

CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING

Chatham County Board of Elections Office

984 Thompson Street, Suite D

Pittsboro, NC 27312

GoToMeeting

June 22, 2021 – 5:30 P.M.

The Chatham County Board of Elections met at the Chatham County Board of Elections office at 984 Thompson Street Suite D, Pittsboro, NC 27312 on June 22, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. via GoToMeeting. . About 350 citizens, or less than 1% of the total registered county voters, who subscribe to Chatham County e-notices for BOE meetings were given the opportunity to submit comments or concerns about precinct changes and other election related matters via email to the Director by 5:00 p.m. to be addressed during the public input segment of the meeting agenda.

The following people were present: Chair Laura Heise, Secretary Charles Ramos, Member Amy Meek (Remote), Member Frank Dunphy II, Member Mark Barroso, Director Pandora Paschal, Deputy Director Steve Simos, Election Specialist Chance Mashburn and temp employee Donald Lyerly. Secretary Charles Ramos led everyone in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Call to Order

Chair Laura Heise called the meeting to order. She recognized Gloria Davis who passed away. She served as Chief Judge of New Hope Precinct for many years. Gloria was a sterling example of the type of judge we seek. She was the kind that advocates for free and non-partisan elections. Her presence will be missed in the elections to come.

Public Input

Chair Heise gave an explanation as to how citizens participate in the Public Input section on the agenda. It is when the public has an opportunity to express their views on issues and topics that come across the desk of the Board of Elections. It is a chance to make your views known, and an opportunity for the board to listen to the public and use the information in coming to a decision on issues that are in front of us. If someone has a specific question about election administration or any election related matters you can ask the staff. If the staff can readily answer they will, if not you can call them or come by the office during regular business hours.

Chair Heise read the public comments which were sent by email to the Director prior to the meeting. Citizens who were attending the meeting via Go To Meeting (names are attached to the minutes) were given the opportunity to make verbal comments during the Public Input segment on the agenda, or throughout the meeting in the chat box. Citizens who were not present during the segment would have the opportunity to make comments at the end of the

meeting. Member Mark Barroso wanted the citizens listening to know that the public comments that are read are available for their viewing if they made a request to the Board of Elections staff.

Approve Minutes

Chair Heise asked the board if they were ready to approve the minutes from the May 18, 2021 meeting, or did anyone have any corrections? Member Frank Dunphy II asked that on the fourth page, second paragraph that two sentences be taken out of the minutes because of violation of a rule in the Suggested Guidelines for Board of Elections Minutes. The guidelines state to record discussions objectively, avoiding adjectives and adverbs whenever possible. It also states to check your language to be sure that it is clear, unambiguous, and complete. The board agreed that these sentences should be taken out.

Frank Dunphy II made a second comment about information about precinct changes taken from the draft minutes appearing in the Chatham News + Record. The Suggested Guidelines for Board of Elections Minutes state that the minutes should be approved by the Chair before sharing in print or online. Member Mark Barroso stated that this was an agenda item to be discussed under New Business. Chair Heise tabled the item for further discussion in New Business if Member Frank Dunphy choose to discuss further. Member Frank Dunphy II stated he just wanted to point out that the draft minutes appeared in the public domain. Member Frank Dunphy II made the motion to approve the minutes. Secretary Charles Ramos seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Old Business

Process for Selecting Early Voting Workers & MAT Teams

After the discussion about the process for hiring early voting workers and MAT teams from the meeting held on May 18, 2021, Chair Heise stated that Director Pandora Paschal and the staff put together information about our historic processes for selecting early voting workers and MAT employees. All the information was sent out to the board prior to the meeting for review. Chair Heise asked were there any further questions about how we hire our early voting workers and selecting MAT teams?

Member Frank Dunphy II reiterated his concerns about the system for hiring early voting workers. He objected to the fact that the process of selecting early voting workers is different from selecting Election Day workers. He argued that the board handed over their duty and responsibility to the Director of Elections for selecting and hiring these workers. Member Frank Dunphy II recommended that selecting and hiring early voting workers should be the same as selecting Election Day workers with input from the political parties.

