

COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes, March 3, 2021
9:00 AM

I. Meeting Called to Order

Chair Susan Cuthrell called the meeting to order at 9:00AM.

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

Board Members Virtually Present: Secretary Dale Gillikin

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

Others Present: Jackie Starkey; NewsTimes, Steve Gilgo; PrintElect

II. Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Deese made a motion to approve the March 3, 2021 regular meeting agenda. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

No public comment.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Director Sabadish presented the minutes from the February 3, 2021 Regular Meeting and February 17, 2021 Special Meeting for approval. Member Holland recommended that the minimum education requirement for the Director, a two (2) year degree, be included in the minutes for clarification and made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Secretary Gillikin seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

V. ExpressVote Demonstration by PrintElect

Mr. Steve Gilgo demonstrated the operations of the ExpressVote by ES&S for the Board as required by Numbered Memo 2020-21. The Memo requires the County Board of Elections to witness a demonstration of the recommended voting equipment system in order to move forward with the purchase and certification of new ADA compliant voting equipment to replace the AutoMarks. Overall, the Board was impressed with the functionality and efficiency of the ExpressVote. The Board was informed that they are required to witness a demonstration by another vendor; Hart InterCivic Verity will be hosting a live virtual demonstration on March 10, 2021 that the Board will attend.

VI. Atlantic Beach Temporary Relocation

The original Town Boardroom used by the Board of Elections for municipal elections located at 125 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512 has

been demolished. The Atlantic Beach Town Hall and Boardroom have been temporarily relocated during the pending construction of the new Public Safety and Town Administration Complex to Atlantic Station located at 1010 W Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512. The pending construction of the new facility is expected to be complete by January, 2022. The temporary space is fourteen feet (14ft.) by forty-eight feet (48ft.); according to CDC social distancing guidelines, with six hundred seventy-two square feet (672sq.ft.), it is recommended that no more than eighteen (18) people be in the space at one time. This is a manageable accommodation for social distancing to include six (6) precinct officials and approximately one thousand four hundred thirty-seven (1,437) eligible municipal voters. In comparing precinct data from the 2017 Municipal and 2019 Municipal Elections, we can anticipate that there will be approximately three hundred forty-five (345) in-person municipal voters in 2021. The Board also took into consideration the significant increase in absentee by mail voting, which would decrease the number of in-person voters on Election Day for the Municipal Election. The Board found that the new space at Atlantic Station is a suitable Election Day precinct location to hold the 2021 November municipal election in Atlantic Beach. Vice Chair Deese made a motion to temporarily relocate the Atlantic Beach voting precinct from 125 West for Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512 to 1010 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512 for the November 2021 Municipal Election. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously. Pertaining to this precinct alteration, staff agreed to strictly adhere to GS 163-128 and provide notice to all affected registered voters. As such, notice will be given forty-five (45) days prior to the next election in a newspaper having general circulation in the county, by posting a copy of the resolution at the courthouse door and at the office of the county board of elections, and by mailing a copy of the resolution to the chairman of every political party in the county. Additionally, the Board will mail a notification card noticing the address of the new voting location to individuals affected by the change no later than thirty (30) days prior to the election.

VII. Indian Beach/Pine Knoll Shores Permanent Precinct Merge Notice

Staff received a complaint from a member of the public that the Board of Elections was negligent in providing adequate notice to the registered voters affected by the permanent precinct merge between the Indian Beach precinct and the Pine Knoll Shores precinct. The complainant stated that registered voters in the Indian Beach precinct and the Pine Knoll Shores precinct were not aware that the merge between the two precincts was permanent. When the Board of Elections took formal action to permanently merge these two precincts, the Board strictly adhered to the guidelines outlined in GS 163-128 to include giving notice by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the county, by posting a copy of the resolution at the courthouse door and at the office of the county board of elections, and by mailing a copy of the resolution to the chairman of every political party in the county no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the

election. The county board of elections mailed notice of precinct change to each registered voter who as a result of the change was assigned to a different voting place, no later than thirty (30) days prior to the election. Additionally, a letter along with a copy of the resolution was mailed out to each registered voter who as a result of the change was assigned to a different voting place. Notice was also posted on the county board of elections website and published in the official minutes.

After much discussion, the Board determined that a second card noticing the permanent precinct merge shall be mailed to registered voters in the Indian Beach and Pine Knoll Shores precincts no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the next election and should include the word “permanent” in bold on the mailer. The Board also decided that the same courtesy should be extended to the registered voters that were affected by the permanent precinct merge between the Cedar Island precinct and the Atlantic precinct, and they will also receive a second notification of the permanent precinct merge no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the next election. No formal action was required by the Board.

VIII. Director’s Report

a. Express Vote Update

Director Sabadish briefed the Board on numbered memo 2021-01, which replaced the previous numbered memo 2019-04, concerning the purchase and acquisition of new voting equipment.

b. Additional Part-Time Help

The Board of Elections office has received some inquiries concerning electronic record of candidate campaign finance reports being posted on the Board of Elections website. In order to keep up with the demand, staff requested that Sharon Lewis be brought in as the second part-time office assistant to assist with this request. The Board agreed that Sharon’s knowledge and expertise would be an asset to the team in getting the campaign finance reports uploaded onto the Board of Elections website. Director Sabadish noted that the funds for the second part-time office assistant were already approved and included in the current 2020-2021 fiscal year’s budget. Member Holland made a motion to authorize the Director to hire Sharon Lewis as the second part-time office assistant to help with the candidate campaign finance efforts, not to exceed nine-hundred ninety (999) hours. Chair Cuthrell seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

c. Precinct Official Letters

Staff provided the Board with copies of letters that they would like to send out to gauge the potential interest of returning precinct officials in preparation for precinct official appointment in August, 2021. The Board thanked staff for their efforts and asked staff to mail and email the letters to the precinct officials and also provide an electronic copy of the letters to the Board. Staff agreed to compile the feedback received from the precinct officials and keep the Board updated.

IX. Board Comments

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

Member Holland

Member Holland noted that the ExpressVote demo was very interesting and informative.

Secretary Gillikin

Secretary Gillikin thanked staff and the Board for setting up the Zoom meeting and allowing her to attend virtually. Secretary Gillikin was also impressed with the ExpressVote demo and was pleased with the overall progress in the acquisition of the new voting equipment.

Chair Cuthrell

Chair Cuthrell mentioned that she would like to attend the orientation and training that the State Board of Elections will hold for newly appointment Board members. Chair Cuthrell asked that staff keep the Board updated if they hear any updates concerning Board training. Chair Cuthrell also commented that she was pleased to hear that the State Board will be conducting “wellness checks” for each of the county board of elections to ensure overall compliance.

X. Adjournment

Member Godette made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Chair Cuthrell and the motion was passed unanimously.

Susan Cuthrell, Chair

Jeanette Deese, Vice Chair

Dale Gillikin, Secretary

Marjorie Holland, Member

Gerald Godette, Member