

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

Monitor Name: George Elam in person and Cheryl Williams and Aiden Carson online.

Date & Time: January 21, 2025 3:30 PM

Names of Board Members Attending:

Jake Quinn, Chairman

Mary Ann Braine, Board Member

Steven Aceto, Board Member

Attending Virtually:

Glen Shults, Secretary

Sally Stein: Board Member

Names of Buncombe Co Staff Attending:

Corrine Duncan, Director; Anna Katherine Moore, Administrative Coordinator and Clerk to the Board; Devin Whitney, Elections Technical Specialist, GIS

Location of Meeting: 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville NC

Observers:

At least 3 in person, including 1 LWVAB, 1 Common Cause, and 1 with unknown affiliation. 2 LWVAB on line.

I. Agenda for this meeting approved without objection

II. Minutes (G.S. § 143-318.10) approved without objection

III. Office Updates – Corrine Duncan, Director

- Ms. Duncan said that the State Board and the NC Association of Directors of Elections want to host combined district meetings. The meeting for District 1, which is western NC, will be Friday, March 28 probably from 9 to 1. Staff and Board Members are invited. There will be a guest speaker. The Association will provide lunch. It will be held at 200 College Street in Asheville.

IV. Elections Facilities Resolution - continued from 1/13/2025

- Mr. Quinn said that over the past 2 meetings, the Board has drafted an email to send to County Management outlining the concerns Board Members have about the proposed move to 35 Woodfin Street and a resolution authorizing the Board to request a meeting and to send two Members to participate, specifically Mr. Quinn and Mr. Aceto if he's available or Ms. Braine if he is not.
 - Members were responding to drafts sent out by Ms. Moore.
- Earlier in the day Mr. Quinn and Ms. Braine toured the building at 35 Woodfin Street.

- Ms. Braine said it was much worse that it appeared to be in the schematics reviewed at the January 8 meeting.
- The space does not facilitate the operations of the office. Access will be difficult for staff and confusing for the public. It's not clear what departments the staff will be sharing space with on the second floor.
- Led by Mr. Aceto, the Board decided to reach out to stakeholders to obtain their comments and input to help ensure that the discussion reflects their concerns. He hopes they will draft letters that are not copies of the Board resolution.
 - Ms. Braine said a letter had been drafted by the Republican Chair asking for a bipartisan meeting but she did not know whether it had been sent or whether the Democratic Chair had sent a similar letter.
 - Stakeholders may contact County officials but they cannot speak for the Board.
 - If the Board gets their input, their concerns can be discussed during the meeting.
 - The matter of the move is a Board issue more than a public issue but we can let County Management know that stakeholders routinely attend our meetings
- The Board Members discussed the draft and the six specific characteristics that make the Elections Services Office and Board stand out from other County Offices and Boards:
 - Elections are meant to be independent of the political atmosphere in which they are held.
 - The actions of the Board and staff are mandated by law and often have strict timelines – there are no redo for an election.
 - The activities of the Board and staff and are complex regarding both time and space and are only getting more complex – their space must facilitate the complexity.
 - The Board and staff operate in a climate of change that requires immediate implementation of state laws and judicial decisions.
 - The Board of Elections is a working, not an administrative, Board. Its actions are directed by state law and judicial decisions.
 - The Elections Board and staff are high profile with extensive media coverage and public participation.
- Mr. Quinn noted that the six characteristics are a higher level of concern than the “nitty gritty” details contained in the two-page letter they prepared and, as such, should be reflected in the resolution.
 - The details can be presented and discussed at the meeting.
- After several rounds of wording suggestions, the Board was satisfied with the resolution. A motion to pass resolution 2025-01, after each Member had read it, passed 5/0.

Public Comment:

George Elam, an LWV observer, asked how stakeholders should share their concerns and said that before the stakeholders could support the letter, they need to see it. Mr. Quinn said he would share the “nitty gritty” letter with stakeholders and ask for written comments.

Meeting adjourned 5:04 pm

VI. Next Meetings: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 3:30

- **Location 59 Woodfin Place – topic proposed budget**