

Mecklenburg Board of Electors

September 14, 2021

Present were Jeanne M. Capello Chair, Robert P. Chadeayne Secretary, Yvonne Alexander, and Jason Corwin Registrar.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Capello at 1:03 PM at the newly opened Office of Elections 316 Washington Street Boydton, VA. Mr. Corwin led us in a brief prayer.

The proposed agenda was agreed to with modification to include a discussion FOIA requests.

The minutes of August 17, 2021 were approved as presented.

November Election – All of the election machines, including the spare machine, have been programed and tested and are ready for the election. In addition, Mr. Corwin has a spare electronic flash card programed for this election in the event that there is more than one voting machine failure on election day.

As of September 13th, there has been a total of 566 absentee ballots requested and issued. There is approximately 340 of the total requests that are from the ongoing annual request list. Mr. Corwin is expecting a rather large turn-out for in person absentee voting, maybe 4,000.

Mr. Corwin indicated that he has received suggested changes to the two proposed forms to document Removal of Ballots from Voting Machines and Removal of Ballots from Drop boxes. His recommendation is to accept the changes that removed the redundant signatures and rewords the certification statement. After some discussion a motion was made and seconded to adopt the two forms as revised. Motion passed.

Mr. Corwin reported that he has received three lists of people who are interested in becoming Officers of Elections. One list is a Republican list, another is from a third-party group, and we have the list of names from the 2020 election whom we did not use. The lists will be consolidated and Mr. Corwin will send a letter to each, indicating that to be appointed a person must participate in training conducted by the Registrar, along with the date and location of the next training session to be conducted.

The calendar of training dates was discussed. Training will begin on October 18th. The classes will be grouped by precinct district starting with districts 1 and 2. New Officer of Election training will be Wednesday October 27, 2021 and the Chief's training will be Thursday the 28th.

Ms. Terry is actively preparing the mailings for absentee voting by mail. The new envelopes have been printed and received. The expectation is that the ballots will be mailed on or before September 20th.

Law Updates – A discussion was held regarding the change that mandates daily pre-processing of absentee ballots received via mail or drop box starting seven days before an election. This will require an Officer of Election from each party to be present each day to process ballots. Mr. Corwin has challenged ELECT to determine if Mecklenburg County could receive a waiver, on the basis we have demonstrated in the 2020 Presidential election that our CAP personnel can process upwards of 2,000 ballots in five hours. The request was denied. The result is that Mecklenburg County will have to absorb the additional cost of two people to be available to process any number of ballots, from zero to infinity, during each of the seven days prior to election day. The consensus of the Electoral Board is that this mandate makes no sense for most small counties, is legislative over-kill and does nothing to improve the operation of running an election.

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Curbside signs have been ordered. These signs will have the office telephone number informing curbside voters to call when they are at the precinct to vote. The office will in turn contact the appropriate chief to inform him/her there is a voter at curbside.

Mr. Corwin has established the ballot cure process and reviewed it with the state. The office will compile a list of ballots and the observed error. A letter and or phone call will be made to the voter informing of the error. If a voter physically comes to the office, up to the Friday before election, after notification, the uncured ballot will be voided and the voter, after presenting appropriate ID, will be allowed to either vote in person or be provided with a replacement ballot.

Web Site Update – Mr. Corwin reported that he has added an election calendar to the site. The calendar will contain all pertinent information pertaining to an up-coming election. The new office location information has been added along with office hours and is linked to Google Maps to assist the public.

FOIA Requests – Ms. Capello stated that Jeff Stratford, Democratic Committee Chair, has requested to be informed if the Electoral Board or Registrar is receiving FOIA requests. Mr. Corwin reported that we are currently reporting all FOIA requests to the State Police Fusion Center. There is reason to believe that the FOIA process is being used to disrupt election activity. Mecklenburg County has experienced diminishing numbers of requests in the last two months. Mr. Corwin also reported that he has spoken to the NAACP representative who made a FOIA request in the Ann Miller issue. As a result of that conversation there has been no further activity. Mr. Corwin's assumption is that the material provided in response to the request has satisfied NAACP's needs.

Mr. Corwin requested at 1:47 PM that the board go into closed session for the purpose of discussing our consultant's activity on security measures.

At 1:58 PM the board reconvened in public session. Ms. Capello reported that no votes were taken nor was any topic outside of the stated purpose discussed in closed session.

Sunday Voting – A brief discussion as follow-up from the last meeting was held in regard to developing community sentiment. Mr. Chadeayne offered a recommendation that the issue be put on the ballot as a non-binding referendum question for the next general election in 2022.

Mr. Corwin is on the agenda for the Board of Supervisor's meeting October 25th, he will raise the question of Sunday voting and a possible referendum during his presentation.

The next meeting will be October 12, 2021 at 1:00 PM at the new office location.

The meeting adjourned at 2:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert P. Chadeayne

Secretary