

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Meeting Minutes · Canvass Meeting · November 15, 2024 · 11:00 a.m.

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

Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, Absentee Assistant Christy Souter, County Attorney Bryan Batton

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Julie Paladino, Stefanie Ottolini, Myrtle Stevenson, Gwen Causey, Debra Prew-Deleкто, and Pat Vandergrift

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.

Hearing on early voting and absentee ballot challenges

[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.”

Proper notice was sent to all voters and copies were included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Lewis asked if anyone present needed to address the challenges.

Mr. Lewis swore in Ms. LaVere to allow her to provide testimony. Ms. LaVere reviewed the challenges and the how the board of elections was notified of information that would necessitate the voter's ballot be challenged.

Mr. Smith made a motion to sustain all challenges. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration and Tabulation of Supplemental Absentee Ballots

There are 7 supplemental absentee ballots for consideration.

Ballots recommended for approval – Board to spot check

- 3 Overseas Federal Write-in Absentee ballots – to be duplicated during meeting
- 3 Military Federal Write-in Absentee ballots – to be duplicated during meeting

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the 6 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson confirmed the vDrive seal from November 14 meeting as 36069748 and confirmed 212 supplemental absentees were scanned at that meeting; Ms. LaVere confirmed the seal number and ballot count.

Ballots were duplicated as necessary by the bipartisan team and scanned.

Ballots recommended for disapproval

- One Civilian ballot received after the deadline

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove the ballot. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson confirmed 6 supplemental absentee ballots were scanned today for a total of 218; confirmed by Ms. LaVere.

Consideration and Tabulation of Provisional Ballots

Ms. Chambers presented provisional ballots for consideration.

Provisional ballots being considered today: 45

Vote Count	Provisional Voting Reason	# Ballots
APPROVED	ID Not Provided (No Exception Form)	1
	Properly Executed Photo ID Exception Form	1
	TOTAL APPROVED	2
NOT APPROVED	ID Not Provided (No Exception Form)	29
	Proof of Residency to Approve Same Day Registration	11
	Unsigned Photo ID Exception Form	1
	TOTAL NOT APPROVED	41
PENDING	Challenged Ballots	2
	TOTAL PENDING BOARD DECISION	2
TOTAL FOR CONSIDERATION 11.15.2024		45

Mr. Johnson opened the central scanner for scanning of the approved provisional ballot and verified there were 439 provisional ballots scanned at the November 14 meeting.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 4 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 41 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

The bipartisan team opened the ballots, duplicated as necessary and ballots were scanned. Mr. Johnson confirmed there were 4 provisional ballots scanned.

Retrieval of ballots cast by Same Day Registrants who failed mail verification

[2023-05 Same-Day Registration](#) outlines the process to provide a notice and cure option for voters who use same-day registration and later fail mail verification.

Initial Verification and Return

When a mail verification notice is sent to a same-day registrant and returned as undeliverable, the county staff initiates the cure process if returned before the close of business two days before canvass.

Notification to the Registrant

Within one business day of the undeliverable notice being returned, staff will:

- Send a "Notice to Verify Your Address" by **mail** and **email**.
- Call the registrant if a phone number is available.

Options for the Registrant to Verify Address

The registrant must verify their address by either:

- **Submitting a HAVA Document:** Provide a copy of a HAVA-compliant document to the county board by **5 p.m. on the day before the county canvass**.
- **In-Person Verification at Canvass:** If unable to provide an acceptable document by the deadline, the registrant may verify their address in person at the canvass meeting. At the meeting, the county board will:
 - Take the registrant's testimony under the first oath in G.S. 163-86(c)
 - Consider any documentation provided by the registrant.

Failure to Verify Address

If the registrant does not provide a current HAVA document matching their registration address by the deadline:

- The county board will not register the applicant.
- The applicant's ballot will be retrieved, and their votes will be removed from the official count.

Ms. LaVere requested the board to provide authorization to retrieve those ballots and remove from the vote totals.

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

Removal of provisional ballot inserted into the tabulator on election day

Summary:

A provisional curbside ballot was mistakenly inserted into the tabulator by a poll worker at NB02.

Ms. LaVere outlined the procedure to be followed to retrieve and remove the provisional ballot from the election day vote count.

Procedure:

1. **Verify Chain of Custody:** Confirm seal numbers on the ballot bin.
2. **Retrieve Ballot:** A bipartisan team will locate the provisional ballot within the ballot bin. Reseal the bin with new security seals once retrieval is complete.
3. **Tally and Adjust:** The bipartisan team will tally the provisional ballot. Any ineligible votes will be deducted from the appropriate precinct results using a manual adjustment.

4. **Document the Adjustment:** Two copies of the audit log reflecting this adjustment will be printed—one for attachment to the tally sheet and one for the official canvass report.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to retrieve and remove the provisional ballot placed in the tabulator as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Bipartisan teams went through the relevant bins for early voting, absentee, and election day to retrieve the balls that should be removed from the totals.

Once all ballots were located, the team conducted manual tally on each to allow Mr. Johnson to remove votes from appropriate vote counts.

Mr. Johnson will work to tabulate and update results while Ms. LaVere updates the board on Sample Audit and Voter History.

Sample Audit Count and Voter History Audit

Sample Audit Count:

The sample audit count, required by state law, helps ensure the reliability of election results tabulated by a machine. Bipartisan teams at each county board of elections conduct hand-to-eye counts of all ballots in two randomly selected precincts and compare the results with the results of the machine counts. The process verifies the accuracy of the machine counts.

Bipartisan teams did a hand to eye count of the Presidential contest in precinct WB03 Longwood and SB03 Mosquito 2 on November 8. The results matched the machine count.

Voter History Audit:

The voter history audit is an important process to ensure that a voter is recorded as casting a ballot in one of the four voting methods: absentee, early voting, election day, or provisionals. The best practice is to make sure that the voter history audit is reconciled and completed before county canvass.

Currently, voter history on paper appears to be off by 52. However, several processes remain to be finalized, including the removal of ballots cast by ineligible voters. Once these processes are completed today, it is expected that voter history will show three more ballots cast than recorded in voter history.

Finalize Results

Mr. Johnson read in supplemental absentee ballots, provisional ballots from yesterday and today, and manual edits of hand-tallied ballots were removed from election day results, and results were finalized.

Documents were signed by the board.

Adjournment

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