

# BRUNSWICK COUNTY

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Meeting Minutes · Regular Meeting · August 18, 2025 · 2:00 p.m.

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**Board Members Present:** Chair Randy Pelton, Secretary Edward Lewis, Member Paula Clarity, Member Joe Myers, and Member David Smudski

**Board Staff Present:** Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, Deputy Director Adrienne 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

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### **Meeting Opening**

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

### **Swearing in of board members**

Chair Randy Pelton and Member Joe Myers were sworn in by Ms. LaVere.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Clarity 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.

Mr. Pelton called to see if the challenger Michael Felmly was present; Mr. Felmly identified that he was present.

Mr. Batton 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. Myers made a motion to hear both voter challenges simultaneously. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. LaVere was sworn in to provide testimony and answer questions. Ms. Clarity asked Ms. LaVere if the form was filled out correctly, she stated to her knowledge it was.

Ms. LaVere swore in Mr. Felmly who offered evidence and testimony as to why he believes the voters do not reside at the address at which they are registered.

Mr. Batton advised the board that the question before them, if they have found the challenge was properly filed, is if there is probable cause to proceed to an evidentiary hearing to hear evidence as to whether they are properly registered.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to proceed to an evidentiary hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Hearing for Candidate Challenge**

A candidate challenge has been filed by Debra Drumheller to the candidacy of Glassell Slaughter Fitz-Hugh III for the Office of Bald Head Island Council Member.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to accept the Order of Proceedings. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Batton advised the burden of proof is on the candidate.

Mr. Fitz-Hugh was sworn in and made a candidate statement, offering testimony and evidence in a candidate statement.

Ms. Drumheller was sworn in and made a challenger statement, offering testimony as to why she believes the candidate does not reside on Bald Head Island.

Ms. LaVere listed copies of exhibits submitted by the challenged candidate and presented to the board.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to dismiss the challenge. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Batton will draft an order as such.

The full hearings can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u02eV72qFzE>

### **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve minutes from the Organizational and Regular Meeting on July 22, 2025 and the Emergency Meeting on July 30, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Public Comments**

The board heard public comments from the audience. There were no online comments submitted.

### **Director's Report**

July voter registration statistics were provided in the agenda packet.

### ***Registration Repair***

- Brunswick County reviewed 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

- Upon completing the review, there are now 1,234 voters that need to provide their DL or SSN4. Letters have begun going out to those voters from the state this week.
- Voters in the Registration Repair process who have not provided the required HAVA information will be flagged as Inactive Voters with the reason DL/SSN-Update Record.
- Voters in the Registration Repair process who have not provided a validated DL/SSN or the required HAVA identification will be required to vote a provisional ballot when voting in person.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### ***Adoption of Duties of Director***

Mr. Smudski made a motion to approve the resolution of the Duties of Director as drafted. Motion carried unanimously.

### **New Business**

#### ***Annual reevaluation of existing out of precinct polling places***

Ms. LaVere provided a summary that we currently use four polling places that are just outside of precinct boundaries. Staff continually looks for appropriate polling places for each precinct and none suitable for use are found within the precinct boundaries for precincts SB04 Southport 1, CB04 Secession 2, WB02 Hickman's Crossroads, and WB06 Grissettown. The polling places currently used must be reevaluated annually, approved by a resolution of the county board, and approved by the executive director of the state board of elections.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the resolution as drafted. Motion carried unanimously.

#### ***Appointment of Precinct Judges***

Ms. Chambers provided a summary of the process, according to GS163-41.

- Every other year in odd-numbered years, the county board of elections will appoint chief judges and judges for each precinct to serve a two-year term. No more than two judges can be of the same political party.
- The chairman from each political party may recommend up to two people to serve as chief judge in each precinct. They may also submit up to two people to serve as judges of each precinct. Parties may submit voters not of their party for appointment.
- There is no statutory requirement that the chief judge be the same party as the Auditor.
- Unaffiliated voters can be appointed if recommended by a party chair or if the party recommendations are insufficient and the board votes unanimously.
- Appointment to voters that reside out of precinct must be by unanimous vote.
- Staff worked with representatives of both parties to discuss qualified candidates for consideration.

#### ***CB01 Supply:***

Mr. Lewis made a motion to appoint Melinda Johnson as chief judge, Norman (Doug) Ward and Walter Lynch as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*CB02 Shallotte:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Sharon Martins as chief judge, Sallyjune Kuka and Allison King as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*CB03 Frying Pan:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Sophia (Spring Harkins) as chief judge, Geraldine Spring and Gregory Weber as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*CB04 Secession 2:*

Mr. Lewis made a motion to appoint Beth Baker as chief judge, Mark Allen and Libby Mackey as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*CB05 Secession 1:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Phil Julian as chief judge, Pamela Foertsch and Donna Geise as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*CB06 Mosquito 1:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Page Tyler as chief judge, Bonnie Ublacker and Victoria Edge as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*NB01 Hood Creek:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Ernestine Bryant as chief judge, Nancy Pane and Mary Pulawski as judges.

*NB02 Leland:*

Mr. Lewis made a motion to appoint Cindy Martishuis as chief judge, Caryn Segal and Dorene Shirey as judges.

*NB03 Town Creek:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Doris Long as chief judge, Melissa Saytanides and Stan Hixon as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*NB04 Belville 2:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Johnnie Simpson as chief judge, MJ Knox and William Gallagher as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*NB05 Woodburn:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Teena Kirby as chief judge, Teresa Benton and Lynn Hall as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*NB06 Brunswick Forest:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Deborah Watkins as chief judge, April Collins and Arthur Kreiss as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*NB07 Belville 1:*

Mr. Lewis made a motion to appoint Jacqueline Adair as chief judge, Susan Schirck and Geri-Lynn Copeland as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*SB01 Bolivia:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Mark Leeds as chief judge, Tom O'Connor and Ronald Curley as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*SB02 Boiling Spring Lakes:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Edouard Peloquin as chief judge, Ken Campbell and Mary Pongonis as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*SB03 Mosquito 2:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Kathleen Hawkins as chief judge, George Johnson and Amanda Kiel as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*SB04 Southport 1:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Lisa Pomeranz as chief judge, Nancy Lee Smith and Linda Gilbert as judges.

*SB05 Southport 2:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Charles McClellan as chief judge, Jere McMillan and Sandra Spencer as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*SB06 Oak Island 3:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Michella Noll Marquette as chief judge, Karen Litchfield and Terri Malott as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*SB07 Oak Island 2:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Sandra Batson as chief judge, Cheryl Bruce and Allen Dearry as judges.

*SB08 Oak Island 1:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Barry Brown as chief judge, Mary Lou Barber and Rose Gibbs as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*WB01 Waccamaw:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Betty Hewett as chief judge, Amy White-Predieri and Robert Dunn as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*WB02 Hickman's Crossroads:*

Mr. Myers made a motion to appoint Suzy King chief judge, Gail Barna and Christine Faust as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*WB03 Longwood:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Carol Kerr as chief judge, David Moyer and Madeline Dubas as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*WB04 Shingletree 2:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Vicky Craun as chief judge, Barbara Brooks and Brenda Cavallini as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*WB05 Shingletree 1:*

Mr. Smudski made a motion to appoint Deborah Morrow-Ryan as chief judge, Diana Pirigyi and Julia Martinelli as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

*WB06 Grissettown:*

Ms. Clarity made a motion to appoint Denise Sebak as chief judge, Sheri Monaldo and Patricia Davin as judges. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. LaVere and Mr. Pelton thanked staff for their work preparing for appointments of precinct officials.

**Adjourn**

Ms. Clarity made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.