



BUNCOMBE COUNTY ELECTION SERVICES

BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Board Meeting Agenda

Tuesday August 18, 2020

5:00 pm

Welcome of Visitors

- I. Office updates
- II. Approval of minutes
- III. MAT team appointments
- IV. Emergency plan discussion

Buncombe County Board of Elections

Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2020

Opening

The scheduled meeting of the Buncombe County Board of Elections was called to order at 5:04 pm August 18, 2020 at 77 McDowell Street, Asheville, NC 28801. A copy of the agenda is attached.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and NC Stay at Home Order, the board meeting was held with limited in-person Board members and staff. The Board members and staff, along with the public, were in attendance over a virtual public access site hosted through the Public Teams meeting app. Directions on how to attend this virtual meeting were provided to the public on the Buncombe BOE website.

Present

Board Members-

Jake Quinn, Chairman (in person)
Linda Block (in person)
Stephen G. Duncan (in person)
Elizabeth Newman (virtual)
Jay Watson (in person)

BOE Staff-

Corinne Duncan, Director (in person)
Kaylea Noce (in person)
EmmaRose Trautmann-Galloway (in person)
Beth Franklin (in person)
Bria Bailey (in person)

Visitors-

16 virtual guests

Welcome Visitors and Introduction of Remote Meeting Features

Chairman Jake Quinn welcomed virtual guests.

Item One – Office Update

Director Duncan gave the following updates:

- The early voting plan has been approved by SBOE. Two additional sites, Reynolds Village (second north Asheville site) and Turtle Creek Shopping Center (second south Asheville site), were secured for a total of 16 locations.
- Transition was made from Adecco Staffing to Spherion Staffing.
- Nine new temporary employees have started work, making a total of 19 in house temporary workers. Three more will be hired which will bring the total to 22. The new hires will include positions to assist registration, campaign finance, and the call centers.
- The first ballot proof was been completed on all sixteen ballot styles. The final proofing should be completed, followed by a State review and ready to be loaded in the system by the beginning of next week.
- It is estimated that a total of 230 early voting poll workers will be required, 108 have already signed up. It is estimated that a total of 560 Election Day poll workers will be required, 211 have already signed up.
- The State's poll worker recruitment portal has delivered over 100 interested individuals.

- Approximately 1500 voter registration forms are left to process. All registrations submitted by August 6, 2020 have been processed.
- The NCOA mailing went out last week.
- A new absentee request form is available. Both the old and new form are valid for requesting an absentee ballot for the November 3, 2020 election.
- An absentee ballot drop-off will be provided at the 77 McDowell office. Two staff will be dedicated to receiving these ballots. State law does not allow ballot drop boxes. The voter or a near relative are eligible to return a ballot and they will need to sign a log when the ballot is returned.
- 12,900 absentee by mail requests have been received since the board meeting on July 21 (6600 reported at that time), bringing the total of requests received to 19,500. Last Monday 3000 were received, the total for the week was approximately 7000. The spike of requests was likely a result of the mailing by the Center for Voter Information.
- The total for civilian requests in the 2016 General Election was about 6800.
- Staff is researching the most efficient methods to process the large quantity of returned absentee ballots during future absentee board meetings.

Item Two – Approval of Minutes

Chairman Quinn presented the July 16, 2020 meeting minutes. Chairman Quinn moved to approve the minutes from July 16, 2020. Member Block seconded, and the Board unanimously approved.

Item Three – MAT team appointments

Chairman Quinn explained that the June 2020 session law requires the Board to approve Multi-partisan Assistance Teams (MATs). These MATs go out to help voters who cannot leave their residence to register to vote, apply for absentee ballots or to vote.

Staff member Noce provided a copy of the session law addressing the Board's responsibility, along with a list of twelve potential MAT member names for the Board to review. It was noted that if not able to find an insufficient number of party affiliated workers, UNA voters may be appointed as approved by the Board.

The presented list of MAT members was made up of four Republicans, six Democrats, and two unaffiliated voters.

