

CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS ABSENTEE MEETING/BUSINESS MEETING

Chatham County Board of Elections Office
984 Thompson Street, Suite D
Pittsboro, NC 27312

GoToMeeting

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

October 31, 2023 – 5:00 P.M.

ATTENDEES:

Chair Laura Heise, Member Frank Dunphy, Member Mark Barroso, Member Bob Tyson, Member Erika Lindemann, Director of Elections Pandora Paschal, Deputy Director Steve Simos, and Elections Voting Equipment Technicians Marvin Caracol.

Moment of Silence and Pledge

Member Bob Tyson led a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Call to Order

Chair Heise called the meeting to order stating that this is the Absentee meeting and other board business will be conducted. A quorum was present to conduct the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Heise asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Member Tyson made a motion to approve the agenda. Member Lindemann seconded the motion. All were in favor. Vote 5-0.

Absentee Mail Ballots

Chair Heise stated the first thing to do is for the board to verify that the Verity Scanner has a zero total. The board verified the zero tape on the machine to ensure that no votes had been cast on it. Each board member is asked to sign the tape as proof of verification.

Member Lindemann (Democrat) gave the “spot check” report after she and Member Tyson (Republican) verified that all required signatures were on the ballot container envelopes, and that all photo IDs were valid. There was 1 military ballot, 4 civilian ballots, and 1 additional civilian ballot that had an ID exception form included for approval by the board.

Member Lindemann made a motion to approve the civilian mail-in ballot with the ID exception form. Member Tyson seconded the motion. Vote 5-0

Member Tyson made a motion to approve the 4-civilian mail-in ballots. Member Lindemann seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Member Lindemann made a motion to approve 1 military mail-in ballot. Member Tyson seconded the motion. All were in favor. Vote 5-0.

Deputy Director Simos explained that if any mail-in ballot mailed out prior to L+A testing, the ballot would be transcribed. The untested ballots had no timing marks on them and could not be read by the Verity Scan. The board transcribed 1 civilian ballot.

Deputy Director Simos gave the spreadsheet report of the sorting of mailed absentee ballots to the board. He reported there were 6 mail-in ballots returned for this meeting. He gave a breakdown of sorting. A total of 93 absentee ballots were mailed or emailed as of 10/31/2023: Ballots mailed, (Mailed 78 civilian, 1 military), Ballots emailed, 14 (10 overseas, and 4 military ballots). There were 26 spoiled ballots (4 overseas, 2 military, and 20 civilian).

The mail-in ballots were put in the Verity scanner. Beginning count 0, and ending count was 6.

Approve Absentee Applications

Member Tyson made a motion to approve the early voting applications from October 24, 2023, October 25, 2023, and October 26, 2023, October 27, 2023, October 28, 2023, and October 30, 2023. Member Barroso seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Old Business

Early Voting Plan Primary 2024

Chair Heise stated that the board agreed for staff to post a survey on the county website, and post on the Next-Door app to see if it would be a hardship for citizens if there were no Sunday voting. The survey link was shared with the Republican Party Chair and the Democratic Party chair to share with their constituents. Election Specialist Mashburn provided the results from the survey (47% said yes it would be a hardship, and 52% said it would not be a hardship). The board wanted to use the data to assist with determining the early voting plans for the 2024 Primary election. For the full discussion please click on this link: <https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs-a-h/elections/board-of-elections-members-meetings>

After the discussion Member Lindemann made a motion to adopt option 2 (**Option 2 allowed one day of Sunday voting during the early voting period**) for the 2024 Primary as a voting plan. Member Barroso seconded the motion. Vote 3-2 (Heise, Barroso, Lindemann for, Tyson and Dunphy against). Chair Heise stated that since the plan was not unanimous the North Carolina State Board of Election will make the decision on the early voting plan for the 2024 Primary election. Chair Heise will be the democratic representative, and Member Tyson will be the Republican representative to defend their stance on the early voting plans to the North Carolina State Board of Elections when the time comes for consideration of the plans.

Member Tyson made a motion to approve six locations for early voting for the 2024 Primary elections. Chair Heise seconded the motion. All were in favor. Vote 5-0.

Reconsider Review of Early Voting Applications

Member Dunphy advocated to formalize the process of reviewing the early voting applications. In 2022 applications were reviewed during board meetings. In 2023, the process changed, we are reviewing applications before board meetings. He suggested the board set a consistent time and detailed documentation to review the application signatures either during the meeting, before the meeting, or consider delegating signature review to the staff. One reason for delegation is, early voting signatures have less chance for fraud because voters are identified in the electronic poll book at the intake station, voters are in public view and two early voting site workers witness the application signatures. Furthermore, the application signatures are witnessed a third time by our office staff upon arrival at our BOE Office. In contrast, Absentee by mail has much more chance for fraud because both voter and witness actions are conducted outside of public view and outside of voting worker supervision. Consequently, mail in process requires much more scrutiny, (as required on page 7 of Numbered Memo 2020-25), mail in ballots require signature and photo ID "spot checking" by the bi-partisan board member team prior to the absentee meetings.

Member Lindemann made a motion to the board that we invest in the staff to review the one stop applications, and that we trust staff and the election workers, who also sign off on the one stop applications, and it won't be necessary for the board members to also to review those applications, but the board members who wish to review them are free to do so before each board meeting. Member Dunphy seconded the motion. Vote 4-1 (For- Heise, Dunphy, Barroso, Lindemann, against- Tyson). Chair Heise stated as always this topic may be revisited later.

<https://www.chathamcountync.gov/government/departments-programs-a-h/elections/board-of-elections-members-meetings>

New Business

Approve Judge Appointments

Specialist Mashburn stated that 2 Judges are unable to work for the November 7, 2023 elections at the West Siler City Precinct and at the East Williams precinct. The party chairs for both parties were contacted to obtain approval of the appointments for this election only. Robert Waldrop will serve as Chief Judge (Democratic) at the West Siler City precinct, and Meredyth Johnson will serve as the (Republican) Judge at the East Williams Precinct. Member Barroso made a motion to approve both judges to work for the November 7, 2023, election. Member Tyson seconded the motion. All were in favor. Vote 5-0.

Adjourn

Member Tyson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Lindemann seconded the motion. All were in favor. Vote 5-0. Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Frank Dunphy 11/06/2023

Frank Dunphy II, Secretary

Pandora Paschal

Pandora Paschal, Attest