

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

Monitor Name: Elaine Elam, George Elam, Aiden Carson, and Meg Word-Sims in person

Date & Time: October 8, 2024 3:30 PM

Names of Board Members Attending:

Jake Quinn, Chairman

Mary Ann Braine, Board Member

Steven Aceto, Board Member

Glen Shults, Secretary

Sally Stein: Board Member (virtual)

Names of Buncombe Co Staff Attending: Corrine Duncan, Director; Anna Katherine Moore, Administrative Coordinator and Clerk to the Board; Karen Rae, Recruiting and Outreach Coordinator; Justin Tate, Absentee Coordinator; Neggy Fox, Deputy Director

Location of Meeting: 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville NC

Observers:

The room was crowded, with about 30 in person including 4 LWVAB. 17 online.

Agenda Items

I. Agenda for this meeting approved without objection

II Minutes for 9/10/24 deferred until next meeting

III. Office Updates – Corrine Duncan, Director

- Staff has been working in the office since hurricane Helene. By Monday they were caught up with Absentee Ballots. By Thursday all staff were accounted for.
- The State BOE passed a resolution on Monday, October 7, addressing modification of voting rules in view of Helene’s impact on the region.
- Elections Services has received support from other counties and from our county management.
- Ms. Duncan expressed 100% confidence that Early Voting and Election Day Voting will happen on schedule.
- She reviewed the SBOE resolution:
 - Early Voting – gives authority to county boards in the affected counties to change Early Voting plans (add or change sites, change days & hours)
 - Ms. Braine asked if the plan needs to be decided today or if more changes can be made if circumstances change. Ms. Duncan said time is short and the plan should be approved today, but further changes can be made if needed.

- Election Day Polling Places – gives authority for county boards to transfer voters to another precinct, establish out of precinct voting places, establish more than one voting location within a given precinct, and to allow the central transfer precinct to be used by any county voter.
 - Ms. Duncan said Election Day locations still need to be assessed.
 - All voters will be notified of Election Day locations, and party officials will be notified
- Poll Worker Recruitment and Assignment – gives authority for county boards to appoint officials who are not registered in this county, appoint Election Day officials without regard to their precinct of residence, appoint emergency ED assistants and assign them to precincts, and reassign poll workers to different locations.
 - Ms. Duncan said we probably will not have to draw poll workers from other counties.
 - We still plan to do in-person training and oath-giving.
- Absentee Ballot Processing – gives authority for county boards to process an absentee ballot request from a voter or their near relative or legal guardian in person at the county board office up until the day before the election and to provide that person with the voter’s absentee ballot envelope at the office location; gives authority for county boards to process a spoil-and-reissue or cure of an absentee ballot at the county board office and allow a near relative or guardian to retrieve any reissued ballot package or cure documentation for the voter; gives authority to accept delivery of completed absentee ballots from Election Day voting sites; and gives authority to accept delivery of completed absentee ballots by mail, delivery service, or delivery by a staff member if the ballots were delivered to another county board of elections or the State BOE by 7:30 PM on Election Day, as long as they are received by the voter’s county by the day before the county canvass.
- Absentee Voting for Affected Voters – Voters, their near relatives, or guardians, may hand-deliver completed Absentee Ballots to another county’s BOE office or the SBOE office by 7:30 PM on Election Day. Those offices will ensure the ballot is delivered to the voter’s county office by the day before county canvass.
- Multipartisan Assistance Teams – gives authority for county boards to appoint MAT members who are registered voters of other counties; appoint MAT members who are not affiliated with the two main political parties where there are not sufficient numbers of Rs or Ds; schedule MATs to assist with Absentee Ballot requests and absentee voting at disaster shelters and other places where disaster relief is provided; allows MATs to collect Absentee Ballot envelopes or cure documentation for any voters, regardless of disability, at any site they are authorized to serve.
- Voter Registration and Office Operations – gives authority to the State Board of Elections to process voter registration applications for voters in the affected

counties. Affected county BOEs may get help from another county or the SBOE with voter registration or other administrative functions.

- Ms. Duncan said we may get help from other offices in sending out mailings.
- Coordination with State Division of Emergency Management – acknowledges the need for continued coordination with the NCEM to provide aid to local jurisdictions in support of elections. The SBOE Executive Director shall designate a liaison to each of the affected county boards to coordinate needed resources.
 - Mr. Aceto asked who our liaison is. Ms. Duncan was not sure but thinks it's probably Jon Noce.

