

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

75 Stamp Act Drive NE · Building H
PO Box 2 · Bolivia · NC · 28422
www.brunswickcountync.gov/elections

Phone: 910-253-2620
Fax: 910-253-2618
elections@brunswickcountync.gov

Board Meeting Agenda

February 20, 2024 · 4:00 pm · Regular & Absentee Meeting

This meeting will be held in the Commissioners' Chambers of the David R. Sandifer Building, 30 Government Center Drive NE, Bolivia, NC, 28422.

Members of the public may observe the meeting in-person or via live video feed online using [Zoom](#). You will need to have Zoom installed on your computer or mobile device prior to joining the webinar; no registration or passcode is required.

- 1. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. January 17, 2024 – Regular Meeting
 - b. February 13, 2024 – Absentee Meeting
- 4. Public Comments**
 - a. Any individual or group who wishes to address the board may make a request to be on the agenda to the Board of Elections Staff. Public comments should be limited to three to five minutes.
 - b. A [public comment portal](#) allows those not in attendance during a board meeting to address the board. Any comments received by the start of a board meeting will be read aloud during the public comment period.
- 5. Director's Report**
- 6. Old Business**
 - a. Revisit Photo ID Policy
- 7. New Business**
 - a. Public Comment Policy
- 8. Consideration of Absentee Ballots**
- 9. Adjourn**

The next meeting will be an **Absentee meeting** on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 4:00 pm in the Commissioners Chambers of the David R. Sandifer Administration Building.

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Meeting Minutes · Regular Meeting · January 17, 2024 · 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton, and member Timothy Randall

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, and Elections Logistics Specialist Ryan Childress

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Clarity made a motion to amend the agenda to change the order of business. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the following meeting minutes:

- November 6, 2023 – Absentee Meeting
- November 7, 2023 – Election Day Meeting
- November 9, 2023 – Sample Audit Meeting
- November 16, 2023 – Pre-Canvass Meeting
- November 17, 2023 – Canvass Meeting
- November 28, 2023 – Special Meeting
- December 4, 2023 – Special Meeting

Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

Judge Carry-Over for WB01 Waccamaw

An appointment to a judge position was not made at the August meeting. It remained tabled because that precinct was not open in the municipal election. Because an appointment was not agreed upon unanimously for an out-of-precinct judge, the matter before the board is to decide which previous judge carries over. John Cox (REP) and Robert Dunn (UNA) were both judges in the precinct last appointment term and both names were put forth by parties.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve John Cox as the carry-over judge. Motion does not carry, with Mr. Smith and Mr. Pelton voting for the motion and Mr. Lewis, Ms. Clarity, and Mr. Randall dissenting.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve Robert Dunn as the carry-over judge. Motion carried by majority vote with Mr. Smith and Mr. Pelton dissenting.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to table the item, citing preference for the matter to be heard at a meeting in which all board members will be present. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

The board heard public comments from the audience. Ms. LaVere read comments submitted online.

Director's Report

Ms. LaVere provided the board with the following information in the director's report:

- Updated voter registration statistics attached.
- Legislative update – Senate Bill 747 passed the House and Senate on August 16, has been vetoed by the Governor.
- Ms. Chambers provided information on voter ID implementation and poll worker training on Photo ID.
- National Voter Registration Day is today. We had representation at all the library locations throughout the county. Experienced poll workers were at each location to offer registration and answer voter questions.
- Our next Election Education Seminar is Thursday, September 21 at 5:30 pm in the Commissioners' Chambers. The public may attend in person or online. No preregistration is necessary and the topic will be "Prepare to Vote".
- Ms. LaVere has been offered the opportunity to be involved with the North Carolina network for Fair, Safe, & Secure Elections with an in-person meeting at Catawba College on October 9. The only financial involvement is their payment of lodging the night before since it is some distance away. Ms. LaVere will provide the board with a summary of this meeting following her participation.

Old Business

The board continued discussion regarding a citizen request to consider adding a polling place on Bald Head Island that was tabled from the previous meeting.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to table the item, citing preference for the matter to be heard at a meeting in which all board members will be present. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Appointment of Early Voting Officials

The board must appoint chief judges and judges to serve during early voting. Staff recommendations were shared with both parties. Neither party submitted lists to the Board of Elections. The recommendations before the board include all chief judges, judges, and specialty role workers that are working election day and during early voting. If this list is approved, staff will assign for each shift a balance of party for judge assignments.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the list of early voting officials as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Multipartisan Assistance Team members

A Multipartisan Assistance Team, or MAT, is a team of voters who represent different political parties in each county who assist patients and residents in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and adult care homes (“facilities”) with absentee voting. MATs can help voters in facilities with disabilities or who otherwise require assistance in requesting or casting a mail-in absentee ballot. The team provides a public service to these voters by giving them lawfully-authorized, neutral assistance with absentee voting.

