

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 17, 2021 – 10:00 AM  
REGULAR MEETING**

The Rockingham County Board of Elections met Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 10:00 am in the Commissioners Chambers.

Board Members Present: Ophelia Wright, Chair; Tom Schoolfield, Secretary; Nelson Cole, Member; Thurman Hampton, Member; and Sarah Totten, Member.

Staff Members Present: Paula Seamster, Director

**ITEM #1 – MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The Board meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chair Wright.

**ITEM #2 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Wright.

**ITEM #3 – INVOCATION**

Invocation was given by Pastor Randy Jessup of Ayersville Baptist Church in Mayodan.

**ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Secretary Schoolfield moved, seconded by Member Cole to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.**

**ITEM #5 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Wright asked that the Minutes of July 20, 2021 be removed from the agenda and to bring it back to the next meeting.

**Member Totten moved, seconded by Member Hampton to approve the March 12, 2021 Special Meeting, March 16, 2021 Regular Meeting, and March 31, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.**

Secretary Schoolfield stated that he and Director prepared the Minutes and that the Minutes would be much briefer but the Public Comments portion of the meeting will be recorded verbatim.

**ITEM #6 – PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Wright asked the Director to read the Public Comments Rules.

Ms. Seamster read the Public Comments Rules.

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Bonnie Purgason –

“Thank you Madam Chair and Board Members. My name is Bonnie Purgason and I live at 183 LeGrande Drive, Eden, NC. On your agenda today you will be discussing the 2021 Municipal Elections One Stop Early Voting, I would like for you to have some information that was gathered from the North Carolina State Board of Elections and some partial information provided by the local Board of Elections. In 2017, there were 14 days of early voting. We voted 4,056 citizens out of 23,998 registered voters which is a 16.9% voter turnout. Of that 4,056 only 360 voted those 14 days. The cost to the municipalities was \$9.98 per vote. In 2019, there were 15 days of early voting. We voted 3,639 citizens out of 23,000 registered voters which is a 15.6% voter turnout. Of the 3,639 only 366 voted those 15 days. I could not figure the true cost of these 15 days since my Freedom of Information Act to the local board did not provide complete information as I requested therefore the cost to the municipalities was greater than \$10.93 per vote. As you can see adding days and spending more money isn't creating more votes. Now you are tasked with setting the one stop early voting for the 2021 Municipal Elections, never in the history of this Board of Elections has days been added to one stop early voting in a municipal election other than what has been recommended by the State. The State Board has recommended 17 days, 2 days more than 2019 and any other days that you all might consider. The taxpayers of our cities deserve to have a fair election and they also deserve for each of you to take into consideration the cost of any more useless days of one stop early voting for 2021. If an individual can't get to the polls in 17 days plus Election Day I doubt very seriously they will vote period. I urge each of you not to consider adding more days to a very long voting period for the sake of the employees and the citizens of our cities. Yes you have the duty of setting these dates but you also have the duty to be conservative with taxpayer dollars. Thank you.”

Chair Wright thanked Ms. Purgason for her Public Comments and she closed Public Comments.

**ITEM #7 – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AND DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS FOR ROCKINGHAM COUNTY**

Chair Wright stated that in the Board's packet there is a copy of the current Delegation of Authority and Duties that was approved by the past Board as well as a copy of the prior Delegation of Authority and Duties. She stated that the difference between the two is Item #7. Chair Wright read Item #7 for the public 'Be responsible for the appointment, removal, salary adjustments, merit increases, and job evaluations for the Rockingham County Board of Elections Staff.' She added that this was the difference between the last delegation of duties and this delegation of duties. Chair Wright asked for approval of one of the Delegation of Authority and Duties of the Director of Elections for Rockingham County.

Member Schoolfield recommended adding 'subject to the Board's approval' to Item #7.  
Member Hampton agreed.

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**Secretary Schoolfield moved, seconded by Member Totten to approve the current Delegation of Authority and Duties of the Director of Elections for the Rockingham County and to amend Item #7 to read ‘Be responsible for the appointment, removal, salary adjustments, merit increase, and job evaluations for the Rockingham County Board of Elections Staff with Board approval’. The motion carried unanimously.**

**ITEM #8 – RESOLUTION TO ALLOW ANNEXED VOTERS OF THE CITY OF REIDSVILLE – SOUTHEAST PRECINCT PRIVILEGES TO VOTE IN AN ADJACENT PRECINCT FOR ELECTIONS FOR THE CITY OF REIDSVILLE – NCGS 163A-1045.**

Chair Wright stated that there has been at least 4 voters that have been annexed by the City of Reidsville and the Director is seeking permission to allow these voters privileges to vote in an adjacent precinct. She stated that the resolution has been approved for past municipal elections and this resolution would need to be approved and sent to the State Board of Elections.

