

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JULY 16, 2024 – 10:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING**

The Rockingham County Board of Elections met Tuesday, July 16, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the Rockingham County Governmental Center Commissioners Chambers.

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

Board Members Absent: Sarah Totten, Secretary.

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, those present in the meeting, and those who were watching online.

ITEM #2 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Member Schoolfield led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3 – INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Deacon Ilvarez Henderson with Zion Baptist Church, Reidsville.

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ITEM #5 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Schoolfield moved, seconded by Member Hampton to approve the June 18, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #6 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

ITEM #7 – WRITE-IN CANDIDATES FOR THE 2024 GENERAL ELECTION

The Director stated that the Board of Elections had two Write-In Candidates to file for petitions for write-in candidates for the Board of Commissioners contest. The petitioners have fulfilled their obligation or obtained enough registered voter signatures and have filled out their Declaration of Intent to run as Write-In Candidates for the 2024 General Election. She added that in the Board's packets they would find NCGS 163-123. Declaration of intent and petitions for write-in candidates for partisan elections and the NC State Board of Elections Write-in Petition Fact Sheet. The Director stated that this information went through all the procedures that the write-in candidates had to follow in order to be recognized as write-ins for the 2024 General Election. She asked if there were any questions.

Member Schoolfield asked the Director if the Write-In Candidates had qualified or if they were still in the process of qualifying. The Director responded that the two Write-In Candidates had been deemed qualified and obtained all of the signatures necessary to qualify as write-in candidates. She stated that these two individuals will not be listed on the 2024 General Election ballot however

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there would be two Write-In lines included on the ballot under Rockingham County Board of Commissioners. Member Schoolfield asked the Director if she could share the names of the Write-In Candidates. The Director responded Patricia “Cyndy” Hayworth and Vickie “Lynn” Knight.

ITEM #8 – DIRECTOR’S UPDATES

Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor Filing

The Director stated that the Soil & Water Conservation District Filing began on Monday, June 10, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. and ended on Friday, July 5, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. She stated that two individuals had filed for this contest and their names will be on the ballot in November.

Member Schoolfield asked if this contest was for one seat. The Director responded that it would only be one seat.

2024 General Election Information

The Director stated that the 2024 General Election Early Voting Schedule has been posted to the Board of Elections Website as well as the 2024 General Election Schedule. Book marks with the Early Voting Schedule has been sent to all the Rockingham County Libraries and the Rockingham Community College Library. She added that the Board of Elections office has Early Voting Schedules, Early Voting Calendars, and Early Voting Schedule Bookmarks available outside of the room today and they are available to anyone who would like them. The Director stated that the Board of Elections office is in the process of sending this information out to the senior centers and civic organizations in the county. She stated that if anyone would like to be sent this information they can contact the Board of Elections office. The Director asked if there were any questions.

Senate Bill 88 and House Bill 1071

The Director stated that Senate Bill 88 regarding various Elections changes has passed the Senate and was sent to the House on June 26th. This bill would extend the pilot program through the 2024 General Election which verifies voter signatures. She stated that the pilot program started during the Primary Election and there were ten counties that were selected by the State Board of Elections. The Director stated that those 10 counties were supplied with the software to run this pilot program. She stated that if the senate bill passes the software may or may not be paid for through the State Board, this would depend on whether or not the General Assembly would provide this funding. The Director stated that if this bill passed it would not take place until the 2025 Municipal Election. She asked if there were any questions.

Chair Wright asked the Director if she knew how much the software will cost. The Director responded that this question has been asked but no cost has been received as of yet and she added that software is not cheap.

The Director stated that House Bill 1071 regarding use methods of certain groups/voter rolls has passed the House and was sent to the Senate on June 27th. This bill requires the local board of elections to research and to do list maintenance on suggested errors. She stated that copies of both of these bills could be found in the Board’s packet and could also be found online by searching for each specific bill. The Director asked if there were any questions.

