

Buncombe County Board of Elections

Asheville/Buncombe County League of Women Voters

Monitor Name: Aiden Carson, Linda Kinsinger, and George Elam

Meeting Date & Time: October 11, 2022 3:30 pm

Names of Board Members Attending:

Jake Quinn, Chairman*

Linda Block, Secretary

Glen Shults, Board Member

Steven Aceto, Board Member

Robert (Bo) Carpenter, Board Member

* Jake was feeling ill and left the meeting at 4:09, leaving Ms. Block in charge.

Names of Staff Attending:

Corinne Duncan, Director

Jaqueline Austin (Absentee Program Coordinator)

Other staff

Public Attending

There were 10 members of the public in attendance at the beginning of the meeting and 10 virtual attendees. Director Duncan noted that the greater number of virtual attendees was likely due to the link now being on the county public input portal

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jake Quinn

Agenda Item: Director's Update (Corinne Duncan)

- The Mock Election held on 10/6 was successful
- Two Early Voting sites have been set up (50 Coxe Ave. and the Enka library), and early voting training started today.
- Registration deadline is 10/14.
- There will be a Poll Observer information session on Thursday. 10/13.
- Election Services participated in the Emergency Plan Tabletop exercise with Buncombe County on Friday 10/7.
- Both DS850 machines are now working. Director Duncan replied to a question with the information that both had been cleaned & serviced, and that evidently fixed the one that was not working last week.
- Ms. Block asked for information on what exactly is involved in machine testing. Director Duncan replied that a checklist is used for machine maintenance items

and test decks are used to check for accuracy. Staff conducts these tests on all voting machines, and when the Board does machine testing they test a random sampling of the machines.

- There have been 6611 Absentee Ballots requested thus far. In the 2018 midterms a total of about 4500 requests.

Agenda Item: Absentee Ballot Review

- The late tabulation of Absentee Ballots went forward on 10/5 in the presence of 3 observers. This was caused by one of the tabulators being out of service at the time.
- For today there are a total of 353 ballots to be processed
- 331 civilian
- 20 overseas
- 2 military
- 2 suggested for disapproval and 1 anomalous situation.
- Board members Block and Aceto teamed up, as did Board members Shults and Carpenter, to review the envelopes prior to their being opened by machine.
- The duplicating team, consisting of 2 Ds, 1 R, and 1 U was split up to sit with the 2 D and 2 R Board members to make 4 bipartisan teams to review the absentee ballots.
- These teams first compared the ballots received with a list of ballot requests and verified that the required information was on the outside of the envelopes.
- Then the ballots were removed from the envelopes and reviewed.
- During the review there was a lengthy discussion of ballots where the signatures of both witnesses appeared to be in the same handwriting. The Director stated that unless there was compelling evidence that the signatures were invalid, they should be approved. It was also noted that the ballots had already been opened when this was noticed, and it could lead to the appearance of bias if they were disapproved at that point.
- There was a question from Mr. Carpenter regarding the absence of a notary expiration date on one of the envelopes. Guidance from the State BOE was reference which stated that a missing expiration date was not a valid reason for rejection. Mr. Shults moved that the ballot be rejected but that motion was defeated, with the three other members voting to approve the ballot and Mr. Shults voting to disapprove.
- In the anomalous situation noted above, a ballot and its envelope were received in a postal mailer and opened by staff. All ballots must be opened in the presence of the Board and in this case the ballot was not in its envelope. The ballot was disapproved and the voter will be contacted to see if they want another ballot.
- The Board voted unanimously to disapprove 2 other ballots due to missing

information or signature. The voters will be given another chance to submit a ballot.

- The count was 331 civilian, 20 overseas, and 2 military ballots approved and 2 ballots unanimously disapproved, plus the third anomalous ballot.
- Mr. Aceto requested that staff “track” the names of “assistants” named on the AB envelopes. A discussion ensued about the possibility of vote harvesting in view of the recent court case and guidance regarding disabled voters being allowed to choose who may assist them in voting. There is no way to identify which voters are “disabled” or claiming to be so. The Director is reluctant to add a new procedure not shared by other counties. Mr. Aceto asked the Director to seek guidance from the state BOE.

A 35 minute break was called at 6:10 for dinner and a move to the warehouse for machine testing. LWV monitors did not attend the machine testing.

Next meeting scheduled for October 18 at 3:30 PM.