

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 17, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

The Rockingham County Board of Elections met Tuesday, August 17, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Rockingham County Governmental Center Commissioners Chambers.

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

Staff Members Present: Paula Seamster, Director.

ITEM #1 – MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Wright called the Board meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Chair Wright welcomed the Board members and the guests that were present and those online.

ITEM #2 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Member Nelson Cole led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3 – INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Reverend William Hairston, Shiloh Baptist Church in Reidsville.

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ITEM #5 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Cole moved, seconded by Secretary Totten to approve the July 18, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes and the July 24, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #6 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Wright stated that one person signed up for Public Comments. The Director read the emailed public comments.

Diane Parnell –

“Madam Chairman, Board Members, thank you for letting me come to speak with you tonight. I have an issue that came up the last election and I believe I expressed some concern and I want to get ahead of that because I know we have an election coming up in 2024, Municipal Election. In the corral, we have always been able to get together all parties that came and worked together very agreeably. When you come to the corral and you set up a tent I was told that you share these things. When you come to your corral and you have a table that takes up a large spot then that is concerning, it’s concerning to me. I bring a little patio table to put my information on so it will be close to me. I think that’s acceptable but I am willing to hear from you and saying what measurements a table should be. It should not be, in my way of thinking, a table with stools to sit inside the corral and have lunch, to me that is degrading of our municipal elections, of our process. The second thing that really concerns me is animals don’t belong in that corral. Not animals dressed with a t-shirt of a person that is running and used to campaign with but we had animals in our corral along with the dog bed, along with the dog water, not one but two, so if this is going to be

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the norm, expect more of this to happen. I just want to get ahead of this issue. I would like to hear a ruling from you. I know that there is no policy from the NCBOE and there shouldn't have to be, it should be common sense and consideration but apparently we don't have that. I realize that the corral has been challenged and that it is not supposedly mandatory that you stay within that corral but I like you believe that the corral should be there for a reason for safety purposes and to allow all parties an equal opportunity to speak to the voters that are coming in. I would like a response from you. Thank you very much.”

Chair Wright responded “Thank you.”

Chair Wright closed Public Comments.

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

Chair Wright stated that the Delegation of Authority in the packet is the same that was approved by the Board in 2021. She asked if the Board had any changes or revisions for the Delegation of Authority.

Secretary Totten stated that she did not have any changes or revision however she commended the Director for the excellent job she does.

Member Cole moved, seconded by Member Hampton to approve the Delegation of Authority and Duties of the Director of Elections for Rockingham County. 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 163-128(A)

The Director stated that five voters have been annexed into the City of Reidsville. They normally vote in the Southeast Precinct however this resolution would give the Board of Elections permission to move them to an adjacent precinct which is the McCoy precinct to vote during the Municipal Election. She stated that this has been done for several years now. The Director stated that the approval of the resolution gives the Board of Elections the authority to mail letters to the 5 voters affected letting them know that they can vote at the McCoy precinct.

Member Schoolfield asked when the annexation of this area was approved and why are the voters not in the McCoy precinct. The Director responded that the annexation took place years ago. She added that these voters are located in the Southeast precinct according to the district election lines. Member Schoolfield stated that the district lines were recently redrawn in the City of Reidsville. The Director responded that the precinct lines were not redrawn and added that voting district does not have anything to do with the City of Reidsville's A and B districts. She stated that the Southeast precinct is a voting precinct or voting district. The Director stated that the 5 individuals affected by this live outside of the city limits of Reidsville but some reason chose to be annexed or the city chose to annex them. She stated that this resolution approval happens throughout the whole state of North Carolina. It is not specific to Rockingham County. Member Schoolfield asked who has the authority to reallocate the district so they could be included in the municipal election.

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Chair Wright asked if this started with the city council. The Director responded yes; there is a process that has to be followed to be annexed into the city including public hearings that are held. Chair Wright stated that this is the second step in the process and the Board would need to approve this resolution and then it is sent to the State Board of Elections.

Member Hampton asked if this was five individuals or five residential addresses. The Director responded that this affected 5 individuals, 4 residential addresses.

