

Buncombe County Board of Elections
Asheville/Buncombe County Board of Elections

Monitor Name: George Elam, and Aiden Carson in person

Date & Time: April 16, 2024 3:30 AM

Names of Board Members Attending:

Jake Quinn, Chairman

Mary Ann Braine, Board Member

Steven Aceto, Board Member

Glen Shults, Secretary

Sally Stein: Board Member

Names of Buncombe Co Staff Attending: Corrine Duncan, Director; Justin Tate, Absentee Coordinator; Anna Katherine Moore, Administrative Coordinator and Clerk to the Board; Neggy Fox, Deputy Director; Bria Bailey, Elections Technical Specialist

Location of Meeting: 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville NC

Observers:

9 observers as follows: 3 Democrats, 1 Common Cause, 1 Republican, 2 LWVAB, 2 online.

Agenda Items

I. Agenda for this meeting approved by acclamation

II. Minutes – Minutes for April 9 were approved by acclamation.

III. Office Updates – Corrine Duncan

- Corinne will have a small virtual meeting to plan the 2nd primary and the general election on Thursday. There will one site for primary.
- The final round of interviews has been completed for the Candidate Coordinator position and a selection soon to be made.
- The mock election will be on Thursday.
- Poll worker training starts on Friday.
- Early Voting for the 2nd primary begins next Thursday and Corinne will have a media availability session that day.
- Sunday at 7:30 AM staff will be on the scene at the WNC Nature Center for a 5K run and a “Get Out the Goat” event as well as the running of the goats.
- Corrine was asked at last meeting to question the State Board regarding the request for local Boards to provide an Early Voting plan for the general election by May 7 (why so early?). Her reply led to a rare moment of partisan discord within our BOE.
 - Corrine stated she talked to Karen Brinson Bell who said that the injunction against SB749 will expire so the SBOE wants to have the Early Voting plans submitted before that happens.

- (SB749 overhauled the structure of state and local election boards, splitting each of them equally between Republicans and Democrats and giving all appointments to legislative leaders. It was appealed by Governor Cooper.)
- Mr. Aceto commented that the issue was political, and the State BOE is trying to maintain control of the Early Voting plans, as they will lose oversight when and if SB749 is implemented.
- Mr. Aceto further said that he had attended the recent SBOE HAVA complaint meeting where the complainants used Sequel (?) to identify duplicate registrations in Burke County. He thought the complainants were unfairly treated and that similar software could and should be used to identify duplicates.
- Mr. Quinn noted that the state Election Services information system should be updated but the legislature has not provided funding, and he pointed out that if the NC General Assembly had not interfered with joining ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center), the organization would have prevented the problem.
- Neggy presented what has been accomplished so far in planning for Early Voting (for the General Election) in a very compressed timeframe.
 - Public input on the plan will continue, with the proposed plan posted for the public on April 22.
 - On April 23 she will present it to the Board.
 - The public input will be reviewed the following week and on May 7 the Board will vote on the final plan.
 - Tentatively we will have 13 proposed sites using places previously used for Early Voting, including UNCA, N AVL Fire Station, Bee Tree Fire Station, and Swananoa. The exact site at UNCA is not yet established.
 - The Monday through Friday hours of 8 AM to 7:30 PM are dictated by law; the weekend hours are up to the Board to determine.
 - A high turnout is expected and more equipment and staffing will be needed.
 - Mr. Aceto asked about the criteria for choosing sites. Neggy stated that population, voting history, access via main highways, and ADA compliance are considered.
 - Mr Aceto asked Neggy to research two areas he thought were underserved. Corrine displayed a map showing the density of the county and voting sites. Neggy and Corrine will provide past data for the areas.
 - Mr. Quinn asked for stats on who votes early and who votes on Election Day. He would like to get voter participation up to 80%.
 - Mr. Aceto seemed to suggest that our local BOE should tell the SBOE to “pound sand” and decline to submit the plan early if it interferes with our ability to properly plan the election.
 - Mr. Quinn said that it is in our interest to cooperate with the State BOE.

IV. Discussion of budget – Victoria Pickens

Budget discussion was deferred because Victoria was not available.

V. Absentee Ballot Review - Justin Tate

- Justin presented 1 ID exception form to be reviewed and 26 civilian absentee ballots, one of which had to be looked at by the Board prior to being approved.
- The final count was 28 ballots approved 5-0.

VI. Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 23 at 3:30 pm

Location: 59 Woodfin Place