**Member Cole moved, seconded by Secretary Schoolfield to approve the Resolution to Allow Annexed Voters of the City of Reidsville – Southeast Precinct Privileges to Vote in an Adjacent Precinct for Elections for the City of Reidsville. The motion carried unanimously.**

**ITEM #9 – 2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION ONE-STOP PLAN**

The Director stated that the 2021 Municipal Election One Plan that was included in the Board’s packet is the same plan that was presented at the last Board meeting. She stated that the requirements from the State Board of Elections is for the County Board of Elections offices to be open at least regular business hours and from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on the last Saturday of One Stop Voting. The Director’s recommendation was that One Stop Voting would begin on Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup> with the days and hours of Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and that the One Stop Voting would take place at the Rockingham County Board of Elections office on Cherokee Camp Road.

Secretary Schoolfield stated that the State Board is requiring that the Board of Elections have a Saturday for One Stop Voting from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. which would allow for those individuals that work during the week the opportunity to vote on a Saturday. The Director responded that this was correct.

**Member Cole moved, seconded by Secretary Schoolfield to approve the 2021 Municipal Election One-Stop Plan as presented by the Director. The motion carried unanimously.**

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**ITEM #10 – 2021 – 2023 PRECINCT OFFICIALS APPOINTMENTS**

The Director stated that the Board had at their table an updated list of the recommended Chief Judges, Judges, and Precinct Officials for the election years 2021 – 2023.

Secretary Schoolfield asked if all of the individuals were called and accepted. The Director responded that all of the individuals were called and asked if they were willing to serve as Precinct Officials for the 2021 – 2023 elections years and all those listed have accepted.

Member Hampton asked the Director if the individuals on the list had previous election experience. The Director responded that most of the individuals do have previous experience but there were 46 new applicants that would go through the training, work as a precinct official first and not serve as a judge or chief judge.

**Member Hampton moved, seconded by Secretary Schoolfield to approve the 2021 – 2023 Precinct Officials. The motion carried unanimously.**

**ITEM #11 – ATTORNEY FOR BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

The Director informed the Board that she had received 3 proposals for the Board of Elections Attorney. She recommended that a 2 member committee of the Board be formed to review the applicants, interview the applicants, etc. and then make a recommendation to the Board. The Director stated that the Board member had a copy of the applicant's proposals at their seats.

Member Hampton agreed with the Director and volunteered to serve on the 2 member committee to review the attorney proposals. Secretary Schoolfield volunteered to serve as the other member.

Chair Wright gave the names of the three applicants: Gabe Zeller, Meredith Bailey and Brian Ferrell.

**Member Cole moved, seconded by Member Totten at the recommendation of the Director and the volunteering of Member Hampton and Secretary Schoolfield to form a 2 member committee to review the attorney proposals and to bring back a recommendation to the full Board. The motion carried unanimously.**

**ITEM #11.a. – Public Records Request**

Chair Wright informed the Board that she received a Public Records Request and she would like to have general counsel before moving forward with the request. She stated that as soon as the Board has appointed an attorney this request could be handled.

Secretary Schoolfield asked if the public records request could be handled by the county's general counsel. Chair Wright responded that she would prefer that the Board have legal counsel to handle the public records request.

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**ITEM #12 – DIRECTOR’S UPDATE**

**Preliminary 2021 Election Schedule**

The Director presented the Board with the 2021 Election Schedule starting with Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, November 9, 2021. She stated that the Board would need to determine a time for the Absentee Board Meetings on Tuesday, October 12, October 19<sup>th</sup>, and October 26<sup>th</sup> and this could be done at the next Board meeting.

**Numbered Memo 2021-04 – County Canvass**

The Director stated that this memo was placed in the agenda as a reminder to the Board about County Canvass.

**ITEM #13 – CLOSED SESSION**

At 10:46 a.m. **Member Totten moved, seconded by Member Hampton to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel and to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1) . The motion carried unanimously.**

At 11:25 a.m. **Member Totten moved, seconded by Member Hampton to go back into regular session. The motion carried unanimously.**

**ITEM #14 – ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:26 a.m. **Secretary Schoolfield moved, seconded by Member Cole to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Paula P. Seamster, Director

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Ophelia Wright, Chair