Notes on proposed MAT members:

- Suggested members were interviewed by Staff member Noce where requirements of the appointment were explained.
- Five of the listed names were returning members of MAT groups in previous years. Others are poll workers or community members who independently expressed interest. Availability and reliable transportation were stressed.
- The MAT members will be a total of six interchangeable teams. Team members are compensated with \$12/hour and mileage. This is an increase from previous elections, when the compensation was \$10/hour.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a greater need for MATs because of the restriction visitation to facilities. More members may be required.

Chairman Quinn moved to approve the twelve names presented to serve on the Multi-Partisan Assistance Team. The Board unanimously approved.

Item Four – Emergency Plan Discussion


Director Duncan provided SBOE Numbered Memo 2020-17 on operations during the pandemic. All recommendations are being followed. 77 McDowell allows for separation of employees into individual offices. Various groups of staff are also working between the other BOE locations. Cross training has been happening since the March Primary.

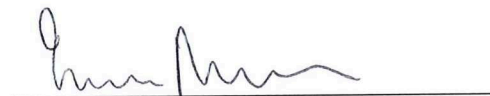
Director Duncan mentioned that the Board has implemented weather contingencies in the past elections and a suggested plan would be presented at a later date.

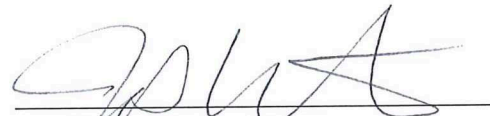
Public Comments Were Addressed


The meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm. The next meeting will be 5:00 pm on September 22, 2020, at 77 McDowell Street, Asheville, NC 28801.

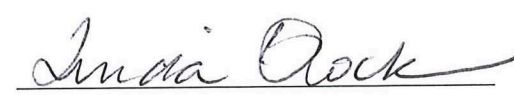
Minutes submitted by: Mary Harrill

Approved by: 
Jake Quinn, Chairman


Elizabeth Newman, Secretary


Jay Watson, Member


Stephen G. Duncan, Member


Linda Block, Member



RESOLUTION FOR SETTING TIME AND PLACE FOR THE PURPOSE OF COUNTING ABSENTEE BALLOTS FOR THE NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statutes Section 163-234-2 provides that the County Board of Elections is authorized to begin counting absentee ballots issued under Article 20 of Sub-chapter VII of GS 163 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and North Carolina General Statutes Section 163-234 provides that the county Board of Election sis authorized to begin counting absentee ballots between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Election Day upon the adopting of a resolution wherein the hour and place of counting absentee ballots shall be stated:

Now, therefore, be it resolved, by the Buncombe County Board of Elections as follows:

1. That the Buncombe County Board of Elections shall meet and convene at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3, 2020 in the Board Room at the Board of Elections Office, 77 McDowell St, Asheville, North Carolina, for the purpose of counting absentee ballots, except those which may have been challenged according to law on election day.
2. That this resolution shall be effective upon its adoption.
3. That a copy of this resolution shall be published once a week for two weeks prior to the election as required by law.

Jake Quinn, Chair
Buncombe County Board of Elections





NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 27255, Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 814-0700 or
(866) 522-4723
Fax: (919) 715-0135

Numbered Memo 2020-17

TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Karen Brinson Bell, Executive Director
RE: Office Operations During Pandemic
DATE: August 14, 2020

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to affect North Carolina, our nation, and the world, we must continue our response to this pandemic in the conduct of elections and daily operations for the State Board of Elections and county boards of elections offices. This memo supplements previously issued numbered memos. Additional guidance will be provided as information is available and the situation unfolds.

County Boards of Elections Operations

Office Exposure to COVID-19

If you learn that your office has been exposed to COVID-19, you should take immediate steps to address the situation. **Consult with your county administration and health officials for procedures specific to your county.** Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services have published numerous resources available on their respective websites.

