

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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

Board Members Present: Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton, and Member Timothy M. Randall

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, Assistant Computer Technician Ed Ovsenik, Absentee Assistant Christy Souter, and Absentee Assistant Camdyn Johnson

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Julie Paladino, Gwen Causey, Myrtle Stevenson, and Patricia Vandergrift

Meeting Opening

Mr. Smith 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 27, 2024 Absentee meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Absentee Ballots

There are 272 absentee ballots for consideration:

Recommended for approval:

Civilian ballots

- 211 Civilian ballots; one is a Bald Head Island that needs duplicated, 12 are Bald Head Island ballots that will be opened separately to ensure both sheets were received
- 33 Affidavit Pending Review that have a properly executed Photo ID Exception Form

Board members each reviewed a minimum of two ballots.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve 211 Civilian ballots and 33 Affidavit Pending Review ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Military and Overseas ballots

- Five overseas ballots and two military ballots received electronically and were duplicated ahead of the meeting by the bipartisan team. Each of these ballots were reviewed by the board.

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve five overseas and two military ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Ballots Pending Board Decision

- Three ballots were returned by an unauthorized person (not a near relative or guardian).

Numbered Memo 2020-23 states that delivery of an absentee ballot by a person other than the voter, the voter's near relative, the voter's legal guardian, or a person of the voter's choice when the voter needs assistance due to disability, is not sufficient evidence in and of itself to establish that the voter did not lawfully vote their ballot. A county board shall not disapprove an absentee ballot solely because it was delivered by someone who was not authorized to possess the ballot.

- Two ballots were returned with no log. There was no log completed at the early voting location; as this was a poll worker deficiency, staff recommends these ballots be approved.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve five ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

- Eight Civilian ballots were returned in a sealed envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed.

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.

One ballot is a Bald Head Island Ballot that will need to be duplicated.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve eight ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

- Two Civilian ballots where the voter indicated that their photo ID documentation is inside the ballot envelope.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the two ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

Ballots Recommended for Disapproval

- Four Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled and re-issued.
- One Civilian ballot with incomplete witness information and photo ID was not acceptable. Ballot has been spoiled and re-issued.
- One Civilian ballot where the ballot envelope was not sealed and there was no ballot inside. Ballot has been spoiled and re-issued.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to disapprove six ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson verified the seal number on the vDrive seal as 33118391. Current ballot count was verified as 331.

The bipartisan team opened the approved ballots and removed ballots to be scanned.

The bipartisan team duplicated ballots as necessary.

After scanning was complete, the board adjudicated overvotes as necessary. Mr. Johnson announced that 266 ballots were scanned today. Ms. LaVere confirmed that was the number of ballots approved.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Mr. Smith and Mr. Randall. The secure vDrive was placed in a storage container and sealed. The following vote count and seal numbers were logged and will be confirmed at the start of the next meeting.

- Ballot count: 597 total
- Ballot bin: 2617006 and 2617007
- vDrive storage container: 33118393

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

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