

**TRANSLYVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
February 11, 2021

The scheduled meeting of the Transylvania County Board of Elections was called to order by Chair Champion at 10 am on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712.

**Present**

**Board Members:**

**Staff Members:**

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Chair: Sara Champion	Director: Jeff Storey
Secretary: Lee McMinn	Deputy Director: Laura Owen*
David Morrow	
Michael Wainwright*	
Sandra Watson	* Remotely via Zoom

Visitors: Kathleen Barnes\*

**Review and Approval of Previous Minutes**

The board was presented with the minutes from previous meetings. **Sandra Watson made a motion to approve the board meeting minutes for January 14, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Long term plan for voting equipment**

Director Storey presented the board with several options for consideration in determining long term plans for voting equipment. The options included maintaining the current inventory, adding 20 additional ExpressVote machines, adding 65 ExpressVote machines, and adding 100 ExpressVote machines. The director provided the initial cost plus a 10 year maintenance cost estimate for each scenario.

The director explained a re-evaluation of the long-term goals were prompted by the need to prepare upcoming budget requests, current litigation with the ExpressVotes, and having existing experience with the equipment in the 2020 primary and general elections.

Secretary McMinn asked assuming the courts ruled the equipment was safe in April if we could proceed with purchasing additional ExpressVotes. The director indicated the FY21 budget has 30 ExpressVotes allocated for purchase that is being held pending the court ruling.

Chair Champion reiterated the board should re-evaluate the long term plans the board addressed previously now that we have used the equipment in production. The question was raised whether the board of elections needed additional ExpressVotes now that we have successfully carried out elections with the current inventory.

The director stated it was the board's decision but felt it would be hard to justify adding more than 20 additional ExpressVotes based on the cost and usage gained. Chair Champion stated

the original long-term plan was decided upon based on the uncertainty with voter intent when using paper ballots vs. touchscreens. Both the chair and director stated that voter intent issues were not as problematic as feared on Election Day due to proper instruction given to voters by precinct officials.

The question was raised on whether to request funds in the next budget for 20 ExpressVotes or whether it could carry over from the existing budget pending the court ruling. The chair and director will get clarification at the scheduled budget meeting with the county manager and finance director.

Secretary McMinn asked what the inventory requirements would be with and without ExpressVotes in the precincts on Election Day. The director answered 50% pre-printed on hand with ExpressVotes and 110% without ExpressVotes based on each precinct's voter registration numbers.

Another factor the director stated the board needed to consider is the logistics of deploying additional voting equipment to the precinct locations. In the past, iVotronics were stacked in rolling racks that were delivered to each polling site. Supplies and existing equipment currently fit in the security cages sent to each precinct. Adding a fleet of voting machines to each precinct would also mean purchasing additional equipment to transport supplies.

The director mentioned with the past voting equipment, the state required 1 voting machine per 250 voters. If ExpressVotes were used exclusively in the precincts, the equipment would need to be purchased in bulk to meet minimum requirements. Incremental purchases over several years would not allow a county wide deployment of equipment.

Chair Champion asked the board if the intention is to purchase additional equipment this fiscal year. **Board member Morrow made a motion that the intent is to purchase 20 additional machines this fiscal year contingent on any court ruling prior to June 30. The motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Champion reiterated her concerns with the original strategic plan to purchase ExpressVotes to replace iVotronics in equivalent numbers. Secretary McMinn stated it should be kept in the budget for next fiscal year to allow the option to continue the strategic plan. **Secretary McMinn made a motion to include 30 ExpressVotes in the FY22 budget. The motion unanimously carried.** After board discussion, the board abstained from altering the strategic plan until such time the courts have ruled and the board has further data for reevaluating long-term goals.

### **Secondary draft of Election budget**

Director Storey presented the board with the final draft of the budget to be presented to the county manager and finance director.

The county was awarded additional funds from the HAVA (Help America Vote Act) grant. The director explained the requirements of the grant and made suggestions for the use of the funds based on election security, training, and operations. The board mentioned portable scanners for voter registration drive and multi-partisan assistance teams. The chair indicated those would help if photo id is implemented again.

## DIRECTOR UPDATES

Directory Storey indicated the CARES Act funding has not been received yet but expected it to be released within the month. ExpressVote lawsuit to be heard this year, possibly as soon as April. The State Board of Elections will meet on February 23 to decide the status of the Green and Constitution party voters. The director indicated candidate filing will start in July for municipalities unless delayed by the legislature due to census data being unavailable.

The director indicated NCOA mailings will be in March and that staffing will be back to normal with the hiring of Julie Dennis, who will begin February 22.

Directory Storey gave the board a summary of the presentation he did for the Pisgah Forest Rotary Club. The director asked if the board still wished to meet next month if there wasn't any pressing matters to discuss. **On a motion by Chair Champion, the board unanimously agreed to cancel the March 11 board meeting unless there were issues that needed to be addressed.**

## BOARD COMMENTS

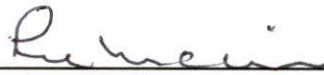
Chair Champion asked if there was any feedback on the revenue sources for the county. Secretary McMinn indicated the forecast was not as bad as feared. Secretary McMinn brought up ranked choice voting and whether the board can encourage that for adoption through the legislation. The director stated he would get information on it to give the board.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

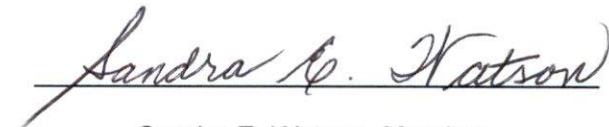
There were no public comments.

**On a motion by the chair, the meeting adjourned at 11:28 am.** The next scheduled meeting will be at 10 AM on April 8, 2021, at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712.

Respectfully submitted,



Lee McMinn, Secretary

  
Sara G. Champion, Chair  
David P. Morrow, Member  
Michael Wainwright, Member  
Sandra E. Watson, Member

Approved by Board on: April 8, 2021