

**COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes, June 3, 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**

Vice Chair Deese made a recommendation to add an item under the director's report to include discussion about the procedures relating to the vacant seats for County Commissioner District Six (6) and Pine Knoll Shores Mayor. Vice Chair Deese made a motion to approve the agenda as amended to modify agenda item VI. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

**III. Public Comment**

No comments made by the public.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2020 regular meeting. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

**V. Marshallberg/Smyrna Precinct Relocation**

Director Sabadish explained that the office received a call from the Preacher of the Smyrna Pentecostal Holiness Church offering the facility to host voting on Election Day. Chair Cuthrell expressed her concerns in conjunction with Member Holland's report, to include the future of a congenial relationship between the Board of Elections and the Smyrna Pentecostal Holiness Church should the church have a change in personnel. Chair Cuthrell also reiterated Member Holland's concerns in that the precinct officials working the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct prefer and enjoy hosting voting at the Marshallberg Fire Department. Secretary Gillikin advised that she was ultimately neutral on the topic, but that it would be in the voters' best interest to relocate to the church due to having a larger area, cleaner facility, and the possibility of a fire emergency occurring during voting. Vice Chair Deese suggested that there is also potential for voting disruptions at the church, should there be a funeral, etc. Member Holland expressed her additional concerns that voting should be hosted at tax-funded facilities to avoid political tendencies that are associated with

religious entities and that church and state should ultimately remain separate. Secretary Gillikin noted that there are currently eight (8) precincts in Carteret County that are hosted in churches. No formal action was taken by the Board, however, it was unanimously decided that the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct will remain at the Marshallberg Fire Department located at 109 Goose Pond Road, Marshallberg, NC 28553.

## **VI. Directors Report**

### **a. Budget Updates**

Director Sabadish explained that she received the FY20-21 recommended budget from the County finance department. Director Sabadish stated that the fourth full time position requested was not recommended. Director Sabadish also identified that the requested \$10,000.00 allocated for Board member pay, under the Board member line item, was not recommended. The requested \$155,072.00 for part-time wages was recommended at \$155,000.00. Director Sabadish reached out to the County finance department to request that the Board member pay either be recommended at \$0.00 and the part-time wage line item be recommended at \$165,000.00 to accommodate for Board member pay or that the recommended amounts for each line item reflect what was requested. Director Sabadish informed the Board that she is still waiting for a response from the finance department on these two issues.

### **b. Precinct Project Update**

Director Sabadish informed the Board that the precinct project to combine the Atlantic/Sea Level precinct with the Cedar Island precinct and the Indian Beach/Salter Path precinct with the Pine Knoll Shores precinct was approved by the State Board of Elections. Director Sabadish explained that the County Board of Elections will mail a notice of precinct change to each registered voter who as a result of the change will be assigned to a difference voting place, as required by N.C. G.S. § 163-128(a). Letters along with the passed resolution, will also be mailed to all registered voters as a courtesy notifying them of the precinct merge. Director Sabadish also explained that she will be in contact with the County GIS department so that they can make the required updates. Director Sabadish will also be working to modify GeoCode ranges and the County Board of Election's website to reflect the merge. Director Sabadish worked directly with Jackie Starkey to get an article in the Sunday, May 31, 2020 issue of The News Times as an additional method of notifying the voters of the precinct merge and relocation.

### **c. Vacant Seats: County Commissioner D6 and Pine Knoll Shores Mayor**

Director Sabadish provided the Board with a list outlining the procedures for filling the vacancies for the County Commissioner District Six (6) seat and the Pine Knoll Shores Mayoral seat along with relating N.C. G.S § 153A-27.1, § 163-294.1, §160A-63, and §160A-60. Secretary Gillikin suggested that a notice be posted on the Carteret County Board of Elections website to notify the political parties that the County Board of Elections will accept nominations for the County

Commissioner District Six (6) seat until August 2, 2020. Director Sabadish agreed to post a notice on the website.

**Pine Knoll Shores Mayor**

- Town Council appointed a search committee; Alicia Durham and Bill Knecht
- Town Council will appoint a qualified individual to serve as Mayor for the unexpired term (until November 2021)
- There is no deadline for the Town Council to appoint a qualified individual to serve as Mayor, as the people are equally represented due to the Town Council members being elected at-large
- Town Charter requires that the appointee is a registered voter of Carteret County and also resides within the municipal limits of Pine Knoll Shores
- CBE will verify that the appointee is qualified to serve
- The appointee will need to file standard campaign finance paperwork with the County Board of Elections within 10 days of being appointed

**County Commissioner District 6 Vacancy:**

Appointee:

