

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

The Rockingham County Board of Elections met Tuesday, September 19, 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; and Tom Schoolfield, Member.

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

Diane Parnell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3 – INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Dr. Ron Tuck, Lawsonville Road Baptist Church in Reidsville.

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ITEM #5 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Secretary Totten moved, seconded by Member Hampton to approve the August 17, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #6 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Wright opened Public Comments and asked the Director to read the Public Comments policy.

Royce Richardson –

“Madam Chairman and Board, I just wanted to come today to say thank you for what you all do. I’ve watched you over the last two or three years and I really believe that you all work together to get the things done that you need to get done in a fair and professional manner and I appreciate that. I hope the voters in the county realize what you do and also to your staff, Paula Seamster and her staff. You have a great staff and they stay busy, I know. The average voter probably thinks that the voting happens, a lot of them, once every four years or once every two years but as you all know the staff stays busy as you all do, stays busy all the time going from one election, getting ready for the next election and they do stay really busy. I really appreciate what the staff do and what you all do and I wanted to let you know that. Thank you.”

Diane Parnell –

“Madam Chairman, Board Members, thank you for letting me come and speak to you today. I am Diane Parnell, I live at 220 Woodland Drive and my issue, I think all of you are familiar with. I am just here to remind you that I would like to see something done before the next election comes up and I realize kindness and decorum can’t be legislated but you can set policy as to no animals in the corral, the size of the tent and do we share it, a table that is used not for lunch but to put material on.

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

I am speaking of our party, I would like to have some way that you can remove somebody from campaigning there if they are not behaving properly. So if you folks can meet with your minds and do something along these lines I assure you we will obey those rules. Thank you so much.”

Chair Wright closed Public Comments.

ITEM #7 – VOTER PHOTO ID REQUIREMENT

Chair Wright stated that the Voter Photo ID was a hot topic at the annual State Board of Elections State Conference in Concord. She stated that all of the up to date information on the Voter Photo ID can be found on the Rockingham County Board of Elections website, there is a link that connects to the State Board of Elections website. Chair Wright went through the acceptable photo IDs. She stated that the Rockingham County Board of Elections has and will continue to issue Voter Identification Cards. Chair Wright stated that every voter will have the opportunity to vote even if they do not have an ID but it will be Provisional. Chair Wright asked if the Board had any questions or comments.

Member Schoolfield stated after going through the list, Rockingham County was not well represented because the IDs for the county employees nor the community college were on the list and he wanted to know the process to get these approved. The Director responded that all of the counties, municipalities, community colleges and universities were contacted directly from the State Board of Elections on how to get their IDs approved. She stated that one of the requirements for the approval of the IDs is to have an expiration date on the ID. The Director stated that if a county or college would like to get their ID approved they can submit their information to the State Board of Elections for approval.

ITEM #8 – ELECTIONEERING AREA

Chair Wright stated that the next item on the agenda was the Electioneering Area.

Member Cole stated that this issue was brought before the Board at the last Board meeting by Ms. Parnell as well as others that the Board has had conversations which dictates that this is a big issue that could not be resolved in the meeting and he suggested forming two committees with a republican board member and a democrat board member on each committee to research this issue and to compile recommendations to be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Chair Wright asked Member Cole what it was that he wanted researched. Member Cole responded to research the issues that exist at the electioneer corrals such as intimidation, unauthorized pets, as well as comments that have been made regarding candidates and to candidates, as well as eating in the area. He stated that the issues needed to be researched in view of the state requirements and make recommendation for the county.

Member Cole moved, seconded by Member Schoolfield that Chair Wright make an appointment of two committees, each with a republican and a democrat, to research this issue and come back at the next meeting for discussion and hopefully a vote.

Member Schoolfield stated that he did not think Board had enough information to move forward with this issue and that this issue needed to be discussed with other individuals especially the

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

parties involved to get their input and check the legal aspect with the State Board. He added that this will need to be enforced by the political parties.

Secretary Totten asked the Director if there were any state regulations regarding this issue. The Director responded that the only state regulation is the buffer zone regulations as far as how far the electioneers have to be located from the voting area. She added that the Board of Elections has a brochure that outlines this information. The Director stated that she had asked the State Board of Elections about this issue and there are not general statutes on this issue other than the buffer zones. Secretary Totten asked what the State Board of Elections recommendation. The Director responded that each county can approve their own rules or policy.