Member Mark Barroso asked Member Frank Dunphy II if he received any complaints about the early voting workers. Member Frank Dunphy II said no. He did not have anything against the workers, but he did with the hiring process. Director Pandora Paschal said hiring follows state law and the Chatham County hiring process through Human Resources based on the

Memorandum of Understanding adopted by the Board of Elections and the County Commissioners in 2008. Chair Laurie Heise asked Member Frank Dunphy II if he wanted to make a proposal? He stated once again that the process should be the same for all election workers. Chair Laura Heise stated that the board does not vote on early voting workers. The board concluded that the staff would provide schedules with names of the workers, but not for publication on the website or any other public domain. If requests are made for early voting workers, they would need to go thru Human Resources for disbursement. Member Amy Meek stated that if these workers were to be discussed at meetings, it would need to be in a closed session.

Director Pandora Paschal will obtain information from Human Resources on details of procedures for names being in the public domain. Chair Heise asked Member Frank Dunphy II to bring clear motions back to the June 20, 2021, meeting for consideration by the board.

Postponement of Previous Board Decisions Pertaining to Precinct Changes

Chair Heise stated that at the May 18, 2021, Board of Elections meeting the board voted unanimously on changes to several precincts. The board voted to split Oakland precinct and merge voters into the Three Rivers precinct and the Goldston precinct, merge the Bennett and Harpers Crossroads precincts, and change the polling place for Bonlee, East Siler City, Albright, North Williams, Three Rivers, Manns Chapel and Pittsboro. Resolutions for these changes were prepared by the Director of Elections and require the board signatures. Chair Heise asked the question, "are we prepared to sign the resolutions"? Member Mark Barroso asked if they were the changes, they had already voted on? Chair Heise stated yes, we voted unanimously on them. Member Mark Barroso, Member Amy Meek stated they were ready to sign the documents. Secretary Charles Ramos was not ready to sign.

Chair Heise gave Secretary Charles Ramos the opportunity to speak to his concerns. He stated that there was not enough input given from citizens about the changes. Member Robena Meek stated we have heard from a large variety of citizens from throughout the county. She stated she is willing to table the Hadley discussion because we do not have those numbers, but the rest of the changes we have already voted on them. Chair Heise stated the public input which was received tonight on proposals which were already voted on unanimously were mostly Harpers Crossroads and Bennett, and the decisions we made were based on the fire station not being a good place to vote because of interruptions that could incur from an emergency. This could cause the election to be interrupted, and delay fire fighters from getting to a call. These reasons were also taken into consideration for Albright and Oakland. For those reasons I am not in favor of rescinding the proposals.

Member Mark Barroso questioned Secretary Charles Ramos about why he wanted to amend his vote. Secretary Charles Ramos stated that he would like to see more input from citizens, so he proposed to put it off to July. Member Frank Dunphy II stated that when they made their votes, they used guidance from a memo from the state that suggested there be no more than 4500 voters in a precinct. Member Frank Dunphy II stated most voters bypass Election Day voting

and utilize early voting, and early voting is here to stay if the trends remain the same. Director Pandora Paschal, asked Secretary Charles Ramos for clarification about what he wanted to rescind. He stated that he wanted to push everything to July and was not willing to sign the resolutions. . Member Amy Meek stated that the board was not trying to disenfranchise any voters, we are only trying to have safe voting enclosures, safe voting places and to give voters a pleasant voting experience. Chair Heise asked the board members who were willing to sign the resolutions on the changes that were previously made to sign them after the meeting. All members signed the resolutions for the precinct changes that were voted on unanimously at the May 18, 2021, meeting except Secretary Charles Ramos.

The board discussed the proposal to split Hadley at NC Hwy 87 sending some voters to Manns Chapel and some to Albright, or combining Hadley with the Albright precinct, and splitting Manns Chapel precinct. Member Mark Barroso stated he agreed with Member Amy Meeks comments about driving, and Member Frank Dunphy II comments about early voting and absentee by mail. He did not need any other points to be made, and that he was ready to vote. Chair Heise stated she was not ready to vote. She thinks the board needs more information about how many people will be added to the Manns Chapel precinct if Hadley was divided along that line. She stated that there may be an argument to be made to keep Hadley intact so that we don't add any new voters to Manns Chapel because they are already overloaded. Member Mark Barroso clarified the voters would not be added to the existing Manns Chapel precinct, that they would be added after the split. Chair Heise would like to wait until the board obtain numbers from the state before the move forward with making these changes. Everyone agreed.