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Member Schoolfield asked if there was any time indicated as to when these bills would be taken up and passed or rejected. The Director responded no sir. She stated that staff has already started performing the list maintenance on a more regular basis. The list maintenance was originally being done the 15th of each month and now it is performed weekly such as the death lists, duplicate lists, etc.

Member Schoolfield asked the Director if any feedback has been given from the ten test counties and how the signatures verification by machine. The Director responded that nothing has been released yet because the program was still in test mode and will continue through the 2024 General Election.

Session Law 2024-18 – Constitutional Amendment

The Director stated that this was an act to amend the constitution of North Carolina to provide for citizens-only voting. This will be included on the ballot for the 2024 General Election. The question to be used in the voting systems and ballots shall be: “__For __Against Constitutional amendment to provide that only a citizen of the United States who is 18 years of age and otherwise possessing the qualifications for voting shall be entitled to vote at any election in this State.” She stated that this would rephrase the existing language in the North Carolina Constitution. The Director stated that there are three other pending constitutional amendment bills however these will not be on the 2024 November ballot. Three pending constitutional amendment bills are:

- 1) Formally expanding photo ID to absentee
- 2) Modify governor appointments for Council of State vacancies
- 3) Income tax cap

The Director asked if there were any questions.

Member Schoolfield asked who would be responsible for publicizing this information. He asked if this would be the responsibility of this Board. The Director responded that once the constitutional amendment is passed it is passed from the General Assembly to the State Board of Elections to the Local Boards of Elections. She added that when there is a constitutional amendment bill it is put on the ballot for the public to be voted on. The Director stated that Session Law 2024-18 Constitutional Amendment will be on the 2024 General Election ballot and the other three constitutional amendments will not be on the 2024 General Election ballot. Member Schoolfield asked if the other constitutional amendments passed if they would be on a future ballot. The Director responded yes.

Member Hampton asked Member Schoolfield if his question was about advertising the amendment on the ballot. Member Schoolfield asked who would be responsible for publicizing that information. He asked if the Board bore the responsibility to publicize this or the general assembly. The Director responded that this was a good question. She stated that this constitutional amendment will be on the ballot and the UOCAVA notice will go out on Friday, July 26th and that will be part of the UOCAVA notice. The Director stated that she was not sure how the information will be advertised. Chair Wright stated that the Director would get the information on who is responsible.

The Director asked if there were any more questions.

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New Party Recognized by the NC State Board of Elections

The Director stated that the State Board of Elections at its July 9, 2024 meeting recognized the Constitution Party as a new party in North Carolina. She added that the Constitution Party has until July 23rd to send in their candidates' information to the State Board in order to be put on the 2024 General Election ballot. The Director stated that the Rockingham County Board of Elections was currently accepting voter registrations for the Constitution Party since July 9th. She stated that the party is not in the SEIMS system as of yet but once the party has been installed the voter registration will be entered and back dated to when it was received.

The Director stated that the We the People Party and the Justice for All Party petitions are still pending, the State Board of Elections was supposed to be scheduling another meeting to review those two pending petitions. She added that as soon as new parties are approved the Board and the public would be notified.

Member Schoolfield stated that those two parties would not have candidates on the ballot this fall, the Constitution Party possibly could. The Director stated that she could not answer this. She stated that this was a question that was going back and forth with the State Board counsel on whether or not We the People and/or Justice For All would be allowed to have candidates on the ballot this fall.

Photo ID Exception Forms Revised

The Director stated that the State Board of Elections has approved revised Photo ID Exception Forms. The forms no longer state "Your vote will count if you truthfully complete and sign this form." as well as a few other things. We have not received the finalized form as of yet, when we receive the new form it will be shared with the public. She stated that when someone goes to vote and they do not have a photo ID the voter will be able to fill out that exception form.

The Director asked if there were any questions.

NC State Board of Elections Summer Conference – August 4 – 6, 2024 at the Koury Center in Greensboro

The Director stated that all Board Members and Office staff will be attending this conference. She added that the Board of Elections office will be open its regular hours on Monday, August 5th and Tuesday, August 6th with part time staff present on those days.

