



# ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

### BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 19, 2019 – 3:00 pm

Regular Meeting

The Rockingham County Board of Elections met Tuesday, March 19, 2019, at 3:00 pm in the Board of Elections Board Room.

Board Members Present: Royce Richardson, Chair; Toni Reece, Secretary; Leanna Lawson, Member; Jeff Parris, Member; and Bonnie Purgason, Member

Staff Members Present: Tina Cardwell, Director; and Amy Simpson, Senior Deputy Director;

Other Persons Present: Rockingham County Attorney, John Morris; and Members of the public

#### ITEM #1 – MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Chair Richardson. Chair Richardson welcomed those in attendance. Chair Richardson reminded the board no three members can get together and discuss any upcoming business and also reminded them if any board member had a conflict of interest, or an appearance of a conflict of interest please let them know so they could be recused from action on that item.

#### ITEM #2 – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member Purgason made the motion, seconded by Secretary Reece, and the vote was unanimous to approve the Agenda for this meeting.

#### ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Purgason made the motion, seconded by Member Lawson, and the vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of the March 5th Called Meeting as presented.

Member Purgason made the motion, seconded by Secretary Reece, and the vote was unanimous to amend the Approval of the Agenda to take out the March 5, 2019 Closed Session minutes.

#### ITEM #4 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don Powell, 636 King Street, Reidsville

-I'm here to discuss an issue that's come to light in the last few weeks concerning Ms. Simpson and the current Register of Deeds, Ben Curtis. It seems that somewhere along the line that Ms. Simpson has taken the approach that investigation of local elected officials has become part of her duties. And in that she has been involved with a conflict I guess with the County and Mr.



# ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Curtis concerning his pay, which is purely a County issue for which Mr. Curtis never asked for or never knew anything about till brought up at the Commissioner's Meeting. That has since been resolved. I believe that the County Attorney here today has information concerning that he made a decision that would have caused Mr. Curtis to have been paid erroneously and the county has now worked through that and in addition to that there was an issue about the number of days off that he's had. It appears that Ms. Simpson has been involved in that we have had copies of emails where there been sent back and forth between her and one of the Commissioners and her and the County Manager. That brings to light two problems with this type of behavior, one is that we now have a Register of Deeds that gonna find himself in front of the public tomorrow night on Channel 12 to answer for things that he's not guilty of nor has ever been guilty of and has been proven to not be guilty of. So he's getting some unwanted attention prior to his next election because of these issues. The other this is that by doing this, it puts a stain on this board, you are a nonpartisan board. You're that because of a reason for any person in the United States of America should be able to come to you and sign up to run for office and solicit information from you of how that process goes without fear of their conversations being released to the public or anybody else. And so I believe that it has placed a tarnish on you in the form of public trust. I would ask today that you take this information and use it seriously to rectify this problem not standing here asking that Ms. Simpson be terminated from the employment of the county but I would ask that she be moved to another department because I do not believe that our Republican candidates will feel comfortable coming in during the next election cycle and filing to run knowing that this has happened with the Register of Deeds and I certainly don't feel like that he would feel comfortable coming in, registering and having Ms. Simpson look over his reports for fear of reparations for our being here today or other incidents or comments that may be made concerning this issue. Thank you.

Diane Parnell,

-Mr. Chairman, I actually put my name on this list because I wasn't sure that Don would make it here. But I do want to tell you, Chairman Richardson, you and I have been here for a long time and I can tell you that I felt like when you were in the minority and we had a Chairman that was a Republican that you were fair and that's exactly what I'm asking for you is to be fair. I have had at least 5 elected officials to contact me in the last twenty-four hours. I don't know Mr. Parrish, I don't know how much information that you know, but we have had plenty. I've known about this issue for a couple of months and there has been no public outcry because we've kept it quiet. I've been very proud of our Board of Elections, there's been a real mess with the State but it has never been here. You have always been upstanding people and I have stood by that and I've argued with people from different areas that said, "Your Board of Elections could not have been this pristine", yes, you were, you were very good. This is such an embarrassment and I'm sorry to say that I agree. I have some upset elected Officials and I'm putting it in your hands and I'm trusting you to do the right thing. Thank you very much.



# ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

### **ITEM #5 – 2019 – 2021 Delegation of Authority**

Member Purgason made the motion, seconded by Secretary Reece, and the vote was unanimous to amend the 2019 – 2021 Delegation of Authority to reflect the following changes:

7. Be available to assist the board with recommendations of candidates for the hiring and termination process subject to the Board's approval. To conduct job evaluations for the Board of Elections staff subject to the Board's approval. G.S. 163A-769.

13. Represent the Elections Office as a County Department Head and perform all personnel duties as approved by the board. Maintain contact with county departments and municipalities concerning Election matters.

### **ITEM #6 – 2019 – 2020 BUDGET**

Member Purgason made the motion, seconded by Secretary Reece, and the vote was unanimous to accept the 2019 – 2020 Budget.

### **ITEM #7 - NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion took place on whether a One Stop Early Voting Plan needed to be discussed and Director Cardwell explained if business hours are not extended it only needed to be posted.

Discussion took place on how the Board of Elections paid for municipal elections and Director Cardwell explained the cost was in the 2019 – 2020 budget but would be invoiced after the election and reimbursed by the municipalities.

### **ITEM #8 - CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO G.S. 143-318.11(A)(6)**

Member Purgason made the motion, seconded by Member Lawson, and the vote was unanimous to go into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) at 4:00 pm. Secretary Reece made the motion, seconded by Member Purgason, and the vote was unanimous to come out of closed session at 5:25 pm.

### **ITEM #9 – ADJOURNMENT**

Secretary Reece made the motion, seconded by Member Lawson, and the vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 pm.



# ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Next meeting is set for April 16, 2019 @ 3:00 pm – Regular Meeting

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Tina Cardwell, Director

---

Royce Richardson, Chair