

COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516
Regular Meeting Minutes, July 1, 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: Barbara Thomas, Morehead 2 (Carteret County Health Department) precinct official; Carol Geer, League of Women Voters President; Mary Newman, Democratic Party Board Member; Yolanda Lozano, Indian Beach/Salter Path/Pine Knoll Shores precinct official.

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. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Deese recommended that the word ‘referendum’ be changed to ‘resolution’ on page two (2) of the minutes under agenda item VI. Director’s Report, subsection B. Precinct Project Update. Director Sabadish agreed to make the change. Member Holland made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2020 regular meeting, as amended. Vice Chair Deese seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

V. One-Stop Plans for November 2020 General Election

Director Sabadish presented staff’s recommendation to the Board concerning the November, 2020 General Election One-Stop plans to include opening four (4) locations for One-Stop Early Voting as listed below to operate from October 15, 2020 through October 31, 2020. All locations will operate Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 7:30PM and the last Saturday from 8:00AM to 3:00PM in accordance with G.S. § 163-227.6. The Board unanimously approved the One-Stop plan as recommended by staff.

- Board of Elections Office (BOE) – 1702 Live Oak Street Beaufort, NC 28516
- Fort Benjamin Park/Recreation Center (FBEN) – 100 McQueen Avenue Newport, NC 28570

- Western Park Community Center (WEST) – 275 Old NC 58 Cedar Point, NC 28584
- Morehead City Park/Recreation Center (MHD1) – 1600 Fisher Street Morehead City, NC 28557

VI. MAT Appointment Discussion

House Bill 1169 became law on June 12, 2020. A central change in this section regarding Multi-partisan Assistance Teams (MAT Teams) includes that the County Board of Elections members are required to recommend MAT members. The Democratic County Board of Elections members are now required to recommend the Democratic MAT Team members and the Republican County Board of Elections members are now required to recommend the Republican MAT members. Vice Chair Deese recommended that the Board appoint more than one (1) MAT to assist voters in November, 2020 due to the possibility of seeing increased interest. Vice Chair Deese also recommended that MAT members receive additional training in conjunction with State guidance. The Board requested that staff compile a list of precinct officials interested in being MAT members and present it to the Board at the next meeting. Staff agreed to reach out to existing precinct officials provide a list for the Board to consider and appoint as MAT members.

VII. Director's Report

a. Precinct Official Survey Report

Deputy Director Burke presented the findings from a survey that was sent out to all precinct officials that worked the March, 2020 Election. This survey was distributed for the benefit of the Board of Elections office and staff designed to collect feedback from our precinct officials with the hope to improve overall election operations. Out of about one hundred sixty (160) surveys that were sent out, sixty-five (65) were received. The feedback that was received was compiled into a spreadsheet and presented to the Board for review relative to what worked well, what did not work, how we can improve in training, etc. Staff explained that the feedback was very informative and enlightening. Vice Chair Deese noted that the Board should always be apprised of letters or surveys that are transmitted to precinct officials and the public. The Board reviewed the survey results and expressed their appreciation for staff sending out the survey.

One topic addressed in the survey was 'how to increase voter education and voter confidence'. This topic of voter education was briefly discussed concerning how the Board of Elections could better educate the public and increase awareness of voting procedures. Some methods that were discussed concerning public outreach were Facebook and Instagram to disseminate information. Director Sabadish agreed to create Board of Election sites to increase communication with County residents and increase voter awareness and education.

b. Precinct Safety Report

Director Sabadish reported to the Board that the precinct safety visits were complete. Director Sabadish, Deputy Director Burke, and HR Safety Officer Shepard toured every precinct in the County to evaluate potential safety hazards and eliminate them before Election Day. All precincts were evaluated for ADA regulations and all sites passed. Human Resources Safety Officer Shepard said that he would send over a PowerPoint evaluations summary at a later date.

