

COUNTY OF CARTERET BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1702 Live Oak Street, Beaufort, NC 28516
Regular Meeting Minutes, August 5, 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, Miriam Green; citizen, non-partisan efforts towards voter education, Helene Kelly; involved in voter registration drives.

II. Approval of Agenda

Secretary Gillikin made a recommendation to amend the August 5, 2020 regular meeting agenda to include approval of the July 1, 2020 closed session minutes under item V. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

No comments made by the public.

IV. Approval of July 1, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Member Holland made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 1, 2020 regular meeting. Member Godette seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

V. Approval of July 1, 2020 Closed Session Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Deese made a motion to approve the closed session minutes from the July 1, 2020 closed session meeting. Member Holland seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

VI. One-Stop Plans for November 2020 General Election

Director Sabadish expressed the need to modify the previously approved One-Stop plans to accommodate the new requirements outlined in the emergency order published on July 17, 2020. As an extension of the preciously approved One-Stop plan, staff recommended that early voting be open from 7:30AM to 8:00PM on Saturday October 17, 2020 and Saturday October 24, 2020. This addition meets and exceeds the requirement outlined in the emergency order that Early Voting must be open for a minimum of ten (10) hours on the first and second weekends. The Board concurred with staff's recommendation to extend these early voting hours at all locations. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the One-Stop

plans for the November, 2020 General Election 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 Saturday from 8:00AM to 7:30PM and the last Saturday from 8:00AM to 3:00PM in accordance with G.S. § 163-227.6 in conjunction with the emergency order passed by Executive Director Brinson-Bell. Member Godette seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

- 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

VII. Temporary Consolidation of Precincts

Member Holland expressed staffing concerns at the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct and also the Mill Creek precinct. Due to COVID-19, several precinct officials are unwilling to work on Election Day. Due to staffing concerns, it was proposed that the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct be temporarily consolidated with the Otway/Bettie/Straits/Gloucester precinct and the Mill Creek precinct temporarily consolidated with the Newport 1 precinct or the Wiregrass/Harlowe precinct. According to House Bill 1169, “Only one precinct assistant is required to be a resident of the precinct, and only one judge is required to be a resident of the precinct. All other precinct officials may be registered voters in any precinct in the County”. The emergency order passed on July 17, 2020 references, “If the county of board of elections learns that one of its polling places for a precinct is inaccessible because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county board of elections may request a transfer of some voters to an adjacent precinct. The request is subject to approval by the Executive Director and shall explain why the partial transfer is necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how the proposal is consistent with the criteria in N.C. G.S. 160-130.2(3)(7). The request must be received at least 45 days prior to the election (9/19/2020). No later than 30 days prior to the election (10/4/2020), the county board of elections shall mail a notice of precinct change to each registered voter who, as a result of the change, will be assigned to a different voting place.”

Due to staffing concerns, staff recommended temporarily combining the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct with the Otway/Bettie/Straits/Gloucester precinct and the Mill Creek precinct with the Newport 1 precinct. These recommendations are presented with consideration to distance, precinct location efficiency, and location relativity. Member Holland recommended that the Mill Creek precinct be temporarily combined with the Wiregrass Harlowe precinct. Chair Cuthrell agreed with Member Holland’s recommendation. Secretary Gillikin expressed that there are positives and negatives to each location, but agreed with staff’s

recommendation to temporarily consolidate the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct with the Newport 1 precinct. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to temporarily consolidate the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct with the Otway/Bettie/Straits/Gloucester precinct and the Mill Creek precinct with the Newport 1 precinct. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Deese and supported by Member Godette. Member Holland and Chair Cuthrell opposed. The motion to temporarily combine the Marshallberg/Smyrna precinct with the Otway/Bettie/Straits/Gloucester precinct and the Mill Creek precinct with the Newport 1 precinct was passed three (3) to two (2).

