

DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Minutes of Board Meeting

Thursday, October 13, 2016 5:00 PM

Members present

Chairman Bill Brian

Secretary Dawn Baxton

Member Margaret Griffin

Staff present

Chief of Staff Kate Cosner

Deputy Director George McCue

Deputy Director Daniel Lassiter

County attorney present: Senior Assistant County Attorney Marie Inserra

Others present:

See Attendance Sheet

Chairman Brian called the meeting to order after confirming a quorum was present and opened the absentee meeting

Absentee ballots

Ms. Cosner recommended the Board allow the feeding of approved absentee ballots into the tabulator at each absentee meeting but ensuring that no results tabulation would occur prior to Election Day. The Board voiced concerns regarding security and policy. Ms. Cosner responded that this was an accepted practice in larger counties to efficiently process absentee ballots, and acknowledged by the State Board of Elections. Ms. Cosner also stated that the tabulator would be stored in a secure locked room accessible only to the management following a procedure requiring at least two employees to log into the room if entered. Ms. Griffin moved to follow these procedures regarding tabulation and security of absentee ballots as recommended by staff. Secretary Baxton seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

The Board reviewed and approved mail-in absentee ballot applications as recommended by staff on a motion by Ms. Griffin that was seconded by Secretary Baxton and was approved 3-0.

The Board approved the ballot of voter Marjorie Helen Combs as recommended by staff on a motion by Ms. Griffin that was seconded by Secretary Baxton and was approved 3-0.

The Board oversaw the opening of mail-in absentee envelopes and the tabulation ballots.

The Board recessed the meeting briefly at 5:45 p.m.

General session

Upon returning from recess the Board approved minutes from meetings held on September 14 and September 22, 2016, based upon a motion from Secretary Baxton and seconded by Ms. Griffin. The motion passed 3-0.

The Board took public comment on various matters, and then received an update from Ms. Cosner on the following topics: Election worker staffing, early voting, mock election, parking, voting machine testing, election observers, and cell phones assigned to Board of Elections staff. Ms. Griffin moved that assigned phones could not be used for employees' personal business. The motion was seconded by Secretary Baxton and was approved 3-0.

Ms. Cosner continued with updates on the following topics: Future elections conferences and instructions from the State Board regarding Hurricane Matthew's impact on the voter registration deadline.

Chairman Brian announced that Board of Elections Director Michael Perry had resigned, and that the Board would plan to hire that position following the 2016 General Election.

The Board received additional public comments.

Secretary Baxton moved to go into closed session as allowed under General Statute § 143-318.11(a)(3) and (a)(6) to discuss legal and personnel matters. Secretary Baxton seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

The Board returned from closed session at 6:54 p.m. and announced no formal action had been taken in closed session. Ms. Griffin left the meeting.

The Board instructed staff to develop a public process to duplicate machine-unreadable ballots using a bipartisan team. The Board also instructed staff to confirm with the State Board of Elections on whether recording devices would be allowed in open meetings and events involving absentee ballots.

The Board also discussed using county e-mail accounts.

The Board adjourned both sessions at approximately 7:20 p.m.


Dawn Baxton, Secretary