

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 20, 2024 – 5:30 PM
REGULAR MEETING**

The Rockingham County Board of Elections met Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at the Rockingham County Board of Elections Office.

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 5:30 p.m. Chair Wright welcomed the Board members and those who were watching online.

ITEM #2 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Paula Seamster led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3 – INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Pastor Wes Pitts, First Presbyterian Church, Reidsville.

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ITEM #5 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Schoolfield moved, seconded by Member Cole to approve the January 9, 2024 Regular Meeting, the February 6, 2024 Absentee Meeting Minutes, and the February 13, 2024 Absentee Meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #6 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Wright opened Public Comments. There were no public comments.

ITEM #7 – DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

2024 Primary Election Information

The Director stated that the 2024 Primary Election Early Voting started on Thursday, February 15th. She stated that the first day was a little rocky, there were some printer issues. The Board of Elections purchased new printers and sometimes the printers would print immediately but at other times the printers would pause and the voter would have to be cancelled in the system and the voter would have to move to a different station. She stated that everyone did get the opportunity to vote. The Director stated that there had been a tremendous amount of party affiliation changes before the Primary Elections and added that the deadline to make party affiliation changes was on Friday, February 9th by 5:00 p.m. however a lot of people have tried to change their party affiliation during Early Voting and this is not allowed. The Director provided the Board with a report of voters that changed their party affiliations prior to the deadline of February 9, 2024. She added that 50 to 75 party affiliations have been requested and will be changed after the primary election is over. The Director informed the Board that the party affiliation deadline was not a part of the new session law, it has always been 25 days prior to Election Day. The Director stated that Early Voting would be open on Saturday, February 24th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at all four of the Early Voting sites

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and Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and the last day of Early Voting will be Saturday, March 2, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. She added that there will be no voting on Monday, March 4th and Election Day will be Tuesday, March 5th, the polls will open at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. or once those in line at 7:30 p.m. have the opportunity to vote. All 15 precincts will be open. The Director stated that the Board of Elections office is not a voting precinct or a voting site however if anyone shows up at the Board of Elections office staff will direct them to their correct voting location. She asked if the Board had any questions. She stated that the chart showed the party affiliation changes from November 1, 2023 through February 13, 2024, 387 party affiliations that were changed. Member Schoolfield asked if the dates of their registration would remain as when they originally registered. The Director responded that the registration date would remain the same since this was just a change to their registration.

The Director stated that some people misunderstand and think that November is a party affiliation ballots as well however the November election has one ballot that contains all the candidates listed on it which includes: Democrat, Republican, Green, etc. candidates. The only time there is a party affiliated election is during the Primary Election.

Member Schoolfield asked the Director if she could help explain the Party Affiliation Change chart. The Director stated that the original party was listed on the left hand side of the chart and the party that the voter had changed to is at the top of the chart.

2024 NC State Board of Elections Winter Conference

The 2024 NC State Board of Elections Winter Conference was held on Sunday, February 4th through Tuesday, February 6th in Concord, NC. She stated that she attended and there were a little over 600 election officials in attendance. Everyone learned more information about the new session laws such as Early Voting. She stated that one of the changes was when Early Voting was considered One Stop it was considered Absentee Voting and now that it is an Early Voting site it is considered a precinct site so the voting machine tabulations will not take place at the Board's Absentee Board meeting on Election Day at 5:00 p.m., only the tabulations of the Absentee ballot machines will take place. The Director stated that at 7:30 p.m. the four Early Voting sites machines will be closed out and the tapes will run just like the other 15 voting sites in the county. She added that when the voting numbers are posted Election night normally the first numbers posted are the absentee mail-in ballots and the one stop (early voting) ballots and that will not be the case during this election on March 5th. The first numbers that will be posted will be the absentee mail-in ballots and then the next set of numbers that will be posted, most likely, will be the four Early Voting sites because staff will still be waiting for the 15 precincts to deliver their results. Member Schoolfield stated that the four early voting sites are co-mingled and he asked if the office would be able to separate those. The Director responded that the ballots were coded by precincts so when the results are run they will be divided by the 15 precincts. Member Schoolfield stated that this information is captured pretty early based on who is voted for in each precinct. The Director responded that it will not be the first numbers posted because the Early Voting is no longer considered an absentee vote.

The Director informed the Board that the next State Board of Elections Conference will be in August in Greensboro at the Koury Convention Center. The Director asked the Board if they had any questions on the Conference.

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Speaking Engagements

The Director informed the Board that on February 9th she was asked to hold a Registration Clinic at the Madison Mayodan Recreation Center. She stated that 3 people attended. The Director stated that information was given about elections, how to change voter information online, and how voters can mail their registration cards in when there are changes such as address, party affiliation, etc.

The Director stated on Friday, February 23rd she had been asked to speak during Career Day at South End Elementary. She stated that South End held an election with their student body a couple of months ago and they called the office to find out how to conduct this election. That information was provide and the Board of Elections provided them with voting stickers. The Director stated that a lot of the kids today do not know about the different jobs that are available in county government.

Parking Issues

The Director informed the Board that parking issues have been experienced during Early Voting especially at the Eden Library. She stated that she had sent out an email to the Chief Judges about speaking to the electioneers and candidates about where they should park.

Member Hampton asked if there had been a response from the Party Chairs. The Director responded that she had not heard anything.

Member Hampton asked if any of the Board members had voted yet. Secretary Totten responded that she had voted. Member Hampton asked what she thought about the precinct and if the process was fast. Secretary Totten stated that her normal precinct was Southeast but she voted at the Board of Elections today. Member Hampton stated that he voted in Madison yesterday at around 4:30 and there was nothing. Secretary Totten stated it was the same experience for her, when she got to the Board of Elections office she was the only person voting. Chair Wright stated that this was the experience for all the Early Voting sites, voters came in spirits. She stated that the Eden Library has had the largest amount of turnout. Member Hampton stated that it would be interesting to see if more people vote towards the end of the election period. The Director stated that she could provide the Board with a report of how many people have voted every day during Early Voting by 10:00, 2:00, 4:00 and 7:30. Member Hampton stated that that would be interesting to see.

Chair Wright stated that it was admirable that the Director was requiring the sites to report the numbers at those intervals. The Director responded that this was required by the State Board.

Member Schoolfield stated that he knew two ladies that have a second residence in Rockingham County, one has her main residence in Florida and the other in Tennessee and they want to know if they can vote here. The Director responded that they can vote where they consider their main residence or where they spend the majority of their time. Member Schoolfield stated that for tax purposes they have established their previous homes as their main residence. He stated that one of them has registered to vote here. Member Cole responded that she will be caught, just not sure when.

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ITEM #8 – ADJOURNMENT

At 6:08 p.m. **Secretary Totten** moved, seconded by **Member Cole** to adjourn. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Paula P. Seamster, Director

Ophelia Wright, Chair