



BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION
and ELECTIONS OF BEAUFORT COUNTY



Tyrone S. Clifford
Chairman

William Severns
Vice Chairman

Marie S. Smalls
Director

Board Members:

William Bronson
Beverly Dore
Dean Hewitt
Philip Jones
Bruce Massey
James Rowe
[VACANT]

15 John Galt Road • Post Office Drawer 1228 • Beaufort, South Carolina 29901-

**Minutes from the November 3, 2016 Board Meeting
Beaufort Jasper Comprehensive Health Center (CHELSEA)
721 Okatie Hwy, Ridgeland, SC**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Tyrone Clifford, Chairman
William Severns, Vice-Chairman
William Bronson
Beverly Dore

Dean Hewitt
Bruce Massey
James Rowe

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Philip Jones

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Marie S. Smalls, Director

PUBLIC PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Clifford called the Board Meeting to order at 2:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Board meeting minutes of September 28, 2016 were deferred.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

November 8, 2016 General Election Update

The Board discussed the laws regulating campaign materials worn during elections. The South Carolina Election Commission (SEC) attorney advised the counties that people are permitted to wear any candidate material (other than for those persons currently on the ballot). Mr. Hewitt asked about if cell phones could be used by persons (other than poll managers) in the precincts. Mrs. Smalls stated per the SEC, persons could use cell phones inside the precincts but not in the vicinity of the certification table or inside the voting booths as long as it is not disturbing others. Mrs. Dore asked if there was any censure to Board members using their own judgment on cell phones being used by voters and the campaign materials. It was suggested a "No Cell phones" sign be used at the precincts.

The Board discussed the use of the Electronic Voter Registration Lists (EVRs) and the new scanners to be used for the upcoming November election. Mr. Massey said he would take his EVRLs and the scanners but would let the poll workers decide to use the equipment.

The Board verified the polling locations that are temporarily moved for the November 8, 2016 General Election would get signs indicating precinct temporarily moved, the name and address, and directions to the new location.

Mr. Clifford passed out a bullet list he created for the poll managers to use for any questions from the public pertaining to the security of the election. The Board discussed the list and responded favorably to using the list. Mrs. Smalls reminded the Board the public can always call the office and the procedures would be explained. Mrs. Smalls noted the SEC asked Homeland Security and various agencies to help ensure South Carolina election systems were secure from any tampering or hacking. The Beaufort County IT Department also stays up-to-date and keeps the County secure.

Mr. Severns asked for clarifications on the difference between a poll watcher and a poll observer. Mrs. Smalls stated the voting process is public information and the process can be viewed, but people should not disrupt the voting process. Mr. Clifford reminded the Board poll watchers can only watch on Election Day, not the absentee precinct.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Rules Committee (Operation Manual)

Mr. Rowe stated the current procedures for announcing Board vacancies were not reflected in the Operation Manual. Mr. Bronson motioned to accept the current procedures for announcing Board vacancies and update the Operation Manual as needed. It was seconded by Mr. Severns. The motion was voted upon and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Response to Letters:

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Mr. Clifford updated the Board on a letter received from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) asking for in-person absentee voting to be offered in Beaufort County on Saturday, November 5, 2016 from 9 am to 1 pm and Sunday, November 6, 2016 from 1 pm to 5 pm to reduce the lines during voting. Mrs. Smalls stated staff will not be available for in-person absentee voting on Sunday because staff will be busy loading the trucks with voting equipment and preparing for Tuesday's election. The Board agreed a letter to explain why the offices would be open Saturday, November 5, 2016 from 9 am to 1 pm but not Sunday should be drafted.

Brantley Wilson

Mrs. Smalls reported to the Board Mr. Brantley Wilson notified the office less than a week before the November 8, 2016 General Election his intent to run as a write-in candidate for the City of Beaufort mayoral race and questioned the legality of the race not being on the ballot. Mrs. Smalls reminded the Board while the law he quoted was correct, the City of Beaufort is a municipality and follows a different set of laws. In this case, Title seven does apply and in accordance with the Municipal Election Handbook states: "A Municipality does not have to hold an election if only one candidate has filed for the office and no person has filed a "Declaration" to be a write-in candidate within 14 days after the filing period closes (SC Code 7-13-190)" the one candidate should be declared the winner. Mrs. Smalls also reminded the Board the City of Beaufort has their own Election Commission and would be the ones to hear the matter if it was pursued.

Edison Research Group & International Observers

Mr. Clifford announced the Edison Research Group would be visiting three precincts to get the unofficial precinct results on election night. He also noted the office was notified there might be international observers to view our election process.

Absentee by Mail

Mrs. Smalls informed the Board the office was using a third party, Election Systems and Software (ES&S) to mail out the absentee ballots. The office started getting phone calls from concerned voters stating they did not receive their ballots. Mrs. Smalls noted with the ES&S system, the ballots could be tracked. Using the system, the ballots were shown being sent to the Jacksonville, Florida processing center then appeared to stall. The Jacksonville (and most of the East Coast) processing centers were affected by Hurricane Matthew. The Jacksonville processing center was closed for a week and when the office spoke with area representatives, was informed the ballots could be delayed by up to 12 days. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters were sent ballots in September (per Federal law) before the hurricane and most of the UOCAVAs were sent via email.

Board Vacancy

Mr. Clifford announced two persons applied for Mr. Rupert Williams' position. It was noted in previous discussions one Board member had recommended one applicant and another Board member had recommended the other applicant. A third applicant, who applied, applied for Mr. Philip Jones' area. The Board discussed the vacancies and the best options for filling the spots. Mr. Clifford noted the empty vacancies were for Mr. Philip Jones, Mr. Dean Hewitt, and Mr. Rupert Williams areas. Mr. Bill Bronson and Mr. Bruce Massey will seek reappointment and stay on the Board. Mrs. Smalls stated staff was covering Mr. Williams' precincts for the November election (and any future election) until a new appointment could be made, but if any Board member wanted to help to contact the office.

ADJOURNMENT

The next scheduled meeting is the Canvass Hearing scheduled for 10 am on Friday, November 11, 2016 at the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County office, located at 15 John Galt Road, Beaufort, SC 29906.

The Board Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.