

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Meeting Minutes · Organizational & Regular Meeting · July 22, 2025 · 12:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Paula Clarity, Edward Lewis, Randy Pelton, and David Smudski

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, Elections Specialist Jordan Lawson

Also Present: County Attorney Bryan Batton, Assistant County Attorney Ryan King

Meeting Opening

Ms. LaVere called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Swearing in of board members

Board members were sworn in by District Court Judge J. Calvin Chandler.

Election of Secretary

Mr. Pelton noted the long-standing tradition of bipartisanship held by Brunswick County Board of Elections to elect a secretary of the opposite party of the chair. As such, Mr. Pelton made a motion to elect Mr. Lewis as secretary. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lewis recognized and thanked former chair Boyd Williamson for his support and mentorship.

Recognition of Recently Served Board Members

Ms. LaVere acknowledged and thanked our recently served board members, Mr. Timothy Randall and Mr. Stuart Smith. Mr. Randall was recognized with a certificate that will be mailed to his home as he wasn't present. Mr. Smith's 22 years of service will be honored with a reception on August 12 from 2:30 – 4:30 pm in the cafeteria building.

Approval of Agenda

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

Preliminary Hearing for Voter Challenge

Two voter challenges have been filed challenging the voter's registration; Richard F. Smith and Lori Mabe Smith.

Ms. LaVere summarized that during a preliminary hearing, the board will decide if the challenges were properly filed and if there is probable cause to move to a full evidentiary hearing.

Mr. Smith called to see if the challenger Michael Felmy was present; Mr. Felmy was not present.

Mr. Batton advised the board that according to GS163.85, the voter challenge procedure, the burden of proof is on the challenger. If no testimony is presented, the board shall dismiss the challenge.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to dismiss the challenge against Richard F. Smith Jr, due to the absence of the challenger. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to dismiss the challenge against Lori Mabe Smith, due to the absence of the challenger. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve minutes from the meeting on June 17, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments

The board heard public comments from the audience.

Director's Report

June voter registration statistics were provided in the agenda packet.

Registration Repair

- Brunswick County has 1,736 voter records to review to determine if any of the following are true:
 - the voter provided their NCDL or last four digits of their SSN
 - the voter indicated they do not have an NCDL or SSN
 - the voter registered prior to 2004
- The deadline to complete this review is August 15

Photo ID, Outreach, and Poll Worker Orientation Events

- Poll Worker Orientation
 - In-Person (Commissioner's Chambers)
 - July 24 – 10 AM
 - August 6 – 2 PM
 - August 11 – 10 AM
 - Virtual (Zoom)
 - August 13 – 6 PM

- Registration is on our website
- Voter Registration and Voter Photo ID Events
 - Senior Centers
 - Waccamaw - August 5 – 9 am – 11 am
 - Southport – August 12 – 11 am 1 pm
 - Shallotte – August 13 – 11 am – 1 pm
 - Calabash – August 25 – 10 am – 12 pm
- High School Back-to-School Open Houses – Voter Registration and Student Election Assistants
 - August 4 – Early College High School
 - August 19 – North Brunswick, South Brunswick, West Brunswick
- National Voter Registration Day
 - September 16 - 11 am – 1 pm
 - All library locations

New Business

Adoption of Duties of Director

Mr. Lewis noted he would prefer to delay this item until a full board is seated. Ms. Clarity made a motion to table the item until the next meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution for the Temporary Transfer of Voters

Ms. LaVere provided a summary that the municipal election, there are precincts with a small number of voters eligible to vote. Historically in these situations, the voters are temporarily transferred to an adjoining precinct for the municipal election as allowed by GS 1663-128(a).

- Precinct CB06, Mosquito 1, has two eligible voters for the municipal election in the Town of Oak Island.
- Precinct WB03, Longwood, has one eligible voter for the municipal election in the Town of Shallotte.
- Precinct CB03, Frying Pan, has 19 eligible voters for the Town of Shallotte.
- Precinct SB01, Bolivia, precinct has 130 eligible voters for the Town of Bolivia, with no contested races. Historically, this precinct has a very low election day turnout:
 - 2023 – 8 voters
 - 2021 – 4 voters
 - 2019 – 8 voters

The voters will be notified by mail at least 30 days prior to the election.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to temporarily transfer the eligible voters of the affected precincts as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the 2025 Municipal Early Voting Schedule

Ms. LaVere summarized that historically in a municipal election, the board approves one early voting location at the government complex, in lieu of the board of elections office as is appropriate for turnout and cost effectiveness for the municipalities.

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

Adjourn

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