

COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes, August 2, 2023
9:00AM

I. Meeting Called to Order

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

Board Members Present: Chair Susan Cuthrell, Secretary Jeanette Deese, Member Dale Gillikin, Member Lucia Bond, and Member Gerald Godette

Staff Members Present: Director Caitlin Sabadish

Others Present: Wanda Fowler; GOP Chair, Barbara Smith; citizen

II. Approval of Agenda

Member Gillikin made a motion to approve the August 2, 2023 regular meeting agenda as presented. Member Godette seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the July 12, 2023 Regular Meeting and the July 18, 2023 Special Meeting were presented for Board approval. Member Bond made a motion to approve both sets of minutes as presented. Member Gillikin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Approval One-Stop Implementation Plans in accordance with GS 163-227.6

Director Sabadish presented the recommended November 7, 2023 One-Stop plan to the Board for approval to include opening three (3) locations for One-Stop Early Voting as listed below to operate from October 19, 2023 through November 4, 2023. All locations will operate Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 6:00PM excluding the last Saturday which will operate from 8:00AM to 3:00PM as required in odd-year elections.

- 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 Hwy 58 Cedar Point, NC 28584

According to G.S. § 163-227.6, "...a county board of elections by unanimous vote of all its members..." shall approve the sites and hours for One-Stop early voting. Member Gillikin made a motion adopt the November 8, 2022 One-Stop early voting plan as recommended. Member Bond seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Discussion of HB-722 and SB749

The Board discussed the current status of HB-722 and SB-749 in the legislature as well as specific concerns with the bill proposals. Secretary Deese noted that she would not be comfortable with sending a letter from the entire Board, but encouraged individual Board members to write letters. Member Gillikin echoed Secretary Deese's comments. Chair Cuthrell commented that the Board should only put forth a letter if there is a unanimous vote. Chair Cuthrell entertained a vote to write a letter from the Board as a whole. Member Godette, Member Bond, and Chair Cuthrell voted in favor of sending a letter from the Board. Member Gillikin and Secretary Deese voted against sending a letter from the Board. The Board decided that because there was not a unanimous vote, the Board Members will not be submitting a letter to the legislature on behalf of the Carteret County Board of Elections.

VII. Director's Report

a. Recommendation for Temporary Municipal Precinct Merges

- i. Director Sabadish presented a resolution requesting approval to temporarily transfer voters in certain precincts for the November 7, 2023 Municipal Election to include transferring voters from the North River precinct to the Beaufort One (1) precinct, voters from the Beaufort Two (2) precinct to the Beaufort One (1) precinct, voters from the Newport One (1) precinct to the Wildwood precinct, and voters from the Newport Two (2) precinct to the Wildwood precinct due to low voter turnout and difficulties staffing each precinct. Secretary Deese made a motion to approve the resolution as presented to adopt the temporary precinct transfers for the November 7, 2023 Municipal Election provided that notice of adoption of resolution establishing the temporary precinct relocations be advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the county, a copy of this resolution be posted on the courthouse door and at the office of the county board of elections, and a copy of this resolution be mailed to the chairman of every political party in the county in accordance with GS § 163-128 no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the next election, and that notice of precinct change cards be mailed to all affected voters no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Election. Member Gillikin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Precinct Official Appointment Discussion

- i. Director Sabadish noted that she sent a list of staff recommended precinct officials to each of the party Chairs along with a letter and related statutes concerning precinct official appointments. Secretary Deese expressed that she feels that sending the list of precinct officials to the precinct officials was premature and in the future staff should just send a letter to gauge precinct official interest rather than a list. Chair Cuthrell noted that staff did a good job getting the list of names together while putting more precinct officials in-precinct and noted that experience is key when staffing the precincts. Chair Cuthrell also noted that traditionally, the Board has

historically appointed the Chief Judge as the same party of the Governor, although that it not required by statute due having a majority vote.

VIII. Board Comments

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

Member Godette

Member Godette expressed noted that there are several changes taking place in election procedures and noted that staff has done an excellent job staying ahead and implementing these changes. Member Godette also thanked Director Sabadish for a job well done on the Morehead City municipal video.

Secretary Deese

Secretary Deese commended staff of the training and municipal outreach and asked if there were any municipalities that did not reach out to schedule this presentation. Director Sabadish noted that Pine Knoll Shores did not reach out to schedule. Secretary Deese also asked Director Sabadish for an update on the number of Emerald Isle Commissioners to be on the ballot in 2023. Director Sabadish explained that there will only be three candidates listed on the ballot in the 2023 Emerald Isle Commissioner contest. The Town announced that they will be appointing the fourth highest vote getter to fill the remainder of the appointed term currently filled by Jim Normile and set to expire in 2025. Direct Sabadish explained her concerns with Emerald Isle voters over-voting the contest and voting for four candidates in a vote-for-three contest. Director Sabadish said that she has been in contact with the newspaper and will reiterate this point with the precinct officials working in Emerald Isle to ensure that every vote counts.

Member Bond

Member Bond is excited about the number of candidates that came out to file for the municipal election and hopes that this is an indication of increased voter turnout. Member Bond thanked the staff for their public outreach efforts and noted the benefits of this project.

Member Gillikin

Member Gillikin asked where a list of incumbent candidates can be found for the municipal election. Director Sabadish noted that a list of all elected officials in the county can be found on the Carteret County Board of Elections website. Member Gillikin noted that Emerald Isle is the largest municipal precinct in the county and encouraged additional training for the precinct officials that are working at that site on Election Day. Member Gillikin also highlighted key voter registration statistics in relation to the municipal election.

Chair Cuthrell

Chair Cuthrell echoed the other Board Members' comments and noted that staff has done an excellent job compiling the names of the recommended precinct officials. Chair Cuthrell said that she is looking forward to the North Carolina State Board of Elections conference in Concord, NC this month. Chair Cuthrell noted that the next Carteret County Board of Elections meeting will be held on August 22, 2023 at 9:00AM at the Board of Elections office in Beaufort.

IX. Closed session in accordance with GS 143-318.11 (1) for the purpose of discussing personnel

Secretary Deese made a motion to move to closed session in accordance with GS 143-318.11 (1) for the purpose of discussing personnel. Member Gillikin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

X. Return to Open Session

Member Gillikin made a motion to return to open session. Member Godette seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment

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

Susan Cuthrell, Chair

Jeanette Deese, Secretary

Dale Gillikin, Member

Lucia Bond, Member

Gerald Godette, Member