We currently have two members and are recommending approval of Patricia Vandergrift (REP), Myrtle Stevenson (DEM), and Sandra Batson (REP) as MAT members.

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve the additional MAT members as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Polling Place change for NB05 Woodburn

The current location at The Brunswick Center at Leland is affected by construction of the adjacent Founders Park. This construction has severely limited an already challenging parking situation. Staff recommends moving the polling place to Navassa Community Center.

Mr. Pelton asked that the director work with the county Public Information Officer to assist in publicizing this change.

Mr. Randall made a motion to move the polling place for Precinct NB05 Woodburn to the Navassa Community Center. Motion carried unanimously.

Reevaluation of Out-of-Precinct Polling Places

Currently Out-of-Precinct polling places are used at the following precincts, which must be approved each year:

- Precinct SB04 – Southport 1, The Brunswick Center at Southport
- Precinct CB04 – Secession 2, Holden Beach EOC Building
- Precinct WB02 – Hickman’s Crossroads, Jessie Mae Monroe Elementary School

These locations have been used successfully in previous elections.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve Out-of-Precinct Polling places as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Off-Site Voter ID Making Policy

G.S. 163-82.8A requires that voter ID-making services are provided at the county board of elections office during regular business hours. Voter ID-making services may also be offered off-site.

Staff recommends the board adopt a policy to ensure consistency when offering voter ID-making services off-site. Ms. LaVere noted that facilities such as senior centers and libraries are available in different areas of the county. Ms. LaVere shared concerns that if the office were to get inundated with requests to participate in events, there should be some guidelines in place, especially if staffing levels did not support attendance for every invited event.

The board discussed logistics of offering this service off-site and reviewed the draft of policy. Mr. Pelton asked the policy to be amended to include the staff shall maintain a record of all events in addition to the form required by the state. Further, that this policy may be changed/amended by the director, notification of the board, and consultation of the chair.

Ms. LaVere clarified that Voter Photo IDs are for registered voters only. A voter has to be a verified voter before they can receive an ID, unless using same day registration. Ms. LaVere read public comments on the matter submitted via the Zoom broadcast.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to accept the policy, as amended. The motion carried by majority 4-0, with Mr. Smith abstaining. Ms. LaVere noted there may be legal guidance from the state regarding board members participating in votes.

Public Comments

The board heard public comments from the audience and submitted through the online portal.

Director's Report

Key staff members will be participating in a statewide tabletop exercise with emergency services, IT, and the Sheriff's office.

The county has launched a new website which allows us additional customization options for our page. We are working to make it as user friendly as possible and Ms. LaVere welcomes comments and suggestions.

Ms. LaVere provided an update on her trip to Washington, DC for Election Assistance Commission Local Leadership Council. There are two representatives from each state in their local association. The Election Assistance Commission offers toolkits to assist us in processes.

2024 Primary Updates:

- Poll Worker Training is underway
- Absentee Ballots begin mailing on Friday
- The first Absentee Meeting is January 30 at 4 PM
- Voting equipment testing begins on Monday
- There are two petitions that are circulating for candidates trying to get on the fall ballot as unaffiliated candidates
- Budget Planning
 - Department Goals and Objectives were shared with the Commissioners this morning
 - Space continues to be a concern
 - Ms. LaVere plans to request two additional full time staff members

Adjournment

Ms. Pelton made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Meeting Minutes · Absentee Meeting · February 13, 2024 · 4:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward Lewis, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton, and Member Timothy Randall

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, and Absentee Assistant Christy Souter

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the minutes for the minutes of the February 6, 2024 Absentee meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Absentee Ballots

Due to several key staff members out of the office with illness, ballots approved today will not be opened and scanned. Approved ballot envelopes will be secured in a ballot bin and processed at next week's meeting.

Ms. Souter presented 3 Absentee cured ballots for consideration. One ballot the voter sent in an ID to cure the ballot. Two voters indicated the ID information is within the ballot envelope.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the one ballot that had a cured ballot and to approve and open the other two ballot envelopes to check for ID. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Souter presented 54 civilian ballots for approval. Each board member reviewed two ballots to confirm they were properly executed. Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 54 civilian ballots. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. LaVere presented one ballot for review that was returned with an executed Absentee Ballot ID Exception Form. Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the one pending ballot. Motion carried unanimously.