New Business

Posting Supporting Meeting Documents with Approved Minutes

Secretary Charles Ramos requested that all materials dispersed in board meetings along with the agenda be attached to the approved minutes on the website. The board agreed with Secretary Ramos that these documents should be made available to the public along with the approved minutes and the agenda.

Placing Draft Minutes on the website prior to board approval

Member Frank Dunphy II had concerns about the draft minutes placed on the Board of Elections website prior to approval by the Secretary. Director Pandora Paschal stated that in a prior meeting the staff was asked to place draft minutes on the website prior to being approved. After realizing in the Suggested Meeting Minutes Guidelines adopted by the board, draft minute should not be placed on the website prior to obtaining approval from the Secretary and Chair of the board. This was an oversight of the staff. Draft minutes will no longer be placed on the website until they are approved at the next board meeting; however, if a public request is received from someone from the time the minutes are taken in the meeting up to the time the minutes are approved at the next board meeting, they will be disseminated

according to the public record law. Minutes will be attached to the meeting notice prior to the meeting for viewing by citizens who are attending the meeting.

Public attending Board of Elections in person

Member Mark Barroso reminded the board of a agenda item that would be new business pertaining to the public attending the Board of Elections meetings in person. He asked the board for their thoughts on the public attending the meetings in person. Chair Laura Heise asked what the vaccination rate was in Chatham County? Deputy Director Steve Simos stated that 49% had at least one vaccine. Member Frank Dunphy II stated his opinion, which was if this is the public's business the public should be allowed to attend. He also like the online meeting and thinks both should be available. Chair Heise stated we have a request from the League of Women voters to continue the use of GoToMeeting for citizens who may barriers that would keep them from attending in person. Director Pandora Paschal suggested finding a larger venue to accommodate the board, staff, and citizens to allow for adequate distance between attendees. Member Mark Barroso agreed that until we obtain a larger space, he is happy with what we are currently doing. Director Pandora Paschal will check with the county to see if there are larger spaces available for use should the board allow citizens to attend board meetings in person.

Other Elections Business

Director Pandora Paschal gave the board updates on legislation related to elections. SB722 was ratified which allows Municipalities whose candidates are elected by districts to move their elections to March 3, 2022. The Town of Siler City will not have an election in November 2021, nor will Cary hold an election in October 2021.

Training dates for staff and board members are August 2nd – 4th, 2021 virtually, January 30th – February 2nd, 2022, place TBD, July 31 – August 2nd, 2022, place TBD. Information was given to board members who would like to become a North Carolina Certified Board member. All eligibility requirements would need to be obtained before sitting for the exam. Election Specialist Chance Mashburn will sit for his exam on August 5, 2021. Future exams will be given on February 3, 2022, and August 3, 2022.


The following names were sent in by their parties for reappointment: Republican Charles Ramos, Republican Frank Dunphy II, Democrat Amy Meek, and Democrat Mark Barroso. They will be sworn in on July 20, 2021, at 12:00 Noon at the Board of Elections office. The governor appoints the Chair. The names for Chairman have not been received from the governor's office at this time.

Constitutional and Green parties are no longer recognized as valid parties in North Carolina. The State Board of Elections will make an administrative party change for anyone who is registered with either of these two parties to unaffiliated status.

Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell reminded election boards and staff that if approached by any individual asking to inspect voting equipment and would like to conduct their own audits, please contact the North Carolina State Board of Elections immediately.

The North Carolina State Board will conduct wellness checks of all 100 county Board of Elections offices to measure the efficiency and overall health of election administration processes.

Chair Heise reminded everyone that the next meeting will be the organizational meeting if there are any adjustments to be made on how we conduct our meetings, handle minutes, or delegate responsibility the next meeting would be the appropriate time to do so. If there are specific items for the agenda that are relevant to organizing the board and how business is conducted send them in ahead of time so we will all have an idea of what the issues will be to give us ample time to think about. Chair Heise asked if anyone had any additional comments or questions? Chair Heise called for adjournment, and Member Amy Meek seconded the motion All were in favor.



Charles Ramos, Secretary



Pandora Paschal, Attest