Per the CDC, “a potential exposure means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.” When an exposure is determined, county boards of elections should:

- Send the employee(s) home if they become sick during the workday. If they become sick outside of the workday, the employee(s) should not come into the office.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Identify those who had contact with the ill employee(s) during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms. Others in the workplace with close contact within 6 feet of the employee(s) during this time are also considered exposed.

- If the exposure affects the entire office, coordinate with county administration and county board members to close the office immediately. A board meeting is not required in these circumstances, but all board members should be made aware of the actions being taken.
- Set up a locked drop box outside of the office for the public to leave absentee-by-mail requests, voter registration documents, or other materials while the office is closed. See Numbered Memo 2020-11 and Numbered Memo 2020-15 for more information.
- Arrange for mail to be checked, stamped, and secured until the office reopens.
- Post a notice on the office door indicated the office has closed and a phone number and/or email address an individual may use to have their questions or concerns address during the closure.
- Notify the State Board of Elections via a help desk ticket of your closure and the contact information provided in the notice posted on the office door. Also, please email Pat Gannon, your SST, the SBE legal team, and me as Executive Director.
- Resume office operations as quickly as possible when it is safe and following a thorough cleaning of the workplace.

Proactive Measures to Mitigate COVID-19 Exposure

In addition to the health and safety measures in place such as social distancing, wearing masks, washing of hands, and cleaning/disinfecting surfaces routinely, county boards should proactively consider how to have continuity of operations during the pandemic. While circumstances may arise that force the closure of a county board of elections during the pandemic, these strategies should be employed to reduce the necessity to close:

- Create separated work areas to ensure that staff is not working directly in the same workspace. Limit the number of individuals congregating in common spaces at the same time and require masks in common areas and when moving about the office.
- Have staff work in teams or shifts. For example, divide the staff into two teams (Team A and Team B). Have Team A work one week and then telework the next while Team B works in the office and vice versa. This strategy ensures that if one team is exposed to COVID-19 that the other team can assume office operations while the exposed team is isolated, quarantined, or treated. Additionally, have more extensive cleaning performed between the switch between teams if possible.
- Another approach may be to have one or more employees continually telework, so they are not exposed if the office is compromised. If the office is exposed, the employee would assume onsite operations at the office once it has been cleaned and until the other staff is able to return to on-site work.
- It is imperative that cross training take place for all roles and tasks. For example, if your absentee-by-mail specialist contracts COVID-19, make sure you have a plan to ensure the processing of absentee-by-mail requests. Additionally, it is important to document all the steps necessary to complete tasks and make sure they are accessible to other staff members.

Board Member Access and Work in a County Board of Elections Office

While county board members may want to be helpful during these unprecedented times, please recognize that the duties of a board member have not changed. Board members should refrain from any action that may cause them to have to recuse themselves from board processes or that would raise any question of inappropriate action. Additionally, the authority of board members exists only when they are in an open meeting, a quorum is present, and the board is conducting official business, not when a board member is acting individually. For this reason, at no time (whether during a pandemic or otherwise) should a board member have a log in or other access to the SEIMS system. Any data or reports needed by a board member should be prepared by staff members. Additionally, a board member should not possess a key or other entry access to the office. It is permissible for board members to assist with administrative support tasks such as filling supply boxes, assisting with mailings such as sealing or applying postage, or disposal of records in accordance with record retention policies.

Public Meetings

As a reminder, if a county board of elections opts to conduct meetings telephonically, the public must be able to listen to the meeting, which may be accomplished by providing a call-in number. Closed sessions should not be conducted on the same telephonic meeting line as the public line. Boards should convene the closed session on a separate line and then return to the open meeting on the line provided to the public.

If a county board opts to conduct meetings in person (with all board members present or some present and other telephonic), the public must be given access by 1) a call-in number; 2) in-person area in the meeting room with social distancing and other precautions in place; and/or 3) a combination of both methods of access. **It is recommended that a call-in number be provided for all meetings, whether in person or telephonic, to ensure that the public has adequate access.**

No matter the method of meeting, proper notice must be given for the meeting.

