

# CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS ABSENTEE MEETING

Chatham County Board of Elections Office

984 Thompson Street, Suite D

Pittsboro, NC 27312

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Recorded meeting is available at <https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs/board-of-elections/board-of-elections-members-meetings>

November 1, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.

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The following people were present: Chair Laura Heise, Secretary Charles Ramos, Member Frank Dunphy II, Member Mark Barroso, Member Amy Meek, Director Pandora Paschal, Deputy Director Steve Simos, and Election Specialist Chance Mashburn.

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 and stated there was a quorum to conduct the meeting. Five members were present as stated above.

## **Approve Minutes**

Chair Laura Heise proceeded to the first agenda item, approving the minutes from the October 26, 2021 meeting. There were no suggested edits to the minutes, so Chair Laura Heise asked for a motion to approve the minutes as written. Secretary Charles Ramos made the motion to approve the minutes and Member Mark Barroso seconded the motion. All were in favor except Member Amy Meek abstained from voting because she was not present at that meeting. Vote 4-1. Chair Heise asked if there was any new business to add to the agenda. Member Mark Barroso stated that he had a question he would like added to the agenda. Chair Heise stated that since the question did not pertain to the counting of ballots that it would be added as the last item on the agenda.

## **Approve One Stop Applications**

Chair Heise stated that the board would review the One Stop applications for the following dates: October 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and the 30<sup>th</sup> to ensure the application contained the signature of the voter, and that the election officials properly witnessed each application. After the board reviewed the applications and there were no issues, Member Amy Meek made the motion to approve the One Stop applications for the dates specified above. Secretary Charles Ramos seconded the motion. All were in favor 5-0.

## **Approve Absentee Mail Ballots**

Deputy Director Steve Simos stated there were 13 civilian absentees by mail ballots to count for this meeting. The board examined each envelope to determine if the voter signed and obtained required

witness information for each ballot returned. Secretary Charles Ramos made the motion to approve the 13 absentees by mail ballots. Member Amy Meek seconded the motion. All were in favor 5-1.

The board proceeded to open the envelopes with the approved ballots to prepare to insert them in the Verity Scan voting machine. Deputy Director Steve Simos asked the board members to verify the count on the machine was the same as it was at adjournment of the October 26, 2021, meeting which was 23. The beginning count on the machine for this meeting was 23. The board verified the count, and each member present signed the tape. The board inserted the 13 ballots into the machine.


The board transcribed the 1 overseas ballot that was submitted by email to an official ballot in order for it to be fed into the tabulator. Member Amy Meek made the motion to approve this ballot. Secretary Charles Ramos seconded the motion. All were in favor 5-0. The ballot was fed into the tabulator. The ending count on the tabulator was 37.

Chair Laura Heise took the Civilian Certificate of Oath and the Certificate of Executed Absentee Ballots (Military and Overseas Citizens). The documents were signed by Chair Heise and notarized by Director Pandora Paschal.

**Consideration of Press at Board of Elections Meeting**

Member Mark Barroso asked the board to consider inviting the press to observe at the Board of Elections meeting to increase confidence in the electoral process. It would be open to one reporter from The Chatham News + Record. Chair Heise asked for thoughts from the staff. Director Paschal stated that the meetings are open to the public and someone from The Chatham News + Record is present at the Board of Elections office on Election night. She stated that the board would need to set guidelines for observation of the process. Member Frank Dunphy II stated the process is open and this is what we did before the pandemic and a bona fide newspaper is a part of the public. He was concerned about a second news reporter showing up with the limited space. Member Amy Meek stated she thought it was important for the citizens of Chatham County to see the transparency of the process so they would feel confident about what was happening in the meetings. Member Frank Dunphy II stated that he was for having a responsible reporter present at the meetings if it worked out satisfactorily. Secretary Charles Ramos stated he would agree to it if the public was allowed to attend at the same time as the press. Member Mark Barroso made the motion to do a trial of inviting one member from The Chatham News + Record to observe deliberations of the Board of Elections public meetings thru the Canvass, and at the end of this cycle the board would re-evaluate the decision. Member Frank Dunphy II seconded the motion. All were in favor except Secretary Charles Ramos. Vote 4-1.

Chair Laura Heise reminded the board of the meeting on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, at 5:00 pm. Chair Heise adjourned the meeting at 5:52 pm.

 11/9/21

Charles Ramos, Secretary

 Pandora Paschal 11/9/21

Pandora Paschal, Attest