

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

**Monitor Name:** Aiden Carson and Cheryl Williams in person

**Date & Time:** August 13, 2024 3:30 PM

**Names of Board Members Attending:**

Jake Quinn, Chairman

Mary Ann Braine, Board Member

Steven Aceto, Board Member (arrived late)

Glen Shults, Secretary

Sally Stein, Board Member

**Names of Buncombe Co Staff Attending:** Corrine Duncan, Director; Devin Whitney, Elections Technical Specialist; Anna Katherine Moore, Administrative Coordinator and Clerk to the Board; Ryan Oliver, Elections Technical Specialist; Devin Whitney, Elections Technical Specialist, GIS; new hire for Voter Registration position

**Location of Meeting:** 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville NC

**Observers:**

16 in person as follows: 2 Republicans, 2 Democrats, 2 LWVAB, and 10 unknown affiliation. Several online, including Karen Rae, Elections Coordinator, and 2 LWVAB.

**Agenda Items**

**I. Agenda** for this meeting approved by acclamation

**II Minutes** for 7/9/24 approved by acclamation

**III. Office Updates – Corrine Duncan, Director**

- Ms. Duncan, the Board members, and several staff attended the NCSBE training last week. Directors are required by law to go while attendance for Members and staff is optional.
  - At the conference Mr. Aceto was recognized for passing the NCSBE certification exams.
- The “I voted” sticker contest is open for voting until August 18.
  - They received almost 70 entries.
- The filing season for local and state offices has closed, so Elections staff will start preparing the ballots.
  - They have already gotten a first draft that will be reviewed at the County and State levels
  - There will be 28 ballot styles in Buncombe County for the November election

- Sample ballots will be available on the County and State websites in the Voter Tools sessions by the end of August
  - Staff are also developing voter guides
- Election awareness materials are available consisting of a three ways to vote flyer, an Early Voting locations and times flyer, and a palm card.
  - Buncombe County will have 14 Early Voting locations.
- Director Duncan confirmed with the County Human Resources Department that the notices Board members have received regarding conflict of interest and financial disclosures do not apply to them and can be ignored.
  - Mr. Aceto who raised the issue during the July 9 meeting wanted that noted in the minutes to help ensure that they following due diligence regarding the notices
- On Sept 10th Victoria and Corrine will make first budget presentation and will provide updates to the Board at meetings.
- On Thursday, August 15, Elections Staff will hold a third poll worker information session.
- Observer training will be offered later
- Absentee ballots should be ready to mail on September 6.
  - Director Duncan noted that NC is the first state to vote in a presidential election by virtue of its long Early Voting period and Absentee ballot policies
- Director Duncan said the later in the meeting she will present a roster of poll workers for the Board's consideration. She acknowledged the Ms. Karen Rae, who is out sick, is the most knowledgeable person in this matter but Ms. Duncan will do her best with Ms. Rae chiming in remotely.

#### **IV. Voting Location Changes (G.S. § 163-128) – Ryan Oliver**

- Director Duncan outlined the process of changing voting locations as follows: Among the considerations for moving an elections site are ADA compliance, sufficient space for voting, and availability during the hours on Election Day. Any changes must be made at least 75 days before the elections. Any moves that are temporary must be approved by NCSBE. Once the Board approves the changes Elections Staff must mail voter notification cards 30 days before the Election. Voters have received several notification cards this year.
- Voting location changes: 4 sites for Election Day.
  - All the new locations are within 3 or 4 miles of the old locations.
  - Current location for precinct 14.2 West Asheville library will move to the proposed site at the Martin Nesbit Jr. Discovery Academy at 175 Bingham Road
  - Current location at 39.2 Fairview Vol. Fire Department is undergoing a full renovation, and staff proposed using the Spring Mountain Community Center at 807 Old Fort Road.

- The current location for 59.1 is the First Baptist Church which has asked not to be a polling location any longer. Staff propose using the Beech Mountain Community Center at 15 Sugar Cove Road.
- The current location for 70.1 is the Woodfin Community Center which is being renovated. Staff propose using the Woodfin Elementary School at 108 Elk Mountain Road which will be easier for people to find and is County owned property.
- The motion to pass all 4 resolutions to approve the location changes passed 5/0.

