

COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516
Regular Meeting Minutes, September 2, 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; NewsTimes, Carol Geer; League of Women Voters, Barb Thompson; Unitarian Coastal Fellowship Church voter registration drives

II. Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Deese made a motion to approve the September 2, 2020 regular meeting agenda. Member Godette seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Carol Geer noted that the League of Women voters is hosting a voter registration drive, in a non-partisan fashion, at Carteret County Community College September 21 through September 24, 2020.

IV. Approval of August 5, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 5, 2020 regular meeting. Vice Chair Deese seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

V. Temporary Consolidation of Precincts

At the July 1, 2020 meeting, the Board made a motion to temporarily consolidate the Mill Creek precinct with the Newport 1 precinct and the Marshallburg/Smyrna precinct with the Otway/Bettie/Straits/Gloucester precinct due to staffing concerns. After the discussion on July 1, 2020, precinct official recruitment efforts were increased and Member Holland and Deputy Director Burke were able to find precinct officials to work at the Mill Creek and Marshallburg/Smyrna precinct. Member Holland and Chair Cuthrell, working in the best interest of the voters, gave direction for staff to hold off on moving forward with the temporarily consolidations without consulting the entire Board. Secretary Gillikin expressed her concerns with the lack of communication in making this decision. Chair Cuthrell apologized for moving forward without the entire Board's approval. Member Holland and Deputy Director Burke confirmed that there is at least one (1) experienced precinct official at each site. Vice Chair Deese suggested that formal action be taken to retract the motion previously made to temporarily

consolidate the two (2) precincts. Member Godette made a motion to revert the motion made on July 1, 2020 to temporarily consolidate the Mill Creek precinct with the Newport 1 precinct and the Marshallburg/Smyrna precinct with the Otway/Bettie/Straits/Gloucester precinct. Member Holland seconded the motion to retract the previous motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

VI. Additional Temporary Office Staff

Director Sabadish explained to the Board that she did receive feedback from the Finance Department concerning the process of moving forward with hiring a temporary full-time employee and a temporary part-time employee. The part-time employee is already budgeted for in this current fiscal year and can be filled at any time. A budget amendment is required for this type of budget amendment to allocate federal funding for this position and requires Commissioner Board approval. Director Sabadish recommended that the temporary full-time position be funded at \$12.00 per hour, per Commissioner approval after the September 21, 2020 Commissioners meeting. According to the Human Resources Department, the full-time temporary position must be filled by someone who does not have hours accrued in this calendar year due to federal funding requirements. Staff informed the Board that they are keeping an open mind and actively seeking candidates to fill these positions. Traditionally, the Board is directly involved in hiring staff, however, due to the limited time frame and upcoming Election, Chair Cuthrell suggested that staff handle the hiring of the temporary full-time staff member and the temporary part-time staff member. Vice Chair Deese asked that the Board get a list of the candidates and resumes before staff conducts interviews. Vice Chair Deese made a motion to approve a budget amendment of \$5,400.00 to fund the grant-funded full-time temporary position. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously. This budget amendment shall be presented on the consent agenda for the Board of Commissioners monthly meeting on September 21, 2020.

VII. Director's Report

a. Ballot referendums

Director Sabadish presented the language for all three (3) of the bond referendums that will be on the November 3, 2020 Presidential General Election ballot. The Cape Carteret Trail referendum will only be on the ballot for the Cape Carteret municipality. The School Board Bond referendum and the One-Quarter Cent County Sales and Use Tax Referendums are County wide and will be on all ballot styles.

b. Absentee Ballot Envelopes

Director Sabadish presented numbered memo 2020-19, which outlines absentee board meeting processes, as well as a FAQs worksheet about the updated absentee ballot envelopes included with instructions. Director Sabadish also included copies of all incoming and outgoing absentee ballot envelopes so that the Board could get familiar with the format of the new envelopes in which they will be reviewing at the absentee ballot board meetings. Director Sabadish also explained

the ballot return log that is required for all ballots that are returned in person, per State Board of Elections guidance.

c. Precinct Official Training and Scheduling Updates

Director Sabadish presented an updated training schedule to the board showing all Election Day and One-Stop precinct official training dates. Deputy Director Burke explained that there are enough training dates to train precinct officials for both Election Day and One-Stop and all precincts will be fully staffed.

d. MAT Assistance Update

Director Sabadish presented a drafted letter to be sent out to all nursing home and assisted living facilities in the County as well as a mailing list. The Board approved the letter and Director Sabadish will mail it out as soon as possible to get an appropriate gauge on the need for MAT team assistance. At this time, staff is still waiting on additional MAT guidance to be published by the State Board.

e. HAVA/CARES Act Funds Update

Director Sabadish updated the Board on purchases made up to this point using HAVA and CARES Act funds for COVID-19 expenses. So far, staff has purchased stanchions to assist with social distancing inside the precincts, cones for curbside voting, electronic envelope openers to assist in absentee board meetings, more tabletop voting booths to combat the high volume, and all of the incoming and outgoing absentee ballot envelopes that we were required to change for COVID.

VIII. Board Comments

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

Secretary Gillikin

Secretary Gillikin thanked staff for their hard work and for keeping lines of communication open and keeping the Board updated. Secretary Gillikin commented that she is looking forward to bringing some additional staff on board to alleviate the current staff.

Member Godette

Member Godette thanked the staff for their hard work. Member Godette asked what the abbreviations CIV and UOCAVA related to, the board explained that CIV, or civilian, referenced domestic absentee voters and UOCAVA referenced military voters and voters overseas. Member Godette also asked how voters can track their ballots and see if their ballot has been cast. Director Sabadish explained that the State Board of Elections has published a ballot tracking system that can track voters' ballots throughout the process and notify them as it moves through. Voters can also contact the Board of Elections office for an update on the status of their ballot. Member Godette also asked if Board members could attend voter registration drives or other voter events; the Board advised that Board members can attend, but in a non-partisan fashion.

Vice Chair Deese

Vice Chair Deese asked staff for an update on the status of the publication of the twelve (12) safeguards of absentee voting. Staff informed the Board that they are working on getting the information published, but planned to publish this literature after the first of October to strategically publish the notice. Vice Chair Deese wanted to clarify that there were enough precinct officials reserved as ‘back ups’ for the Election; staff confirmed. Vice Chair Deese asked staff if they had enough Rovers for the Election. Deputy Director Burke advised that we do have enough Rovers for the Election, but the Board offered to carry additional supplies and deliver to precincts if needed.

Chair Cuthrell

Chair Cuthrell again apologized for the lack of communication with the Board. Chair Cuthrell thanked staff for all the hard work that they are putting in to prepare for the Election and she is hoping to get additional staff in the office to assist as soon as possible.

IX. Adjourned

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

Susan Cuthrell, Chair

Jeanette Deese, Vice Chair

Dale Gillikin, Secretary

Marjorie Holland, Member

Gerald Godette, Member