

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

May 13, 2021

The scheduled meeting of the Transylvania County Board of Elections was called to order by Chair Champion at 10 am on Thursday, May 13, 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 | Deputy Director: | Julie Dennis |
| | Michael Wainwright | | |
| | Sandra Watson | | |

Visitors: Kathleen Barnes, Kristi Brown, Larry Chapman, John Ciriello, Liz Davis, Sam Edney, Barb Jackson

Review and Approval of Previous Minutes

The board was presented with the minutes from the previous meeting. **Secretary McMinn made a motion to approve the board meeting minutes for April 8, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.**

Proposal for use of Election Center conference rooms

The board had asked the director to identify issues a lack of access to the Election Center conference rooms would present. Director Storey presented his findings to the board and discussed the draft proposal of a shared usage agreement between the Clerk of Court and the Board of Elections office. The director informed the board he had met with the county manager and the concerns were concentrated on liability.

A preliminary draft was given to the clerk of court and to board members for feedback. The proposal would move early voting to the Rogow Room and the Brevard #1 precinct to the Community Services conference room.

Logic & Accuracy testing and the 13 day period from the end of early voting until Canvass would be reserved for election use. Judge Brittain has informed board members that he would not schedule court during elections. The court would have priority access to the room for all other timeframes not specified in the agreement. Clerk of Court Kristi Brown thanked the board and the county for their support in finding a temporary solution to the court's needs. Clerk Brown reiterated the courts do not wish to disrupt election activities. The board and director expressed a desire to assist the courts however possible and all members felt the proposal was mutually beneficial to both agencies. Commissioner Chapman thanked the board for their understanding

and willingness to participate in a temporary solution. The director thanked the county commissioners for providing a great facility to hold secure elections. Mr. Morrow agreed and added that the 2020 elections would have been very difficult to manage without the Election Center.

The board asked the clerk of court about security concerns regarding the shared space. Clerk Brown indicated she did not see a huge risk with using the conference rooms and that security sweeps could be performed and would be adequate based on the physical aspects of the rooms.

Director Storey informed the board that Chair Champion, Mr. Morrow, and the director intend to meet with the county manager and County Commissioner Chair Jason Chappell on Tuesday at 12 pm to discuss the board's concerns.

Since the director and clerk of court have a good working relationship, it was suggested the director maintain the scheduling calendar for the rooms with consultation from the clerk of court. Commissioner Chapman stated there is a great need for meeting space and that the Election Center conference rooms have been underutilized. Mr. Chapman indicated he would like to see the room used for more than court and elections during the interim time if safety issues are addressed. The director brought up the concerns over liability and that the county manager has asked no further activities to be scheduled. For clarification, Director Storey indicated the rooms are currently underutilized, but were in demand prior to COVID-19.

The board asked the director to modify the proposal to remove the language prohibiting public use of the rooms and to give the director and the clerk of court scheduling authority for court / election related functions with the understanding any other activities would need pre-authorization from the county manager.

The director will update the proposal and provide copies to the board and clerk of court. The board reserved further action until after the meeting with the county manager and commissioner chair next week.

East Fork precinct follow-up

Director Storey indicated staff are still collecting data on the options for the East Fork precinct to include driving times, population density, and polling sites. The board was asked if they wanted to set a date for a workshop to review the details. **Secretary McMinn made a motion to defer setting a date until after the June 10 board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

DIRECTOR UPDATES

Director Storey indicated the state anticipates having Municipal elections in November. There is still uncertainty over the primary date, but planning will continue for March 8, 2022 unless otherwise directed. Candidate filing will be in December unless delayed.

The State Board of Elections will hold a virtual conference on August 2nd and 3rd in lieu of in person for board members and staff.

Photo ID trial in state court has concluded. A three judge panel will decide the case with a ruling expected by June. There is an additional case at the federal level.

The director informed the board the ExpressVote lawsuit is ongoing.

There are several bills being considered in the state legislature regarding absentee by mail, observers, and external funding sources for elections.

The State Board of Elections will become a member of ERIC – Election Registration Information Center non-profit organization that will cross-check registrations across 30 states.

Director Storey gave the board a synopsis of the NCADE – North Carolina Association of Directors of Elections virtual conference held a few weeks ago. Topics included cybersecurity, redistricting, and statistical analysis of the 2020 General election.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Morrow thanked the director for the work done on the usage agreement proposal and expressed that he felt something could be worked out to accommodate all interested parties with the Election Center conference rooms.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

On a motion by the chair, the meeting adjourned at 11:12 am. The next scheduled meeting will be at 10 AM on June 10, 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: 6/10/2021