Member Cole asked if the status of these individuals are in regards to if they pay taxes in the City of Reidsville. The Director responded that these 5 individuals do pay taxes to the City of Reidsville, which is part of the annexation. He asked if the vote on the resolution could be postponed until the next meeting. The Director responded that the resolution needed to be approved and sent into the State Board of Elections now. She added that the citizens have to be notified within so many days of the Municipal Election. The Director stated that this was something that needed to be done because these individuals pay taxes to the City of Reidsville and it is their right to vote in the Municipal Election. She stated that these individuals have never voted in the municipal election but they still need to be given that right to vote. Member Cole asked if they pay fire tax and if this affects their insurance. The Director responded that she would contact the State Board of Elections and have them to explain this process as well as the Board of Elections attorney. She stated that this is a process is done during every municipal election.

Member Schoolfield stated so every two years we have to go through this process and it did not make any sense at all to him. The Director responded that she understood but it is policy. She added that she thought once the Board receives the legal explanation for this it would make a lot more sense.

Chair Wright stated that she had printed the general statute on this but she left it at home.

Member Hampton asked if the Board's attorney could get with the city's attorney to get some answers. He added that he thinks part of the holdup is using the term 'annexed' which means they become part of the city. The Director responded that if the member of the Board would like to come by her office or the City of Reidsville and look at the City of Reidsville map you will see where the roads are located and how they are located outside of the city limit boundaries but have been annexed into the city. She added that as the Board of Elections, we have nothing to do with annexation. We only give those individuals the right to vote during a municipal election.

Member Totten stated that the candidates on the ballot do not represent the residents that have been annexed. The Director responded that the voters do have a district that is assigned to them whether that is District A or District B.

Chair Wright stated that she found the general statute and if the Board wanted her to read it she could. She stated that the Board needed to follow the general statute to approve this resolution.

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Member Schoolfield recommended that the Board approve the resolution and do what Member Hampton stated and deal with it separately with instruction to the Director to get reasonable answers through the Board's attorney.

Chair Wright stated that there is a requirement of 45 days' notice according to the general statutes.

Member Schoolfield moved, seconded by Member Hampton to approve the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

Member Hampton asked the Chair if they needed to direct the Director to consult with the Board's attorney regarding clarification on the issue.

Member Hampton moved, seconded by Member Schoolfield to have the Board's attorney to speak with the City's attorney to get clarification on the issue.

Member Schoolfield stated that the objective would be to see how to move this out of the Board's process since it wastes a lot of time every two years.

Chair Wright asked Member Schoolfield what could be done about a general statute. Member Schoolfield responded that this was what the Director would find out for the Board. Chair Wright stated that a general statute is a general statute.

Member Cole stated that something needed to be done to resolve this issue.

Chair Wright asked what steps did the Board plan to take to resolve this issue. Member Cole responded that the conversation that the Director would have with the Board's attorney may answer that. Chair Wright stated that it is part of a general statute.

Upon a vote of the motion, the motion carried.

ITEM #10 – 2023 – 2025 PRECINCT OFFICIALS APPOINTMENTS

The Director stated an updated list of Chief Judges for the 2023 Municipal Election and the Chief Judges for the 2024 Primary Election as well as Precinct Officials for elections year 2023 – 2025 was in the Board's packet. She asked for approval of the list and noted that the county needed about 25 to 40 more precinct officials for the 2024 Election. The Director stated that several precinct officials have resigned due to their age, new proposed election regulations, and have moved outside of Rockingham County. She stated that the Board of Elections has hired 18 new precinct officials.

Member Schoolfield stated that he assumed that there were enough precinct officials to cover the Municipal Election. The Director responded that there was enough precinct officials for the Municipal Election. Member Schoolfield asked if the list to be approved was for the 2024 election workers. The Director responded that this list of precinct officials would be for the 2023 Municipal Election, 2024 Primary Election, and 2024 General Election but more precinct officials are needed for the 2024 Elections.

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Chair Wright stated that this list is for 2023 – 2025. The Director responded yes. Chair Wright stated that 195 is the total. The Director responded yes and the county needs at least 225 for the elections next year.

Member Cole moved, seconded by Member Hampton to approve the 2023 – 2025 Precinct Officials Appointments. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #10 – DIRECTOR’S UPDATE

a. Preliminary 2023 Election Schedule

The Director stated that the Board has included in their agenda packet a Preliminary 2023 Election Schedule that gives the dates of election events that will be coming up. She stated that the first date, October 3rd is for the Absentee Board Meeting and this Absentee Board Meeting is prior to the Absentee Ballots being mailed out, however there is a 30 day requirement to start holding Absentee Board meetings. The Director stated that the first Absentee Board Meeting will be cancelled but this still had to be put on the Elections Calendar for that purpose. She stated that the Preliminary 2023 Election Schedule will be posted on the Board of Elections webpage as well as the Calendar of Events. The Director stated that the first thing that will take place on the list of events will be the Logic and Accuracy Testing of the voting machines which will take place on Tuesday, October 3rd and the next important thing that will take place will be a Mock Election which will take place on Thursday, October 5th.