VIII. MAT Appointment Recommendations

Director Sabadish outlined additional guidance published on August 1, 2020 by the State Board in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services concerning Multi-partisan Assistance Team (MAT) guidance. Staff presented their recommendation to the Board as requested to include five (5) democrats, three (3) republicans, and three (3) unaffiliates. MATs will be scheduled and coordinated with facilities in need prior to Election Day and members will be paid at a rate of \$12.00 per hour. In the event that MATs are required on Election Day, a team will be on reserve to be deployed. Staff plans to provide extensive training for MAT members. Staff also plans to send a letter to facilities throughout the County to gauge the need for MAT and schedule accordingly.

As outlined in House Bill 1169, it is required for the democratic members of the county board of elections to recommend the democratic members of the MAT and the republican members of the county board of election recommend the republican members of the MAT. As such, Member Holland(D) made a motion to approve staff's democratic MAT recommendations. This motion was seconded by both Chair Cuthrell(D) and Member Godette(D) making the democratic recommendations unanimously approved. Secretary Gillikin(R) made a motion to approve staff's republican MAT recommendations. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Deese(R) making the republican recommendations unanimously approved. Secretary Gillikin made a motion to approve the unaffiliated MAT members as recommended. This motion was seconded by Member Holland and was passed unanimously by the Board.

IX. Early Voting & Election Day Scheduling

Deputy Director Burke presented staff's estimate concerning number of workers needed for both One-Stop and Election Day. For One-Stop, staff estimated that they will need eighty (80) workers per day for fifteen (15) days working ten (10) per shift, totaling twenty (20) workers for each of the four (4) sites, per day. For Election Day, staff estimated they will need a minimum of one-hundred sixty-six (166) workers, excluding rovers, office staff, MAT members, and back-up precinct officials. Ideally, staff would like to have two-hundred (200) Election Day workers total. Staff are still working to recruit precinct officials to work both Election Day and One-Stop. To enhance recruiting efforts, staff plans to increase advertising through mailers, social media, and word of mouth. Member Holland

expressed the need to advertise the twelve (12) facts of absentee voting published by the state. The Board agreed that staff should increase recruitment efforts and educate voters. The Board requested that they have the opportunity to review any and all mailers prior to distribution.

Staff informed the Board that they plan to train new precinct officials and assistants beginning on September 7, 2020. Staff plans to host new precinct official and assistant training first, as some new precinct officials may need to work One-Stop. Staff plans to have a minimum of six (6) classes for new precinct officials and assistants to accommodate fifteen people per class, however, the number of classes may increase as a result of recruitment. Staff plans to host One-Stop early voting classes second and Election Day classes last. Staff may need to revise the training schedule to accommodate for additional precinct officials that sign up and to include MAT training depending on levels of interest.

X. Director's Report

a. List of Important Dates

Director Sabadish presented the Board with a list of important dates the extends through canvass to include important meeting dates and deadlines.

XI. Board Comments

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

Member Holland

Member Holland reiterated the importance of publishing the twelve (12) points concerning absentee by mail security in the paper to educate voters. The Board agreed that advertising this publication was important for voter education and advised that the timing of the publication should be appropriate and relative to the Election.

Vice Chair Deese

Vice Chair Deese inquired about the absentee ballot signature requirement. Director Sabadish noted that signature comparison is not required and is outlined in numbered memo 2020-15. Vice Chair Deese noted that if there is any type of signature discrepancy, that it be presented to the Board for further review.

Secretary Gillikin

Secretary Gillikin thanked staff for providing the important dates sheet and also suggested that the Board be provide an updated list of voter registration statistics by precinct regularly as we approach the November, 2020 General Election. Secretary Gillikin noted that the conference was educational and overall went well.

Member Godette

Member Godette commented on the conference and highlighted the relationship between Board Members and Staff concerning overall communication. Member Godette requested an explanation concerning absentee ballot security and overall processing. The group responded and outlined the processes and procedures.

Chair Cuthrell

Chair Cuthrell commented on the conference and noted that it was reassuring to hear the hard work that the State has put in to ensure a safe voting environment during the pandemic. Chair Cuthrell also expressed her concerns about being short staffed. Director Sabadish noted that she is working with the Human Resource Department and Finance Department to get additional office staff.

XII. 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