58 approved ballots were placed in a bin and secured with seals 2616989 and 2616988, with the seals initialed by Mr. Pelton and Mr. Randall.

Mr. Randall thanked the board and director for supporting his participation in the recent State Board of Elections conference.

Mr. Pelton thanked the Sheriff's office for their services for meetings and ensuring ballot security to and from meetings.

The board signed an audit sheet confirming the number of ballots approved today and seal numbers.

Mr. Lewis passed along well wishes for ill staff members.

Adjournment

Ms. Clarity made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Date: 2/20/2024

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: Commissioners' Chambers

Agenda Item: Director's Report

Summary:

1. 2024 Primary Election updates
2. Report on Statewide Tabletop Exercise

Attachments:

1. January voter registration statistics

Brunswick County Voter Registration Statistics Monthly Report

| | 2024 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Total Registered Voters | 131,854 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Voter Registration Activity | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Voters Removed | 543 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| New Registrations Processed | 1,821 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Registrations Processed w/ No Changes | 964 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Voter Registration Changes Processed | 1,041 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Monthly VR Transactions | 4,369 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Verification and Confirmation Mailings | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Verifications Mailed Out | 5,486 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NCOA Mailing | 1,172 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Verifications returned undeliverable | 197 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Voter Returned Confirmation Card Update | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Confirmations Mailed Out | 41 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Party Breakdown | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Democratic | 27,330 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Republican | 53,207 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Libertarian | 712 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Green | 18 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No Labels | 72 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unaffiliated | 50,515 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Party Breakdown Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Democratic | 20.73% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Republican | 40.35% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Libertarian | 0.54% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Green | 0.01% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No Labels | 0.05% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unaffiliated | 38.31% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 64,877 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 56,120 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Undesignated Gender | 10,857 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Race | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| American Indian | 386 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Asian | 519 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Black | 8,998 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Multi-Racial | 256 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 9 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White | 109,743 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Race | 2,209 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Undesignated Race | 9,734 | | | | | | | | | | | |

Statistics for this report are generated using the NC State Board of Elections NVRA report.

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Date: 2/20/2024

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: Commissioners' Chambers

Agenda Item: Voter ID-Making Policy

Applicable Statutes and/or Rules:

[G.S. 163-82.8A](#), [Numbered Memo 2023-02](#)

Summary:

G.S. 163-82.8A requires that voter ID-making services are provided at the county board of elections office during regular business hours. Voter ID-making services may also be offered off-site.

- A documented policy should be developed to ensure consistency in offering Voter ID-making services outside of normal business hours.
- It is recommended that off-site services be offered only at county facilities or county or government sponsored events.
- The board of elections has spare equipment to ensure that ID-making services are available during business hours at the Board of Elections office and any off-site event that may be scheduled.
- Voter ID-making must be conducted by staff with access to SEIMS (state software).
- Voters cannot register to vote and receive a voter Photo ID at the same time (outside of same day registration during early voting).

Attachments:

Policy draft amended at January Meeting

Board Action:

Approval of amended policy.

**BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
OFF-SITE VOTER ID MAKING POLICY**

G.S. 163-82.8A requires that voter ID-making services are provided at the county board of elections office during regular business hours. Voter ID-making services may also be offered off-site at any time. Staff members of the Brunswick County Board of Elections shall conduct Voter ID-making services outside of the Board of Elections office, subject to the following rules and procedures:

1. To ensure fairness and impartiality, voter ID-making services shall only be conducted at Brunswick County-sponsored events/and or facilities and/or Board of Elections-specific functions. Such activities must be exclusive from other non-county organizations and/or events.
2. Events and functions involving voter ID-making services shall not conflict with the election schedule, day-to-day operations, elections preparations, and staffing capacity.
3. Only Board of Elections staff shall organize such activities and at least two (2) staff members must be available to conduct the ID-making services.
4. Elections staff shall only use Board of Elections equipment and a secure or county network, for the voter ID-making process.
5. Staff shall maintain a record of all events in addition to the state-required Voter Photo Identification Card Request Forms.
6. This policy may be changed or amended by the Director, with notification to the Board and consultation with the Board Chair.

Adopted this 20th day of February 2024.

Edward E. Lewis, Chair

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Date: 2/20/2024

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: Commissioners' Chambers

Agenda Item: Public Comment Policy

Summary:

Staff recommends implementing concise guidelines for public comments to streamline the process.

Current Procedure:

- Rule 5 of the board's Rules of Procedure outlines public address to the board, with a three to five-minute limit per speaker.
- An online portal for public comments was introduced in 2022, with staff reading comments during meetings.

