

**COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes, March 11, 2020**  
**9:00AM**

**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, Secretary Dale Gillikin, Member Marjorie Holland, and Member Gerald Godette

**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 approve the agenda. Vice Chair Deese seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

**III. Public Comment**

No comments made by the public.

**IV. Review provisional ballots from March 3, 2020 Primary**

Director Sabadish and Deputy Director Burke presented four provisional ballots providing their recommendation to the Board after conducting additional research. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve one provisional ballot, partially approve two provisional ballots, and to not approve one provisional ballot. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Deese and the motion was passed unanimously. The ballots that were partial approved did not require duplication by the Board as the voters only voted for races that they were eligible to vote. Overall, there were 54 provisional ballots approved, seven provisional ballots partially approved, and 113 provisional ballots not approved. The total on the provisional DS200 tabulator is 61 and the Board closed the polls.

**V. Review of two supplemental absentee ballots from March 3, 2020 Primary**

Two supplemental absentee ballots were received and reviewed. Of the 2 supplemental absentee ballots reviewed, two of them were military. The two military ballots received were duplicated by the Board due to electronic submission. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the two military supplemental absentee ballots for a total of two. This motion was seconded by Member Godette and the motion was passed unanimously. The total on the supplemental absentee DS200 tabulator is 41.

**VI. Review incident reports from March 3, 2020 Primary**

Director Sabadish and Deputy Director Burke presented the incident reports from the March 3, 2020 election to the Board to include all One-Stop and Election Day reports. Before beginning review, Vice Chair Deese made a suggestion to make

all of the incident report forms uniform for One-Stop and Election Day to include precinct location. Staff agreed to update all incident report forms. No action was required by the Board.

**One-Stop:**

After much discussion, the Board expressed their concerns about the number of incident reports that resulted from precinct official error- about 50%. In order to rectify this, staff agreed to reemphasize major issues in training such as ballot distribution, marking and identifying the ballots during One-Stop, and additional and accurate precinct official voter research. Overall, the Board noted that the number of One-Stop incident reports have been higher in the past and also expressed their concerns about the major incident report involving the precinct official error when more than one ballot was distributed to a voter. The precinct official distributed a ballot to the voter. The voter inserted a “blank” ballot into the DS200. The voter was upset that they did not get to mark their ballot, so the precinct official gave the voter another ballot to mark, and the voter inserted a ballot into the DS200 for the second time. In order to remedy this incident, staff will conduct research to locate the ballots and make sure the numbers coincide. The Board also recommended keeping this incident in mind when scheduling the precinct official responsible when scheduling for the next election.

**Election Day:**

After much discussion it was determined that several of the incident reports involved precinct official error as well as provisional voting due to unaffiliated voters choosing a ballot, reviewing it, and changing their minds resulting in a provisional ballot; votes on Election Day cannot be cancelled and must be voted provisionally. Staff knew of this issue early on and instructed precinct officials to allow unaffiliated voters to view the available sample ballots before making a final decision. This reduced the number of provisional votes cast for this reason overall.

Several other incident reports were a result of lack of equipment. Many precincts did not have computer/printer cords or the appropriate number of mice/mouse pads to accommodate the number of computers at each site. In order to prevent incidents like this in the future the Board recommended that staff be sure to check all bags and create a check list to also hold the Chief Judges accountable for the equipment. Staff agreed that in the future, they would have the Chief Judges sign off on what equipment was in their bags, certifying that they have everything they need to successfully operate their precinct on Election Day. Staff also agreed to order additional computer/printer cords, more mice, and more mouse pads.

The Board discussed several incidents concerning a precinct official, one involving a request for hand sanitizer at the precinct, one involving an on duty sheriff coming in to vote causing the precinct official to fear leaving the precinct due to having a political sticker on their car. No formal incident report was filed by this precinct official, but an incident report was received from the Chief Judge at the precinct concerning the on duty sheriff deputy which clarified the situation. It was also noted that there have been complaints from this precinct official in the past concerning workmen’s comp. and fear of hearing loss due to excessive noise

levels while working on Election Day. The Board discussed removing this precinct official from being scheduled in future elections.

## **VII. Precinct Project**

The Board requested that this item be added to the agenda after the State recommended to table the project until after the Primary Election. Director Sabadish presented the memorandum and resolution passed by the Board in 2019 to combine the Indian Beach/Salter Path precinct with the Pine Knoll Shores precinct and to combine the Atlantic/Sea Level precinct with the Cedar Island precinct. The Board requested that staff provide them with a copy of the documents from 2019 and to also check with the State to see if a new resolution would be required due to the change in personnel. Vice Chair Deese noted justifications for the precinct merges to include low voter turnout, cost, difficulty recruiting precinct officials, and close geographic proximity to one another. The Board requested that staff work to complete this project and include this item on the regular meeting agenda in April to provide updates.

## **VIII. Board Comments**

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

### Member Godette

Member Godette expressed his concerns about the effectiveness and simplicity of maintaining the 50ft. electioneering boundary. Member Godette noted complaints from precinct officials concerning the method in which the boundary was marked and how difficult it was to mark (paint, tape, cones, etc.). The Board mentioned that marking the boundary is often times site specific, as each precinct is different. The Board recommended that staff check with other counties to see if they can offer other innovative options for marking the boundary.

### Secretary Gillikin

Secretary Gillikin made a general comment that Board meetings should be more streamline and organized. Secretary Gillikin noted that side conversations often redirect the topic at hand. She recommends that the Chair take lead to extinguish side conversations and get the meeting back on track. Other Board Members agreed. Chair Cuthrell noted that raising hands helps with the flow of the meeting and curtails members talking over one another. Vice Chair Deese suggested that staff purchase a gavel to help the Chair maintain order in the meetings. Secretary Gillikin also recognized that all Board Members and Staff should have respect for one another and show courtesy when others are speaking.

**IX. Closed Session for the purpose of discussing personnel in accordance with § NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(1)(6)**

Member Godette made a motion for the Board to move into closed session pursuant to § NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1)(6) for the permitted purpose of discussing personnel. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

**X. Return to Open Session**

Vice Chair Deese made a motion to return to open session. This motion was seconded by Member Godette and the motion was passed unanimously.

**XI. Adjournment**

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Deese 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