

Buncombe County Board of Elections

Asheville/Buncombe County League of Women Voters Monitor

Monitor Name: Karen Ward

Meeting Date & Time: April 12, 2022, 3:30 p.m.

Names of Board Members Attending:

Jake Quinn, Chairman

Linda Block, Secretary

Robert Carpenter, Board Member

Glen Schultz, Board Member

Steven Aceto, Board Member – absent

Staff Attending:

Corinne Duncan (Director)

Jacqueline Austin (Absentee Program Coordinator)

Karen Rae

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Quinn at 3:32 p.m.

Chairman Quinn asked if the minutes from the last meeting of March 29, 2022 would be approved. There was a move and a second, and the minutes were passed unanimously.

Chairman Quinn acknowledged the attendees present and those listening remotely. He instructed the attendees to raise their hands for questions, and when called upon to state their names, because the BOE meetings are recorded for public record.

Chairman Quinn stated that this would be the first test on the absentee voting machines this year.

Agenda Items:

1. Processing absentee ballots – Ms. Austin

Ms. Austin stated that they have received 43 absentee ballots that will be processed tonight. These ballots include 1 military, 5 overseas and 37 civilian ballots. There are also 2 ballots that they are recommending be rejected.

She discussed the process of absentee ballots:

- Voters need to request the most recent absentee ballot. They need to include on the ballot either their Social Security number or Driver License number. Two witnesses or a Notary Public needs to witness the sender's signature. It can be

- returned to the BOE either by mail, in person, or in person by a near relative.
- The ballot is checked for any duplications or for being on the “dead list.”
- The ballots are brought to the Board for approval.

Tonight the 5 absentee ballots from overseas were checked first. These ballots can be emailed or mailed in. Two board members, Mr. Carpenter and Ms. Block, of different party affiliation, first check that the name on the ballot envelope matches the name on the BOE list, that there is a signature, and that the envelope is not damaged or opened. When this was finished, the ballot envelopes were passed to Mr. Shultz and Chrm. Quinn to be opened. The ballots were removed from the envelopes and the ballots and envelopes were placed into separate piles. (I couldn't tell or hear what they then did with these.)

Next the one military ballot was checked and processed the same way. The 37 civilian ballots were checked for having either 2 witnesses or a notary stamp verifying the voter's signature, checked the name/signature, and checked the address.

The Duplicating team were duplicating the email ballots to regular paper ballots. These were bipartisan teams also. Chrm. Quinn asked the standard questions of the duplicating team about the process and each answered each question.

The ballots, including the duplicated ballots are then scanned by the high-speed scanners and encrypted so that they can't be seen until election night. They are scanned in order of precincts; the scanner runs a report and the board validates the report with their lists. The report is sealed into a poly bag. A flash drive of the scan report is sealed into a poly bag.

The original paper ballots are kept for 22 months after the election is closed.

Ms. Austin introduced the two ballots they were suggesting be rejected, because the envelopes were not filled out correctly regarding the signature. She recommended that the 2 ballots be marked as “spoiled,” and new ballots sent to the 2 voters. The Board unanimously approved this action.

Agenda Item:

2. Office updates – Ms. Duncan

- Ms. Duncan announced that Chairman Quinn and Linda Block both have become certified NC Board of Election members.
- Her team has been very busy with starting Absentee and Early Voting training.
- Next week, they will begin Election Day training'

- Ms. Duncan was recently interviewed on radio station WRES. This Thursday at 5:30 she is conducting a “Let's Talk” town hall, virtually on the BOE website
- On Thursday, April 21st, she is doing an information session in person at First Baptist Church. All are welcome.
- Next month's Board meeting will be for processing more absentee ballots and doing machine testing.
- There will be a special media presentation on Monday April 18th from 3-5 pm by the Board's Buncombe County Public Relations Director. (I think.)

3. Continuing discussion of Off Cycle Poll Worker Appointments

- Since the last meeting there have been discussions among staff and board regarding appointing issues and information from the State Board of Elections.
- An issue at question is whether the Board does or doesn't have, and whether the Chairman does or doesn't have the ability to appoint people who are recommended by the political parties.
- Chrm. Quinn stated that his foremost concern is to have fair, smooth, and effective elections in Buncombe County. He will make the remaining appointments tomorrow, so that they can free themselves up for the training.
- Mr. Carpenter also asked Chrm. Quinn how he will transmit the names of the appointees.
- Mr. Carpenter stated that next summer they will begin working on the process of appointing election officials, to comply with the general statutes, and to work with the two political parties.
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The meeting was adjourned at 5:17.

(There were question from the attendees, but they weren't miked and I couldn't hear the questions clearly enough to accurately include them in this report. I could hear the Board and staff speak when they were miked, but they weren't always miked. But all is all, this new space is much better for sound.)/kw