

**Beaufort County Board of Elections and Registration
Meeting Minutes of September 28, 2011
102 Industrial Village Rd., Bldg. #2
Beaufort, SC 29906**

Mr. Ron Clifford called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Ron Clifford, Chairman
Hugh O’Kane
Rupert Williams

Rebecca Bass
Jim Rowe
Dean Hewitt

Beverly Dore
Ellen Bray
Norma Stewart

STAFF MEMBERS

Scott Marshall, Executive Director
Eric Montgomery, Programmer
Kristina Weitz, Board Secretary

PUBLIC PRESENT

Sue Feutz, League of Women Voters - Hilton Head/Bluffton Area
Jerry Hallman, Chairman, Beaufort County Republican Party
Pat Goodman, 2d Vice Chairman, Beaufort County Democratic Party

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Clifford called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. He recognized the guests present and asked them to introduce themselves.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed by all present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments.

REVIEW OF MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2011 and AUGUST 31, 2011

The first order of business was to approve the two sets of minutes. The minutes of the June 22, 2011 board meeting were presented. Mr. O’Kane motioned, with a second from Mr. Williams, that the minutes be approved. The minutes of the meeting of June 22nd were

voted upon and approved unanimously. The minutes of the August 31, 2011 Special Board meeting were presented. Mr. O’Kane motioned, with a second from Ms. Bass that the minutes be approved. The minutes of the August 31st special meeting were voted upon and approved unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Clifford explained that Mr. Marshall presented the Board’s position on the Presidential Preference Primary (PPP) to the Beaufort County Council on September 12, 2011. Mr. Marshall proceeded by presenting the Board with a timeline of events that transpired concerning the PPP.

Presidential Preference Primary Update:

September 6

- Submitted Board’s position to the SEC and other stakeholders

September 9

- SCARE President Lynn Fata, after meeting with the SCARE Executive Committee, submitted letter to SEC with position that...
 - SEC has no statutory authority to commit county resources for the PPP
 - County funds should not be used to fund the PPPs
 - If two PPPs are conducted by counties, they must both be conducted on the same date

September 12

- Presented the Beaufort County Board’s position to County Council
- Hampton County Board of Elections submitted letter to SEC with the position that...
 - There should be one date for both primaries
 - They prefer the parties fund the primaries

September 16

- York County Board of Elections submitted letter to SEC which mirrored our own position
- Laurens County Administrator submitted a letter to SEC that they were in agreement with SCARE’s position

September 21

- SEC met in Columbia and went into executive session to discuss our request to reconsider their position...followed with unanimous vote to maintain their previously stated position
- SCAC Board of Directors met and unanimously voted to oppose the conduct of the PPPs because of the cost that will be borne by the counties...the requirement for counties to conduct them is an unfunded mandate...the PPP serves no state interest

September 23

- Spartanburg County Council voted unanimously to file suit against the SEC, if needed, to keep the county from paying any cost of the PPP
- At the request of the Beaufort County Administrator, provided members of Beaufort County Council a package of comprehensive information regarding the topic.

Mr. Williams wanted to know what the Attorney General was going to do regarding the PPP. Mr. Marshall explained that the Attorney General has done what was asked of him to do. He issued an opinion on the use of public and carry-over funds to conduct the primaries, and his opinion was interpreted by SEC as a mandate to run the PPP.

Ms. Dore wanted to know if Beaufort County Council was amenable to joining the lawsuit with Spartanburg and Greenville counties. Mr. Marshall stated that there were no indications at this point what Beaufort County was going to do, but they were presented with all pertinent information. Mr. Clifford felt that it was up to County Council to make that decision. Any shortfall in funds to conduct the primaries will have to come from County Council.

Ms. Bray wanted to know if the Republican Party holds its own primary and, if so, would only registered Republican be allowed to vote. She was reminded by several board members that South Carolina does not register voters by party, and that voters may choose to vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary, but not both.

Ms. Dore suggested that SEC provide an itemized list of expenses they would cover so that the Counties would know what expected expenses would be. Mr. Marshall interjected that SEC had already requested such a list from the counties via ElectionNet.

NEW BUSINESS

Committee Reports:

Rule Committee – Mr. Rowe reported that he will get information out in five to six days or as soon as possible.

Legislative Affairs - Mr. O’Kane, the chairman of this committee, said the will probably meet next month.

Redistricting/Precincting Committee - Ms. Bray is waiting on approval of the redistricting plans before starting any work.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Municipal Elections:

The Town Port Royal will not hold a municipal election in accordance with SC laws. They have a mayor and two town council seats open. However, the number of candidates who filed is equal to the number of seats available. Further, no one had formally declared to be a write-in candidate within 24 days of the end of the filing period. In such a case, Title 5 of the SC Code of Laws states that no election will be held.

The Town of Bluffton has a mayor and two town council seats available. The mayoral seat will not be on the ballot because only one candidate filed. However, four candidates filed for the town council seats. There are nine (9) partial precincts involved with approximately 6,900 voters. The polling locations will be the Bluffton Library, Bluffton Baptist Church, and Lowcountry Community Church.

Mr. Marshall will meet with the Bluffton Election Commission on October 13th to summarize their roles in protest hearings along with other responsibilities.

The Bluffton Municipal Election is scheduled for November 8, 2011 from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Poll Worker Training:

New poll worker training will be held in October in Bluffton, Beaufort, and Hilton Head Island for aspiring poll managers with no poll worker experience or no previous South Carolina poll worker experience. The sessions are scheduled for four hours and are unpaid. Electronic Voter Registration List (EVRL) training will be incorporated into these sessions. Mr. Marshall encouraged Board members to attend to give feedback on the material presented.

Poll Manager training (Briefing) will be held on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 at the Bluffton Library for the Bluffton Election.

SC Voter Photo Identification Law Status:

The Department of Justice (DOJ) requested more information from the SC Attorney General concerning the request for pre-clearance of the law under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. The DOJ wanted more details regarding implemented. SEC provided a draft response for the AG to consider. Mr. Marshall attempted to address some of the popular misconceptions

relating to the new law. He pointed out that neither registration requirements nor absentee voting processes have changed under the new law.

Redistricting Plans:

SC Senate Redistricting Plan was submitted to the DOJ for preclearance on July 27, 2011. Under the plan, Beaufort County will be split into three senate districts. District 43 is represented by Chip Campsen; District 45 represented by Clementa Pinckney, and District 46 represented by Tom Davis. He does not have any further information on the status.

Under the Congressional Redistricting Plan, Beaufort County will include portions of District 1 represented by Tim Scott, and District 6 represented by James Clyburn. This plan was submitted to DOJ for preclearance on August 30, 2011.

The SC House plan, along with the County Council and School Board plans were also discussed. County Council is also seeking to renumber County Council/School Board districts.

The Board members were concerned about the new voter registration cards for voters once redistricting plans were approved. The estimated cost for county-wide distribution of new voter registration cards (prior to implementing picture ID) is \$95,000.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2011 at 2 o'clock pm.

Meeting adjourned by chairman at 2:55 p.m.