IV. Early Voting Plan Amendment Neggy Fox

- The original plan had 14 locations, of which two were fire stations. The fire stations will not be able to be used for Early Voting.
- There are not going to be enough poll workers for 14 sites. Over half of the trained poll workers have confirmed they will be available.
- Facilities were reviewed with respect to availability, accessibility, power, water, network/internet, whether the site was repurposed for the disaster, proximity to another site, and past turnout levels.
- Peak voting times were used to arrive at new hours, and uniformity considered important for clear communication to voters.
- The amended plan proposed ten sites instead of fourteen.
- Two alternatives were proposed for North Asheville: either the North Asheville Library or the UNCA Health & Counseling Center on W.T. Weaver Blvd. (former MAHEC site).
- The latter has more parking and a larger room, which will allow for increased capacity.
- Mr. Aceto expressed concern about cutting down on rural sites.
- Mr. Shults asked what % of Early Voting poll workers have confirmed their availability. I think it was about 2/3 confirmed, with just two definitely dropping out.
- The Black Mountain and Fairview sites sustained hurricane damage but repairs should be done in time.
- Signs will be posted at previously identified sites to direct people to new sites.
- Mr. Aceto noted the new notice requirements in the SBOE resolution and asked how the info will be posted. Cassie Day was present in the audience and said the county has links to all disaster sites and will push info to them. Mr. Aceto asked for formal documentation to satisfy the notice requirement. Mr. Mueller, county attorney, suggested that the person who posts the notification can at that time make an affidavit that they have done so.
- Ms. Braine asked about non-governmental disaster sites. Ms. Duncan said the Board will have to decide where notices will be posted.
- Discussion ensued regarding the North Asheville site decision.

- Chairman Quinn invited audience opinion on the sites, Several people spoke, all but one strongly advocating for the UNCA site, referencing parking lot disputes and auto accidents. One person thought it might be too late to communicate the change to voters accustomed to using the North Asheville Library. Kathy Kline, Chair of BC Democrats, said they plan to widely publicize the changes.
- Mr. Aceto moved to approve the Early Voting Plan Amendment, with the UNCA site being chosen. Approved 5/0.
- Chairman Quinn praised staff for getting the amended plan together so quickly, and asked audience members to spread the word about the changes.
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V. Early Voting Machine Testing (08 NCAC 04.0307) – 50 Coxe Ave.

- LWV monitors did not attend this portion of the meeting

Part 2 – the meeting resumed the following day

Monitor Name: Elaine Elam, George Elam, and Aiden Carson in person

Date & Time: October 9, 2024 3:30 PM

Names of Board Members Attending:

Jake Quinn, Chairman

Mary Ann Braine, Board Member

Steven Aceto, Board Member

Glen Shults, Secretary

Sally Stein was absent

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

Location of Meeting: 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville NC

Observers:

5 in person comprised of 3 LWVAB.

- Chairman Quinn began the meeting with a few minor corrections to the EV plan passed on the previous day. Changes were approved 4-0.
- Ms. Duncan announced that the PR team has redone the Early Voting materials. The 4 x 5 1/2 Early Voting info cards will be ready on Monday.
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VI. Absentee Ballot Review (G.S. § 163-230.1(f)) Justin Tate

- Justin said that 11,077 Absentee Ballot Requests have been received. They are seeing “no too many” ID exception forms, sadly seeing a number listing #3, victim of a natural disaster, as a reason.

- He noted that the system does not allow electronic submission of Absentee Ballots from inside the US, citing an example in the past when a ballot was flagged as being from inside the US when the people actually lived just over the border in Mexico and the system could not distinguish that.
- 10 Pending Absentee Ballots were presented which the Board reviewed as two bipartisan teams. These were ballots which had been placed in the wrong envelopes. All 10 were approved 4/0.
- 12 ID exception forms were reviewed in the same manner. I think one of them looked like a household envelope mix-up and they had to wait for the bulk of the ballots to be reviewed in order to find the matching mix-up. All 12 were approved 4-0.
- Members of the 4-person Duplicating Team paired up with Board members to make 4 two-person bipartisan teams and 76 Civilian ballots were reviewed and accepted 4/0.
- 24 Military ballots were similarly reviewed and accepted 4/0.
- 359 Overseas ballots were similarly reviewed and were accepted 4/0.
- The bipartisan Duplicating Team assembled and duplicated several water-damaged ballots. Chairman Quinn questioned the team to ensure they were all in agreement with the process.
- Ballot originals and duplicates were placed in a red plastic envelope which was initialed by all Board members.
- Totals and flash drive were placed in a pink plastic envelope and initialed by all Board members.
- Cardboard box containing these (I think) was sealed, labeled, and signed off on by all Board members.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Quinn at 7:46 PM.

VII. Next Meetings: Tuesday, October 15 at 3:30 pm (Absentee Ballot Review)
Location: 59 Woodfin Place