that there are new precinct officials scheduled to work one-stop for the March primary election to fulfill six to seven precinct officials per site, per shift, and that there will be more seasoned precinct officials on site than new precinct officials on any given shift.

**X. Adjournment**

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chair Cuthrell seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

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Susan Cuthrell, Chair

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Jeanette Deese, Vice Chair

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Dale Gillikin, Secretary

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Marjorie Holland, Member

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Gerald Godette, Member