c. Precinct Official Training

Director Sabadish outlined staff's ideas for precinct official training to include separate classes for Chief Judges, Judges, Assistants, and new precinct officials. Staff also considered extending training times to four (4) hours for experienced precinct officials and five (5) hours for new precinct officials and to also decrease the numbers to about fifteen (15) per class to allow adequate room to social distance. The Board expressed their approval for separate training classes for new precinct officials, but recommended that Chief Judges and Judges be consolidated into one training session. Integrating Chief Judge and Judge training will increase job cross training and provide more opportunities for officials to attend while ensuring backup officials to fill in if someone is absent. Staff set a goal to begin training on September 15, 2020 starting with one-stop training, then complete experienced official Election Day training, and finish with new precinct official training.

d. Absentee by Mail Report

From June 15, 2020 through June 29, 2020, the Carteret County Board of Elections office has received one hundred fifty-four (154) absentee ballot request forms total. The Center for Voter Information (CVI) previously sent out three hundred five (305) forms to registered Carteret County Voters. Of the three hundred five (305) forms that were mailed out, the Carteret County Board of Elections has received eleven (11) invalid forms. Each individual that submitted an invalid form was mailed a template letter created by the State Board explaining the circumstances along with a blank absentee ballot request form for the voter to complete and return. To remedy the invalid forms, the CVI sent out an unknown number of blank registration forms, identifiable by prepaid postage. The Carteret County Board of Elections has received ninety-five (95) valid absentee ballot request forms sent out by CVI and an additional forty-eight (48) absentee ballot request forms provided by the State Board of Elections.

e. PPE Update

Director Sabadish provided the Board with a spreadsheet outlining supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) that will be provided to each precinct in preparation for the election in relation to COVID-19. This list does not include supplies provided by the State. The State Board advised that additional guidance will be published after August 1, 2020 concerning PPE provided by the State and additional fund distribution.

VIII. Board Comments

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

Member Holland

Member Holland asked for an overview of the referenda currently presented to be on the ballot in November, 2020. Director Sabadish explained that there were potentially three (3) known referendums that could be presented on the General ballot. The first referendum is a County-wide one quarter cent (\$0.0025) sales tax increase in which the Board of Elections has received verbiage. The second potential referendum is a bond referendum proposed by the Cape Carteret Town Council to fund a trail; no verbiage has been received yet. The third potential referendum is a school board bond referendum proposed by the County Commissioners to fund improvements to schools and related facilities throughout the County; no verbiage has been received yet. Director Sabadish reiterated that the deadline to receive the verbiage in order for the referenda to be on the ballot is August 5, 2020.

Member Holland also inquired as to the number of precinct officials that staff anticipated to have for the November, 2020 election. There was some discussion concerning additional precinct officials needed for sanitizing and monitoring lines, however the Board determined that precinct official staffing would be similar to what we had in the March, 2020 election. Deputy Director Burke will continue this discussion with Member Holland at a later date.

Member Godette

Member Godette made an inquiry concerning Member Holland's role in recruiting precinct officials. Member Holland explained that she has been responsible for recruiting Democratic precinct officials to work the polls for each election. Since Member Holland has taken on this role, the Board of Elections office has been responsible for recruiting republican precinct officials to work the polls.

Secretary Gillikin

Secretary Gillikin requested that staff provide the Board with an updated list of voter registration statistics by precinct and a list of important dates concerning the upcoming November, 2020 General Election. Secretary Gillikin complemented staff on communication and information transmitted to the Board.

Vice Chair Deese

Vice Chair Deese expressed her appreciation for the staff and their hard work.

Chair Cuthrell

Chair Cuthrell concurred with Vice Chair Deese's comment and reiterated her thanks for staff's hard work.

IX. Closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 for the permitted purpose of discussing personnel and performance reviews

Vice Chair Deese made a motion to move into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 for the permitted purpose of discussing personnel and performance reviews. This motion was seconded by Member Holland 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 Chair Cuthrell and the motion was passed unanimously.

XI. 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