Chair Wright asked Member Cole what the purpose was for two committees versus one committee. Member Cole responded that the more people involved in the input would create a better policy and make for a faster resolution to the issues.

Upon a vote of the motion, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Wright stated that she would make the appointments however not at the meeting.

Chair Wright read the “Electioneering Laws and Information” brochure to the Board and public. She stated that the brochure can be found on the Board of Elections website or it can be picked up at the Board of Elections office.

ITEM #10 – 2023 PRECINCT JUDGE APPOINTMENTS

The Director stated that at the last Board meeting on August 17, 2023 the Board approved the Chief Judges for the 2023 Municipal Election and the Precinct Officials for the 2023-2025 Election years. She stated that included in the Board’s packet was a list of the approved Chief Judges as well as the Democrat Judge and the Republican Judge for each Municipal Precinct. The Director asked for approval of the Judges for the 2023 Municipal Election.

Member Schoolfield stated that the Board approved the Chief Judges for the General Election and he asked how it stood for the Judges for the General Election. The Director responded that staff was still working on those appointments and the Board would approve the Judges for the Primary Election once it gets closer to that election.

Member Schoolfield moved, seconded by Member Cole to approve the 2023 Precinct Judge Appointments for the 2023 Municipal Election. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #10 – 2023 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS PREPARATIONS

a. Training

The Director stated that the Precinct Officials started their Precinct Trainings on Tuesday, September 12th. The Chief Judges are conducting these training with the assistance of Staff. Photo ID requirements, Provisional changes, etc. have been discussed extensively in these trainings as well as other things that may come up during the Municipal Election. There will be additional training for Provisional ballots and the ExpressVote training will take place on the same day as the Logic and Accuracy Testing on the voting machines.

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

b. Logic and Accuracy Testing on the Voting Machines

The Director stated that the Logic and Accuracy Testing (L & A) on the voting machines will take place on Tuesday, October 3rd. The time has not been set for this testing as of yet. A notice will be sent out to the public when the time has been set. This is open to the public however she did asked that the Board of Elections be notified so that ample room can be made available to view the testing. The Director asked the Board if there were any questions.

Chair Wright stated that she was at the Board of Elections while some of the training was taking place and the officials were conducting the training. The Director stated that the Chief Judge training took place earlier. She added that every precinct handles things a little bit different. The Director commended the precinct officials and their dedication to the citizens of Rockingham County in ensuring that everyone gets the opportunity to vote.

c. Mock Election

The Director stated that the Mock Election with the State Board will take place on Thursday, October 5th. She stated that the results that are received from the Logic and Accuracy testing is what will be used to conduct the Mock Election.

Member Schoolfield asked the Director to run through the process of the mock election and how many machines are tested. The Director responded that all of the voting machines that will be used during the Municipal Election will be tested and she went through the process of the Mock Election.

d. One Stop (Early) Voting

The Director stated that One Stop (Early) Voting will begin on Thursday, October 19th and run through Saturday, November 4th. Early Voting will be held at the Board of Elections office only. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 p.m. and then on Saturday, November 4th from 8:00 am to 3:00 p.m.

e. Election Day

The Director stated that Election Day will be Tuesday, November 7th. Polls will open at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. The 9 Municipal Voting Precincts will be open and these locations can be found on the Board of Elections website. The Sample Ballots are posted on the Board of Elections website as well as they are available for pick up at the Board of Elections office. Voting will not be conducted at the Board of Elections Office.

f. County Canvass

The Director stated that County Canvass will take place on Friday, November 17th at 11:00 a.m. at the Board of Elections office. This will be an open meeting and the public is invited to attend that meeting.

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

The Director asked if the Board had any questions on the 2023 Municipal Elections preparations.

ITEM #11 – DIRECTOR’S UPDATES

a. 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 – Legal Update

The Director stated that at the last Board meeting the Resolution to Allow Annexed Voters for the City of Reidsville – Southeast Precinct – Privileges to Vote in an Adjacent Precinct for Elections for the City of Reidsville. She stated that she was asked by the Board to send this information to the Elections attorney for an explanation. The Director read the response from the Elections attorney explaining the need for the resolution to allow the annexed voters to vote at an adjacent precinct for the municipal election.

Chair Wright stated that one of the Board members questioned at the last meeting why the Board has to continue to approve this resolution and the response from the attorney explained the purpose of the resolution before each municipal election. She asked the Board if the explanation was sufficient.