Member Schoolfield asked if this needed approval. The Director responded that these dates are already set. Member Schoolfield asked if the Early Voting was listed. The Director responded that One Stop (Early) Voting will start on Thursday, October 19th through November 4th. She stated that there will be 13 days for early voting. The Director stated that the Early Voting will take place at the Board of Elections office only for the Municipal Election.

b. Events/Speaking Engagements

- On Saturday, September 9th, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Johnson’s Sporting Goods – Ruffin Fall Festival. There will be a tent set up with Precinct Officials Clara Chappell and Deborah Moore representing the Board of Elections.
- On Friday, September 15th and Saturday, September 16th, Riverfest in Eden. There will be a tent set up. Friday, Precinct Officials Marilyn Watkins and John Harris will be there from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and then on Saturday, Precinct Officials Dayne Blair and Frank Wilson will be there from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Precinct Officials Terry Davis and Bret Hart will be there from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- On Saturday, September 16th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Rockingham Community College Community Day. Precinct Officials Marilyn Watkins and Roger Shelton will be there.
- Tuesday, September 19th, is National Voter Registration Day and the Board of Elections will have tables set up at the Rockingham County Libraries to register individuals. Precinct Official Bret Hart will be at the Eden Library from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Precinct Official Joyce Webster will be at the Madison/Mayodan Library from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Precinct Official Stacey Joyce will be at the Reidsville Library from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Precinct Official Cyndy Hayworth will be at the Stoneville Library from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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- On Saturday, October 21st, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Fall into Madison Event. There will be a tent set up with Precinct Officials Jenny Sharp and Melanie Harrington representing the Board of Elections.

The Director informed the Board that she had placed calendars at the Board seats with all the information listed. She stated that information will also go out on Facebook to let the public know about the events.

c. No Labels Party

The Director stated that on Sunday, August 13th, the State Board of Elections met before the Conference began and recognized that No Labels was now an affiliated political party. She stated that individuals throughout the state of North Carolina now have the Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, Republican Party, and the No Labels Party, as well as Unaffiliated. The Director stated that if anyone wants to register as a No Labels, can check beside Other and write in No Labels. She stated that the State Board is updating the SEIMS system to add No Labels as a party in the system. The Director stated that new registration forms will be coming soon.

Member Schoolfield asked if there was a date on when the State Board will have the system set up with these changes. The Director responded that some changes were made this past weekend as well as this week.

d. SB 747

Director stated that the NC House of Representatives met last night and at 8:51 p.m. SB747 passed 27 to 18 and is moving on to the Governor. She stated at the Board's seats there is a copy of the changes and revisions that were made by the House. The Director stated that the indication that was given this morning was that the Governor most likely will veto this bill.

Member Schoolfield asked for the vote again. The Director responded 27 to 18.

Member Cole stated that this had to be the Senate vote. The Director responded that this was the House vote. Member Cole stated that there are 120 members in the House. The Director responded that those were the ones that were present that voted last night.

The Director stated that SB 749 is still in Committee with the Elections Law and Campaign Finance Reform with the House of Representatives and has been there since June 26th.

Secretary Totten stated that she was hoping that the House would make some changes to SB 749.

The Director informed the Board that if SB 747 and SB 749 pass and become laws they will take place on January 1, 2024.

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e. State Board of Election Summer Conference

The Director stated at that the State Conference started on Sunday, August 13th and ran through Tuesday, August 15th. She stated it was a good conference and a lot of information was covered. The Director stated that there were some equipment issues but overall it was a good conference. She asked if any of the Board members that attended would like to add anything.

Member Hampton stated that it was a great conference. He said the information was great. Member Hampton stated that he thought about Member Schoolfield when statistical tables were discussed during the conference.

Secretary Totten stated that the session that stood out to her was the one on Emergency Management and Safety. She stated that she learned a lot in this session that she was not familiar with or had not thought about it.

ITEM #11 – CLOSED SESSION

Secretary Totten moved, seconded by Member Cole 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.

Member Cole moved, seconded by Secretary Totten to go back into regular session. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #12 – ADJOURNMENT

At 11:15 a.m. Member Hampton moved, seconded by Member Schoolfield to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula P. Seamster, Director

Ophelia Wright, Chair