

**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
September 25, 2020

The Transylvania County Board of Elections held a special meeting that was called to order by Chair Champion at 10 am on Friday, September 25, 2020 at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712 and via zoom to discuss the numbered memo guidance on absentee meetings.

**Present**

**Board Members:**

**Staff Members:**

Chair: Sara Champion  
Secretary: Lee McMinn\*  
David Morrow\*  
Pam Dashiell\*  
Michael Wainwright\*

Director: Jeff Storey  
Deputy Director: Laura Owen

\* Remotely via Zoom

Visitors: Ruth Harris\*

**Numbered Memo 2020-25**

Chair Champion thanked everyone for attending and stated she thought it was important to walk through the numbered memo in preparation for the first absentee board meeting. It was noted that all board meetings are to be publicly noticed and was confirmed by the director. Chair Champion stated that the board must act upon all absentee container-return envelopes received prior to each meeting and to be prepared for long hours for Tuesday's meeting. Deputy Director Owen was asked how many ballot returns have been received to date and answered there were roughly 1400 for the board to consider but will also include any ballots received before 5 PM on Monday. Secretary McMinn reminded the board they have the option to recess if needed. The director mentioned there will be two DS200 tabulators used to scan approved ballots. The high-speed scanner has not arrived.

Chair Champion indicated that board members should be physically present to review and vote on ballot returns. All members indicated they will be present.

The chair commented that CARES Act money could be used for media equipment and asked the board to consider if the absentee meetings should be streamed online or only in-person. Secretary McMinn asked what equipment we had available. The director indicated the office had some equipment, but staff would have to monitor the camera at all times and devise a layout that protected privacy. Chair Champion stated the meetings will be held in the large conference room and open to the public in-person with COVID protocols in place. Mr. Morrow did not feel the need to spend any additional funds on video/audio equipment. The board concurred.

There was discussion regarding the confidentiality of the absentee register. Deputy Director Owen gave the board an overview of the processes with absentee requests, absentee returns, and curable procedures.

### **Delegation of Preparatory Steps to Staff**

Chair Champion discussed tasks to formally delegate to staff when preparing for absentee meetings to include:

- Inspecting container-return envelopes for deficiencies and contacting voters as required by Numbered Memo 2020-19 (revised September 22, 2020). Please note that voters must be contacted within one business day of when staff identify the deficiency. It is not permissible to wait for the absentee board meeting to contact the voter about a deficiency.
- Sorting container return envelopes into categories for the board to review and approve. **Secretary McMinn made a motion to delegate the tasks to the director and staff. The motion carried unanimously.**
- Verifying the list of ballot envelopes against the absentee pollbook. **Mr. Morrow made a motion to delegate the task to the director and staff. The motion carried unanimously.**
- Performing ballot duplication.

The director did not feel ballot duplication was a task that needed delegating outside of the board meeting. **Secretary McMinn asked that ballot duplication remain with the board and not be delegated to staff. The board concurred.**

Chair Champion reiterated the process for ballot duplication and keeping voter privacy. There was discussion to split board members into bi-partisan teams to review and accept absentee ballots. Mr. Morrow (REP) and Mr. McMinn (DEM) will be one team. Ms. Dashiell (REP) and Mr. Wainwright (DEM) will be the other team.

During the board meetings, staff will be allowed to open the approved ballots to feed into the DS200.

There was discussion on numbered memo 2020-22 and 2020-23. Those memos are still being reviewed by the courts and will be addressed at that time.

### **Numbered Memo 2020-19**

Chair Champion discussed Numbered Memo 2020-19 and that while it could be challenged in court, it is currently valid. The board discussed it and agreed staff will follow the guidelines of the memo.

### **MAT Teams**

Chair Champion discussed Numbered Memo 2020-24 regarding MAT Teams and that the board appoints those teams. The director indicated a list will be provided to the board within the week and presented at a future meeting. Secretary McMinn asked if the health director could recommend staff to assist. The director will check with Elaine Russell. Mr. Morrow asked about a Transylvania County VA member hospitalized in Buncombe County and how a MAT team could assist. The director will get guidance.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Ms. Dashiell made a statement regarding Numbered Memo 2020-19 that she found it disturbing there is no signature verification on absentee ballots and that registration signatures on file should be allowed to be compared to the absentee return envelope signature. Mr. Morrow thanked her for her comments and wanted to also voice his concern with the resignation of both Republican board members from the State Board of Elections. This leaves the board with no representation from the party in decisions and the question was raised if the state could conduct meetings with a partisan board. Chair Champion stated the State Board met this morning and voted to make the transcript public along with the documentation presented at the previous meeting. The anticipation was the governor would appoint replacements next week. The director will ask for clarification on questions brought up by the board regarding curable return envelopes.

Pending getting the keys for the old Kmart, Chair Champion invited the board to visit the site for early voting preliminary preparations.

Mr. Morrow brought it to the board's attention that the Lt. Governor has sent a letter to Attorney General Barr asking to look into the activities surrounding the State Board's actions.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**


There were no public comments.

**On a motion by Mr. Wainwright, Chair Champion adjourned the meeting at 10:55 am.** The next scheduled meeting will be at 5 pm on September 29, 2020, at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712.

Respectfully submitted,



Lee McMinn, Secretary

  
Sara G. Champion, Chair

David P. Morrow, Member

Pam Dashiell, Member

  
Michael Wainwright, Member

Approved by Board on: 12.3.20