

# BRUNSWICK COUNTY

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Meeting Minutes · Absentee Meeting · October 1, 2024 · 4:00 p.m.

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**Board Members Present:** Chair Edward Lewis, 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, and Absentee Assistant Christy Souter

**Bipartisan Duplication Team Present:** Julie Paladino, Stefanie Ottolini, Myrtle Stevenson, and Gwen Causey

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### **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**

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2024 Regular meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Appointment of MAT Member**

Ms. LaVere summarized that the Multipartisan Assistance Team has been busy with requests from facilities and with the availability of current members, it would be of benefit to appoint another member to be able to accommodate all requests. Staff recommends appointing Alice Beane (DEM) to serve on the MAT.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve Alice Beane (DEM) as an additional MAT member. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Consideration of Absentee Ballots**

There are 219 ballots for the board's consideration.

### **Ballots recommended for approval:**

- 137 Civilian ballots
- 1 Military ballot returned by mail

- 10 Affidavit review pending (returned with a properly executed Photo ID Exception Form)

#### Ballots requiring Board review

##### Ballots recommended for approval

- 50 Overseas (received electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)
- 13 Military (returned electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)
- 4 Civilian ballots received in a sealed return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed
- 1 Civilian ballot where the voter indicated that their photo ID documentation is inside the ballot envelope.

#### Ballots recommended for disapproval

- 3 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled and a new ballot issued.

For informational purposes only, there are 2 pending cure ballots.

Mr. Johnson opened the Central Scan and the board signed the zeros tape.

Board members spot-checked at least two ballots from the ballots recommended for approval. Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 137 Civilian ballots, 1 Military Ballot, and 10 Affidavit Review Pending ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

Board members reviewed Overseas and Military ballots that were duplicated ahead of the meeting by the bipartisan duplication team. Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 50 overseas ballots and 13 military ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

#### Review of a previously approved Civilian ballot

Upon opening one of the approved civilian ballots, a CIV mismatched was discovered. Guidance of the state provides if a CIV mismatch occurs, if a member of the same household also has a CIV mismatch, the ballots can be approved. In this instance, the voter in the same household is a ballot that is in a 'pending cure' status, waiting photo ID documentation.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to put the ballot in a pending status and change the number of approved CIVs to 136. Motion carried unanimously.

### Five ballots pending board decision

Four Civilian ballots were received in a sealed return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed. Numbered memo 2021-03 provides that when 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 are 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.

Ms. Souter opened the ballots under the supervision of the board and evaluated photo ID requirements. In two instances, upon opening the outer envelope, it was discovered that the ballot was not in the ballot envelope, but loose in the return envelope. Mr. Pelton and subsequently, Ms. Clarity made motions to place ballots into the proper return envelope. Both motions were unanimously approved.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve these four ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

One civilian ballot where the voter indicated that their photo ID documentation is inside the envelope. Numbered memo 2021-03 states “a voter may respond to a notification that their ballot is missing photo ID documentation by stating it is in the ballot envelope. If this occurs, staff must defer the review of the photo ID documentation to the next absentee board meeting, when the county board can review the application and, if approved, open the ballot envelope and confirm photo ID compliance.”

Mr. Pelton made a motion for Ms. Souter to open the ballot envelope to check for Photo ID or documentation. Motion carried unanimously. The photo ID enclosed was accepted. Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the ballot. Motion carried unanimously.

There are three Civilian ballots recommended for disapproval due to incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled and new ones reissued to voters. Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove three ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Four ballots that were damaged upon opening and had to be duplicated by the bipartisan team.

The board adjudicated an overvote.

After scanning was complete, Mr. Johnson announced that 215 ballots were scanned today.

Ms. Rushton confirmed that the number of ballots approved was 215.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Mr. Pelton 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: 215
- Ballot bin: 37471384 and 37471385
- vDrive storage container: 37471387

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

Ms. LaVere clarified the recent press release by the State Board removing voters from the rolls involves the standard, regular list maintenance processes.

Mr. Pelton addressed a letter he received regarding concerns raised about the security of equipment. Ms. LaVere will forward the letter and her response to board members.

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