

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Meeting Minutes · Election Day Meeting · November 5, 2024 · 5:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. 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: Stefanie Ottolini, Julie Paladino

Meeting Opening

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

Approval of Agenda

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

Consideration of Absentee Ballots

There are 153 ballots for the board's consideration.

Information only: 71 ballots pending cure

118 Ballots recommended for approval for board to spot check

- 83 Civilian ballots
- 8 Overseas returned by mail or will be duplicated during board meeting
- 11 Military returned by mail or will be duplicated during board meeting
- 16 Affidavit Review Pending (returned with 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 118 Civilian ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

12 Ballots requiring board review

- 12 Accepted Cure ballots

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 12 ballots as recommended by staff.

Ballots requiring board review – pending board decision

4 ballots total requiring board review:

- 4 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.
- Ballots were reviewed by staff and recommended for approval.

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

- 1 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. Randall made a motion to approve and direct staff to open the ballot envelope to evaluate photo ID requirements. Motion carried unanimously. Staff recommended ballot for approval.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the ballot as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

- 2 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. Pelton made a motion to approve the 2 ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

16 Ballots recommended for disapproval

- 16 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 16 ballots with incomplete witness information. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson verified the seal from the vDrive storage container as 37471457.

Mr. Johnson opened the central scanner.

The bipartisan team opened the approved ballots and removed ballots to be scanned. Mr. Johnson announced the total number of ballots scanned as 6676 ballots scanned; matching what was scanned at the close of the November 4 meeting.

The board adjudicated one ballot as necessary.

Mr. Johnson announced that 137 ballots were scanned at today's meeting. That was confirmed to be the number of ballots approved.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Mr. Randall and Mr. Pelton. The secure vDrive was placed in a storage container and sealed. The following vote count and seal numbers were logged.

- Ballot count: 6813 total
- Ballot bin: 37471458 and 37471459

Ms. Rushton obtained board signatures on absentee poll books.

Closing of Verity Central Scan

Mr. Johnson obtained results from Central Scan of absentee ballots. He also closed the Verity Scans from One-Stop and obtained those results.

Summary of Absentee for Release at Close of Polls:

Absentee by Mail Summary

Absentee by Mail	Verity Central Scan Total	Approved Ballots
Absentee TOTAL	6813	6813

Consider Challenges to Absentee and Early Voting Ballots

Ms. LaVere reviewed the procedures provided by the State Board of Elections to challenge voters that are no longer eligible to cast ballots. Challenges involve voters that died after their ballot was cast but prior to election day, voters whose registrations were denied due to verification returned undeliverable and one voter who has now registered in Mecklenburg County.

[Numbered Memo 2022-05](#) provides guidance for county boards to challenge ineligible absentee-by-mail and early voting ballots. The qualifications for all voters, including early and absentee voters, are judged as of Election Day.

What if a voter dies after voting absentee-by-mail or early voting but before Election Day?

- Prior to taking any action, obtain official confirmation of the death. Permissible sources include the DHHS List Maintenance Reports, death certificate from the local register of deeds, or a written, signed notification from a near relative.

- Follow the Process for Disapproving the Ballot Application (if applicable) and Challenging the Ballot above.
- Remove the voter pursuant to G.S. 163-82.14(b).

Voter Registration Denied

G.S. 163-82.7(g)(2) provides that when a voter verification mailing and second notice verification mailing are “returned as undeliverable after a person has already voted by absentee ballot, then that person's ballot may be challenged in accordance with G.S. 163-89.”

Mr. Smith made a motion to move forward with challenges. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson proceeded to tabulate absentee results under the supervision of the board.

Closing of Verity Scans from Early Voting Locations

At the close of polls, 7:30, Mr. Johnson closed Verity Scans from Early Voting Locations.

The handle seal numbers on each scanner were compared with the seal number which was logged by precinct officials at the end of early voting. The vDrive seal number was compared with the seal placed on the Verity Scan during Logic and Accuracy testing.

Results media was imported into the Verity Count system. From the Verity Count system, there were transferred to the networked computer and uploaded to the State Board of Elections using a new, unopened thumb drive.

Board members signed results tapes from each Verity Scan.

Early Voting Summary

Site	vDrive Seal	Handle Seal	Verity Scan Count (from Saturday close)
Bolivia	0508539	0542780	7,290
Shalotte	0508537	36069796	14,771
Leland	0508538	0542653	22,879
Sunset Beach	0508540	36069798	13,092
Supply	0504498	36069797	12,364
Southport	0504500	0542793	17,378
			87,774

Precinct Results

When all precincts had reported, and tabulations were complete, the unofficial results of the 2024 general election were announced.

Adjournment

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