- The remaining County Commissioners shall appoint a qualified individual to represent District Six (6) to serve until December 7, 2020
- In order for the appointed individual to be qualified, they must be a registered voter in Carteret County, of the same political party as the previously elected (Rep.), and reside within Commissioner District Six (6)
- The appointee will need to file standard campaign finance paperwork with the County Board of Elections within 10 days of being appointed

Nominee:

- A qualified nominee will be a registered voter in Carteret County and reside within the Commissioner District Six (6) boundaries
- The qualified nominees will be required to file candidate paperwork to the CBE, including a Notice of Candidacy 2020 Nominee form
- Each party's executive committee shall submit ONE nomination for County Commissioner and those names shall be printed on the General Election ballot and be elected County-wide
- There will be no filing period. Nominations should be submitted to the County Board of Elections no later than 90 days prior to Election Day
- Party executive committees are not required to submit a nomination
- The nominee elected County-wide in the November 2020 Election will serve the remainder of the unexpired term up for re-election in 2022

**VII. Board Comments**

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

Member Holland

Member Holland requested that the agenda packets be mailed and emailed out one (1) week prior to each board meeting instead of two (2) weeks prior, as previously

discussed. The Board agreed that agenda packets should be mailed and emailed out one (1) week prior to each meeting and the draft agenda should be emailed out two (2) weeks prior to each meeting. This will allow the Board additional time to review the agenda packet materials.

Member Holland expressed her concerns about the recommended FY20-21 budget, including other County departments getting approved for additional full time positions. Vice Chair Deese read the article printed in The News Times which listed the new positions that were recommended by the finance department including an IT position, a tax office position, a CCATS position, a library position, two (2) new detention officers, a detention supervisor, and a public health nurse. Member Holland suggested that the Chair and the Vice Chair meet with the County Manager to discuss the above line items and the requested fourth full time position. Chair Cuthrell asked that Director Sabadish set up a meeting with the County Manager to discuss further.

#### Vice Chair Deese

Vice Chair Deese expressed her concerns in relation to the recommended budget including the new positions that were recommended in other departments for the FY20-21 budget. Vice Chair Deese explained that about \$20,000.00 of compensatory time was paid out by the County to Board of Elections employees in FY19-20. Vice Chair Deese shared that she is concerned about the Board of Elections funding due to having one of the largest elections in the history of Carteret County approaching in November, 2020. With this, the Board of Elections will need additional staff to successfully conduct an election of this magnitude. Vice Chair Deese noted that in years past, the Commissioners have been very generous in consideration of the Board of Elections budget concerning new voting equipment and part-time staff. Vice Chair Deese commented that Tommy Burns has been great to work with and very accommodating for the Board of Elections. In the past he has been willing to provide additional part time staff in times of need and noted that there may be some misunderstanding or confusion pertaining to the Board of Election's requested FY20-21 budget. Chair Cuthrell asked that Director Sabadish set up a meeting with the County Manager to discuss further.

Vice Chair Deese thanked staff for working through the COVID-19 pandemic and inquired on the status of the staff's compensatory time and part-time hours. Director Sabadish confirmed that staff who have accrued compensatory time are taking time off now to prepare for the increased work load in preparation for November. Director Sabadish also confirmed that the part-time hours are limited during this time (eight (8) hours per week) in an effort to reserve the remainder of the nine hundred ninety nine (999) hours for November election preparations.

#### Secretary Gillikin

Secretary Gillikin reiterated that the full time position and the Board Member pay must be discussed with the County Manager. The FY20-21 budget must include funds for Board Member pay as it is mandated by the State. Secretary Gillikin noted that the fourth full time position has been requested in the Election's budget

for the last three (3) years. In considering the amount of money that has been spent on compensatory time/overtime in the past year, the help is obviously needed. The County has been trying to justify this need with part-time help, however, hours are limited to 999 hours for part-time help. To justify this, the County has provided the Board of Elections with additional part-time employees. This trend has been a reoccurring issue for the last few years. Secretary Gillikin requested that staff email out an updated VR stats sheet.

Member Godette

Gerald agreed with Member Holland’s points of discussion concerning the FY20-21 budget recommendations. Member Godette inquired about some talking points to respond to questions concerning State funding to the Board of Elections. Chair Cuthrell suggested that anyone confronted with a similar inquiry should confirm the origination and determine whether or not the source was reliable. Member Holland clarified that the Board of Elections does not receive any additional funding from the State or any other entity to fund elections; Elections are County funded only.

Chair Cuthrell

Chair Cuthrell commented that FY20-21 may not be the year to request the fourth full time position, as the County revenues and income are decreased due to COVID-19, however, it is concerning that other departments were recommended for additional full time staff and is willing to meet with the County Manager to discuss.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Member Godette 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