## **V. MAT Appointments (08 NCAC 16.0103 (C), 08 NCAC 16.0102) – Justin Tate**

- Multi Partisan Assistance Teams (MAT) or MAT Teams are trained by County Elections staff to assist residents of “covered facilities” complete their voter registration, absentee ballot applications, and ballots in some cases.
  - An observer asked whether the definition of “covered facilities” included adult group homes
- Although not required by law, Elections staff solicit names from the two major parties to help ensure that the teams consist of both Democrats and Republicans, with Unaffiliated Voters used when the party balance can be maintained.
- Elections staff strive to have 20 people (10 teams of 2 people each) ready and trained to assist voters. The funds necessary to pay the \$17 hourly rate and mileage for 10 teams was included in the budget.
  - The list contains the names of 11 Democrats, 11 Republicans, and 4 Unaffiliated for a total of 24 names.
  - Mr. Quinn commented that this is the first time he has seen a complete roster this early in the election cycle
- Elections staff recommend team members based on such qualities as previous experience, availability to work 3 or 4 days per week, and technological skills to use tablets.
- Of the list presented at this meeting, Democratic Members are to vote on Democratic nominee and Republican Members are to vote on Republican nominees.
- Once the nominees are approved, training will start tomorrow, August 14. Each person is certified for 2 years but Elections staff want them to take training annually.
  - Nominees are selected to serve election by election
  - Mr. Shults asked whether his understanding that MAT members tend to be returnees rather than new people, just like poll workers.
    - Director Duncan said yes
- Mr. Oliver thanked Ms. Rae for her help in working on the list.
- Mr. Shults asked whether Elections staff reached out to facilities.
  - Director Duncan said that they send a notice to all facilities in the County. To date, 34 of the 42 facilities have requested MAT visits.

- Because MAT visits happen at the same time as Early Voting, MAT members may be poll workers on Election Day but not during Early Voting
- Ms. Moore found that facilities include hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and adult care homes licensed or operated under state law
  - The text does not state that they must be medical facilities
- A motion to approve the list of MAT nominees presented by Elections staff was approved 5/0

## **VI. Discussion of Early Voting Poll Worker Appointments (G.S. § 163-166.35) – Corrine Duncan**

- The list of nominees for poll worker positions comes from recommendations by the two major parties that have been more active in recent years
- Recruiting for these positions is difficult always and the help from the parties is greatly appreciated.
  - They must serve for a period of 17 days, be technically savvy, and cover 14 locations in shifts
  - Elections staff place a priority on people who have experience
  - Often Early Voting poll workers are also Election Day poll workers
  - Many are returning poll workers
    - Karen Rae commented over the phone that 74 percent of the nominees are returning poll workers and 20 percent are new to the job
  - Elections staff strive to have 2 Republicans at every shift at every location
  - A challenge is recruiting people with technical skills in sufficient time to complete background checks and training, which starts on September 7
  - The list is comprised of 27 percent Republicans, 29 percent Unaffiliated, and 44 percent Democrats which represents an increase in Republican participation from the primary when the distribution was 17 percent Republicans, 28 percent Unaffiliated, and 55 percent Democrats
  - The list has 5 backup captains and 15 backup poll workers
    - Mr. Quinn commented that the percentage of Unaffiliated voters is at the top of affiliations both in Buncombe County and North Carolina
  - Guidelines on Early Voting Appointments is in Numbered Memo 2023-07
  - Some people on the list are also Election Day judges
  - One nominee was recommended by the Republican Party but is registered as Unaffiliated
  - All poll workers will be trained as judges to allow more flexibility in staffing
  - One person on the list has not been confirmed

- Mr. Shults asked whether Elections staff were limited to selecting from the lists provided by the parties
  - Director Duncan said not by law and noted that the list contains many people who have worked before and the list was shared with party leaders
- The list will be voted on by the Board at its next meeting on September 10
  - Mr. Quinn thanked the two major parties for their assistance and participation as well as Ms. Rae

**Mr. Quinn asked whether observers had any comments or questions**

- One person praised the Board's diligence and the scope of their work in overseeing elections
- Ms. Stein said that she had spoken with national leaders at the NCSBE conference who said that North Carolina was one of the top five states in the nation for the integrity and transparency of its elections
- A person representing the Woodfin area Democrats asked for clarification on date for the next poll worker information session because she thought it was August 15 rather than August 14 as previously stated
  - The date was confirmed as Thursday, August 15

**VII. Next Meetings:** Tuesday, September 10 at 3:30 pm

**Location:** 59 Woodfin Place