Member Schoolfield asked if reservations had been made for the Board. He asked if the Director would let the Board know about the transportation. The Director responded that the transportation would be left up to the Board members themselves, mileage will be reimbursed. She added that all of the registrations for the conference have been made. The Director stated that there will not be any reservations made at the hotel, the Board and staff will be driving back and forth both days. She added that Board members are required to be present on Monday but Tuesday will be optional for Board members so it would be up to the Board members whether they would want to attend on Tuesday or not.

The Director asked if there were any more questions.

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SAFE Assessment

The Director informed the Board that Rachel McGrath and Rich Clifton with the NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management, Homeland Security Section performed a SAFE Assessment at the Board of Elections office on Monday, July 15th. Also present was Joel Wood, Area 8 Coordinator for Emergency Management; Laura Dell, Field Service Rep. for the State Board of Elections; and Peter Allen, IT Systems Administrator for Rockingham County. There were several safety measures that were discussed. The team went through a survey and then performed a walk-through of the Board of Elections office as well as the Workshop. Staff should receive a list of commendable actions and a list of vulnerabilities and options for consideration within the next 3 to 4 weeks. During this assessment they focused on physical security. During the walk through they were assessing the existing security features and concerns. The list of commendable action will note the existing practices that are noteworthy for their effectiveness and that should be continued. The list of vulnerabilities and options for consideration will note any areas that could benefit from additional attention from a security perspective, areas relating to security management, entry control, perimeter security, and other physical security measures. Each identified vulnerability will have one or more mitigation options to consider. The options are purely voluntary and each facility determines what actions to take in light of its own current security posture, anticipated growth, organizational changes, budgetary outlook, and other factors. The Director stated that the Board would review the lists and see what would be needed at Rockingham County Board of Elections office. She added that this assessment took almost 3 hours to go through. The Director stated that one thing that was brought up was to remove the Board members addresses from the website as a safety measure.

Chair Wright asked if the addresses were listed on all of the websites or just Rockingham's. The Director responded that at one point it was all of them but they are coming off. The reason this information needs to be removed is because everyone know where the Board members live and this is a risk as a Board member of the Board of Elections. She asked if there were any more questions.

Board of Elections Office Renovation

The Director stated that at the last Board meeting I stated that the new Early Voting area/Training room/Board meeting room was nearly finished. The walls had come down and the two short walls in the hall had been installed. The walls had been painted and the electrical outlets had been added. She stated that originally the carpet in this room was going to be patched but once the county engineering department came and saw how well the room looked they recommended replacing the carpet in this area instead of patching it. As of last week staff is waiting on the carpet installer to schedule once the carpet is delivered. The Director stated that she would like to thank the County for this renovation at the Board of Elections office and added that she knew that the public will enjoy this new space for Early Voting. The Director asked if there were any questions.

Chair Wright stated that she did not have any questions on the renovation but she had had some people to ask if the Board of Elections will livestream from the office. The Director responded that this would be something that she would have to get with county management on because the Board of Elections does not at this point in time have the capabilities to livestream unless we do Zoom meetings. She added that Roy could be there recording and videoing the meeting as well as livestream via Zoom. The Director stated that she was not sure how much it would cost to livestream from the Board of Elections office but at the present time the meetings would not be

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livestreamed. She stated that the meetings would be recorded and posted to the website within 24 to 72 hours.

Member Schoolfield asked how the cities were streaming, Reidsville is streaming but he was not sure if it was live, Eden is streaming but he was not sure if it was live. The Director responded that she did not know the answer but Roy would know the answer to that. Chair Wright stated that she believed that the meetings were livestreamed but she was sure that Roy could answer that question. Roy Sawyers stated that those meetings were livestreamed. The Director added that those cities purchased something to make that capability available. The Director asked if there were any more questions.

Chair Wright thanked the Director for her updates.

ITEM #9 – ADJOURNMENT

At 10:34 a.m. **Member Cole moved, seconded by Member Hampton to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Paula P. Seamster, Director

Ophelia Wright, Chair