

# BRUNSWICK COUNTY

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Meeting Minutes · Absentee Meeting · November 4, 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, Gwen Causey, Debra Prew-Deleko, and Pat Vandergrift

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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. Randall made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Consideration of Absentee Ballots**

There are 1693 ballots for the board's consideration.

Information only: 69 ballots pending cure.

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

#### **1432 Ballots recommended for approval for board to spot check**

- 1223 Civilian ballots
- One Civilian ballot received in the VIP – will be duplicated during the meeting
- 5 Military ballots returned by mail and will be duplicated during board meeting
- 203 Affidavit review pending (returned with a properly executed Photo ID Exception Form)

Board members spot-checked at least two ballots from the ballots recommended for approval. Mr. Randall made a motion to approve ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **123 Ballots requiring board review**

- 46 Accepted Cure
- 43 Overseas (received electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)

- 34 Military (received electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)

Board members reviewed ballots. Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 123 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rushton noted there are five pairs (10 ballots) of CIV mismatch within the same household. There is one CIV mismatch with no household match; this ballot will be put in a pending status and the voter contacted.

Ballots requiring board review – pending board decision

84 ballots total requiring board review:

- 65 Civilian ballots received in a sealed return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed or the ballot was loose in the return envelope
  - 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.
  - Mr. Pelton made a motion to authorize staff to open envelopes and evaluate for further recommendations. Motion carried unanimously.
  - Staff opened the envelopes under board supervision and evaluated the ballots.
  - 56 of these ballots met all requirements and were recommended to be approved.
  - Five ballots had incomplete witness information
  - One did not have a ballot envelope
  - One had an illegible Photo ID Exception Form
  - Two provided IDs from different states, which are not acceptable forms of ID (they had not registered within the last 90 days).

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve 56 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 6 ballots as recommended by staff with three ballots stashed as pending cure. Motioned carried unanimously.

- 10 Civilian ballots where the voter indicated their photo ID documentation was inside the ballot envelope.
  - Numbered Memo 2021-03 states “A voter may respond to a notification that their ballot is missing photo ID documentation by stating that 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 to approve and direct staff to open the ballot envelopes to evaluate photo ID requirements. Motion carried unanimously.

- Of the 10, 9 are recommended for approval and one placed in a pending cure status as the ID was not readable.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 9 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

- 7 Civilian ballots were returned by an unauthorized person.
  - 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.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the 7 ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

Upon staff review, one of these ballots appears to be witnessed by the voter themselves. Mr. Smith made a motion to disapprove that ballot. Motion carried unanimously.

- Two Affidavit Review Pending (reason on Photo ID Exception Form to be reviewed by Board).
  - Voters returned Photo Id Exception Form in which the voters checked the "other" box and indicated they were not comfortable with supplying identifying information through the mail.
  - The state advised the board could disapprove the form or offer the voter the opportunity to cure the form by bringing their photo ID or copy of such in person to the board of elections office.

Mr. Smith made a motion to put the ballots in a pending status and offer the voters to cure the ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

#### 53 Ballots recommended for disapproval

- 51 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled and new ballots issued.
- One Civilian ballot not properly notarized. Ballot has been spoiled and a new ballot issued.
- One Civilian ballot unsealed. Ballot has been spoiled and reissued.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 53 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson confirmed the vDrive seal as 37471452 and the ballot count as 5050; Ms. LaVere confirmed this as the seal number and ballot count from the October 29, 2024 meeting.

Approved ballots were opened by the bipartisan team and prepared for scanning.

All approved ballots were scanned.

The board adjudicated overvotes as necessary.

After scanning was complete, Mr. Johnson announced that 1626 ballots were scanned today with the total scanned as 6676.

Ms. Rushton confirmed that the number of ballots approved today was 1626 with total to date of 6676.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Mr. Pelton and Ms. Clarity. 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: 6676
- Ballot bin: 37471454 and 37471455
- vDrive storage container: 37471457

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

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