More Information on COVID-19

For more information on the State's response and helpful materials about the novel coronavirus, please visit the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' dedicated webpage: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/>.

Multipartisan Assistance Team (MAT Team) Approval

Introduction

Multipartisan Assistance Teams are teams of two or more registered voters of the county, of differing parties, who travel to facilities such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, or rest homes in which a voter is a patient or resident, and who assist those voters with the voting process. This includes voter registration forms, absentee ballot request forms, and marking or witnessing their absentee ballot if needed. The Department of Health and Human Services, along with the State Board of Elections, provided guidance for how these visits can more safely occur during COVID-19.

Goals of the meeting:

Session Law 2020-17

Section 2.5(a) G.S. 163-226.3 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

For the purposes of this section, a "multipartisan team" shall consist of at least two registered voters of the county. The two political parties having the highest number of affiliated voters in the State, as reflected by the registration statistics published by the State Board on January 1 of the current year, shall each be represented by at least one team member of the party's affiliation, as recommended by the members of that political party serving on the county board of elections. If the team consists of more than two members, voters who are unaffiliated or affiliated with other political parties recognized by the State may be team members. If a county board of elections finds an insufficient number of voters available to meet this requirement, the county board of elections, upon a unanimous vote of all of its sworn members, may appoint an unaffiliated team member to serve instead of a team member representing one of the two political parties having the highest number of affiliated voters in the State."

- For board members to approve the members affiliated with their party who will be serving on a MAT team
- For board members to unanimously approve any unaffiliated members who will be serving on a MAT team

How did we find these members?

Five of these members were returning MAT members from previous years. A few others have worked Early Voting or Election Day in the past, and were recommended to me by our staff as reliable and skilled employees. This election is receiving a lot of attention and we have many voters calling each day to offer their time and help. Our front desk staff informed me of many voters who were interested in working with election services, and I held phone interviews to determine if MAT teams were the right fit. Our new members are made up of motivated college students, retired nurses, previous election pollworkers, and those with experience working in adult care.

Do we meet the need for unaffiliated members?

MAT teams ideally consist of one member from each of the two majority parties. SL 2020-17 states that county boards may unanimously approve unaffiliated voters when this requirement cannot be met. In finding MAT members, there were some challenges. Many previous workers chose not to participate this year, due to the ongoing pandemic. It is also worth noting that some members who initially agreed to the position decided not to work, after reconsidering the risks. It is hard to predict how many MAT teams we will need to service Buncombe County. However, as many voters who previously relied on family members to assist them are currently unable to visit, I predict an increase in MAT team interest. I believe we have what we need to get started and operate smoothly, however it is possible we will need to schedule another MAT approval meeting down the road.

Notes

- 24 previous members chose not to return this year, 5 chose to return
- I have twelve total for recommendation. 6 Democrats, 4 Republicans, and 2 unaffiliated members.

August 18, 2020 MAT Approval

LAST	FIRST	Returning?	PARTY	VRN	Approved?	Approved?	Approved?	Approved?	Approved?
Turner	Roger	Y	Dem	420643					
Hensley	Hailey		Dem	478313					
Radley	Perrin	Y	Dem	452098					
Cable	Pamela		Dem	140464					
Hoffman	Joe		Dem	191650					
Tipton	Lilly		Dem	490534					
Campbell	Eleanor	Y	Rep	110871					
Rightmyer	Tom	Y	Rep	251989					
Rogers	Laura		Rep	449904					
Wall	Robert (Danny)		Rep	483388					
Moore	Stacy		Una	279822					
Battaglioli	Dominick	Y	Una	325806					

Handwritten signatures and initials in blue and black ink are present in the 'Approved?' columns. The signatures are written over the 'Approved?' column headers and extend into the adjacent 'Approved?' columns. Some signatures are clearly legible, while others are scribbled out. The signatures appear to be from various individuals, possibly related to the candidates or the approval process.