Suggested Procedure Changes:

1. Limit public comments to the designated agenda item or online portal submissions.
2. Set a 5:00 pm cutoff the day before the meeting for online portal submissions, to be included in the agenda packet.
3. Exclude live stream viewer comments during meetings.
4. Emphasize that public comments are not for impromptu questions, and the board will not engage in dialogue.

Suggested verbiage on future agendas to clarify the public comment policy:

Members of the public may observe the meeting in-person or via live video feed online using [Zoom](#). Virtual attendees can email questions/comments to elections@brunswickcountync.gov. Questions or comments submitted through Zoom will not be addressed during the meeting.

A public comment portal allows those not in attendance during a board meeting to address the board. The deadline for submission of comments to the portal is 5:00 pm the day before the meeting. Comments will be included in agenda packets that are available to the board and public during the meeting. Comments received after the deadline will be sent via email to the board members after the meeting. [Public Comment Portal Link](#)

Board Action:

Discuss and approve policy

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Date: 2/20/2024

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: Commissioners' Chambers

Agenda Item: Consideration of Absentee Ballots

Summary:

Ballots approved at the February 13 meeting

The board approved 58 ballots that will need to be opened and scanned at this week's meeting. There are 4 Bald Head Island ballots that will need duplication.¹

Ballots recommended for approval – board to spot-check²

1. 83 Civilian ballots
 - a. 6 of these are Bald Head Island ballots that will need duplication once opened
2. 1 Military ballot (received by mail, duplication not needed)
3. 3 Affidavit Review Pending Civilian ballots (properly executed Photo ID Exception Form³)

Ballots requiring board review⁴

1. Ballots recommended for approval
 - a. 1 Civilian ballot with an Accepted Cure
 - b. 2 Overseas ballots (received electronically, duplicated by bipartisan team prior to meeting)
2. Pending board decision:
 - a. 4 Civilian ballots received in a return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed⁵

¹ Republican ballots for Bald Head Island voters consist of two sheets with unique barcode identifiers, indicating they belong together. In the first batch of mailed ballots, some sheets may have separated during the folding machine process.

²The *Resolution to Delegate Administrative Duties Relating to Absentee Voting to the Director and Staff approved by the board on 10/17/23* states that "The board will not review individual ballot envelopes that have been recommended by staff for approval and will accept staff's recommendation for those ballot envelopes and photo ID documentation. The board will spot-check a minimum of two envelopes and accompanying photo ID documentation to ensure accuracy and consistency. The board reserves the right to review all ballot envelopes that have been recommended by staff for approval."

³ Per Numbered Memo 2020-25, these ballots should be approved by the board if the board does not unanimously conclude that the exception form is false.

⁴ Numbered Memo 2020-25 states "the board must individually review all ballot envelopes that: (1) have been recommended for disapproval by staff, (2) have a cure certification associated with that ballot envelope, or (3) where staff need further guidance from the board as to whether the envelope was properly executed or the photo ID documentation meets all legal requirements.

⁵ Numbered Memo 2021-03 provides that when the ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope which is not sealed but the ballot envelope is received in a sealed return envelope, this anomaly is not a deficiency. Staff is instructed to re-seal the return envelope with a notation of "sealed in return envelope" and the county board should open the return envelope and address the ballot at its next absentee meeting.

3. Recommended for disapproval:
 - a. 3 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information – ballots have been spoiled and a new ballot issued ⁶

Absentee Seal Numbers and Ballot Counts

These numbers are logged on an audit sheet and signed by the board at each meeting.

| Meeting | Absentee Bin Seals | vDrive Seal | Ballots Approved at Meeting | Ballots Scanned at Meeting | Total Ballots Scanned this Election <small>Recorded at end of meeting</small> |
|--|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 01/30/2024 | 2617251 2617261 | 37471593 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| 2/6/2024 | 2616928 2616946 | 37471515 | 33 | 33 | 40 |
| 2/13/2024 (ballots were approved, but not opened) | 2616989 2616988 | N/A | 58 | 0 | N/A |
| 2/13/2024 ballots will be scanned 2/20/2024 | | N/A | 58 approved 2/13 | | |
| 2/20/2024 | | | | | |

⁶ Numbered Memo 2020-25 states “Whether the county board delegates the initial review of absentee envelopes to staff or chooses to have a bipartisan team of board members review envelopes during the meeting, all board members present at the meeting must approve or disapprove the ballots.”

The Resolution to Delegate Administrative Duties delegated the task of “Inspecting ballot envelopes and return envelopes for deficiencies and contacting voters as required by Numbered Memo 2021-03.”