Member Schoolfield asked if the Board were to make a permanent change for these 5 voters how it would affect the general election. The Director responded that the voters would permanently be moved to another precinct.

Member Thurman asked as a follow up to Member Schoolfield question, would these 5 voters be moved to another voting place. The Director responded yes it would move them permanently. Member Thurman stated that the 5 voters are voting in the McCoy precinct. The Director responded that the 5 voters are temporarily voting in the McCoy precinct for the Municipal Election.

Member Schoolfield asked if the 5 voters were notified of the change for the municipal election every time. The Director responded yes.

Member Thurman asked how many people would be affected if the Board modified the precinct boundaries. The Director responded that it would depend on how the boundaries are modified.

b. Events/Speaking Engagements

- On Saturday, September 9th the Johnson’s Sporting Goods – Ruffin Fall Festival took place. Precinct Officials Clara Chappell and Deborah Moore represented the Board of Elections. The event closed early due to a bad storm that came through. No registration forms were received.
- On Friday, September 15th and Saturday, September 16th, the Riverfest in Eden was held. Precinct Officials Marilyn Watkins, John Harris, Tonya Evans, Frank Wilson, Terry Davis and Bret Hart represented the Board of Elections. 8 Voter registration forms were received.
- On Saturday, September 16th the Rockingham Community College Community Day was held. Precinct Officials Marilyn Watkins and Roger Shelton represented the Board of Elections.
- 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

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

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. And Precinct Official Cyndy Hayworth will be at the Stoneville Library from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- 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 will be representing the Board of Elections.

c. Election Security

The Director stated that Election Security was one of the items that was discussed in detail at the Summer Conference in Concord. The Board of Elections has been preparing for any type of problem, disaster, ext. that may happen during the Municipal Elections. We have generators and battery backups if the power goes out as well as other provisions. We hope that we have everything covered and that everything will go well.

d. Board of Elections Parking Lot

The Director informed the Board and the public that the Board of Elections parking lot has been paved and striped and that the staff and precinct officials were very grateful for this. She thanked Ronnie Tate, Engineering Director; all of the Maintenance staff; Lance Metzler, County Manager; and the Board of Commissioners for making this possible. She stated that the parking lot had been extended on the side for staff parking and for curbside voting during the elections. The Director also thanked the residents of Rockingham County because the tax dollars made it possible to have the parking lot paved.

e. New Deputy Director

The Director informed the public that a new Deputy Director had been hired, Polly Makins started on Monday, September 11th. She stated that Wendy Powell is retiring. The Director stated that Wendy will be missed but welcomed Polly to the Board of Elections.

f. SB 747 & SB 749

The Director stated that at the last Board meeting she had informed the Board that SB 747 had passed the House and since then SB 747 was vetoed by the Governor. She stated that on August 28th this bill was referred to the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate. The Director stated that SB 749 had been placed on the calendar for September 19th for the House of Representatives.

The Director informed the Board that at their seats she provided them with calendars for September, October, and November. She added that she also provided the 2024 Employee Holiday Schedule for the County as well as the updated Numbered Memo 2020-25 Absentee Board Meetings. The Director stated that the numbered memo goes over the changes of how to conduct absentee board meeting due to the new photo ID regulation changes.

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

Chair Wright asked the Director if she wanted to go over the items that she had recommended for the Electioneering Area. The Director responded that she could share those with the two committees that will be formed to conduct research on the issues in the electioneering area. She stated that staff had met and discussed a few things that staff would like to see included in the rules and guidelines for the electioneering areas. The Director provided the suggested items to all of the Board members. The Board reviewed the suggested items.

Secretary Totten stated that she had reviewed the suggested items from staff and the only thing she saw missing was the issue of food being eaten in the electioneering area. Chair Wright asked Secretary Totten if the committees would just add to these suggestions. Secretary Totten responded that would be the sensible thing to do.

The Director stated that with the new paving of the parking lot at the Board of Elections office now there will be 2 electioneering areas. She stated that she did not want this to be used to separate parties and she hoped that all parties would be in both of the areas. Secretary Totten asked the Director how the groups in the electioneering areas will be a mixed group and not separated by parties. The Director responded that she was going to depend on the parties themselves to police this.

ITEM #12 – ADJOURNMENT

At 11:12 a.m. **Member Hampton moved, seconded by Member Schoolfield to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Paula P. Seamster, Director

Ophelia Wright, Chair