

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

December 9, 2021

The scheduled meeting of the Transylvania County Board of Elections was called to order by Chair Champion at 10 AM on Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712.

Present

Board Members:

Staff Members:

Chair:	Sara Champion*	Director:	Jeff Storey
Secretary:	Lee McMinn	Deputy Director:	Laura Owen
	Sandra Watson*	Deputy Director:	Julie Dennis
	Wendy Warwick		*Remotely via Zoom

Visitors: Judith West, Kathleen Barnes*, Virginia Pendergrass*

Review and Approval of Agenda

Chair Champion asked for a review of the agenda. Due to the North Carolina Supreme Court ruling yesterday that suspended candidate filing and moved the March 8 Primary to May 17, 2022, it was recommended to take no action on agenda items III, IV, V, and VI. The board agreed action should not be taken but did want to have dialog on the agenda items. Secretary McMinn indicated after discussion with the director, he would like to remove agenda item VII dealing with long-term voting equipment purchases. Member Warwick wished to discuss the agenda item and Secretary McMinn rescinded his motion. **Member Warwick made a motion to table any action items on the agenda as suggested by Chair Champion and to keep item VII on the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.**

Review and Approval of Previous Minutes

The board was presented with the minutes from previous meetings. **Secretary McMinn made a motion to approve the board meeting minutes for October 26, November 1, November 2, November 8, and November 9, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.**

2022 Board Meeting Schedule

The director indicated the board schedule for 2022 will need to be adjusted to reflect changes in election dates. Chair Champion asked the board if the second Thursday of each month for regular meetings was still acceptable. She also suggested that regular board meetings that fall on a week with a mandatory Tuesday absentee meeting be combined during that week. The board agreed. The director will update the schedule and present it for board approval at the next meeting.

One Stop Implementation Plan

Due to the North Carolina Supreme Court ruling, the board deferred taking action on the one stop early voting plan until the next meeting. Chair Champion did ask the board for input on the proposed plan. Members Warwick and Watson expressed interest in only having the last Saturday open for early voting due to staffing and costs. The director stated turnout data could probably justify not having the first Saturday but felt the last two Saturdays should be available for early voting. The director reminded the board that hours on weekdays and the last Saturday are set by the legislature and are uniform statewide. Chair Champion thanked the staff for the data presented and the board agreed to table further discussion until January.

Absentee Board Meeting Schedule

Due to the North Carolina Supreme Court ruling, the board deferred taking action on the absentee meeting schedule until the next meeting to allow the director time to implement the changes & updates.

Precinct Official Appointments

Due to the North Carolina Supreme Court ruling, the board deferred taking action on precinct official appointments until confirmation is given to worker availability for the new May 17, 2022 date.

Re-visit long term voting equipment purchases

The withdrawn lawsuit regarding the ExpressVote voting machines prompted the board to re-visit the long-term voting equipment purchase plan. The original long-term goal was to purchase additional voting equipment to equal a one for one swap of the iVotronic voting machines with the new technology.

The board asked the director if the current inventory of equipment was ideal to administer elections. Director Storey felt the data now available after using the equipment in several elections has shown the need for additional voting machines is not warranted. The director felt a sufficient quantity is available to provide enough units at early voting, an ADA device at each precinct, and failover spares. Using the ExpressVote machines at early voting sites allows the reutilization of unused blank ballot stock and relieves the board of elections office from having to order 120% of pre-printed ballots each election.

For Election Day, Director Storey stated current mandates require 50% pre-printed ballot stock on hand for each precinct (if you have a ballot on demand device on site). This eliminates any savings an additional purchase of ExpressVotes in the precincts would provide since the pre-printed ballot stock is adequate to cover the turnout in most elections. It would also increase the annual maintenance expenses and require additional transport and logistics costs.

The director mentioned previous concerns the board and staff had over marking paper ballots have not been problematic overall. This is attributed to precinct worker instructions to the voter and any issues resolved on site when the voter inserts the ballot into the tabulator. With all factors considered, Director Storey felt it would be hard to justify any additional ExpressVote purchases at this time. After discussion and further consideration, the board agreed to suspend expenditures on the ExpressVote machines and consider the long-term purchase plan complete.

DIRECTOR UPDATES

Director Storey indicated the court ruling had made this month's updates irrelevant.

BOARD COMMENTS

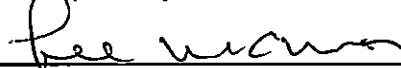
The board expressed their gratitude to the director and staff for the work they've accomplished and their professionalism to the job.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

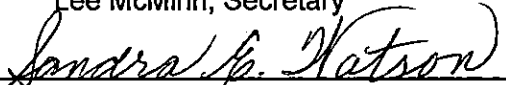
In public comments, Kathleen Barnes indicated she would be opposed to any shortening of the early voting hours on weekends. Ms. Barnes also requested that all board meetings be accessible via Zoom. The board thanked her for her input and agreed to take the requests under advisement.

On a motion by Secretary McMinn, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 AM. The next scheduled meeting will be at 10 AM on January 13, 2022, at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712.

Respectfully submitted,



Lee McMinn, Secretary



Sandra E. Watson, Member



Sara G. Champion, Chair



Wendy Warwick, Member

vacant

Approved by Board on: _____