

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2023

Chair Champion called the meeting of the Transylvania County Board of Elections to order at 2 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712.

Attendance

Board Members:	Staff Members:
Chair: Sara Champion	Director: Jeff Storey
Secretary: Judith West	Deputy Director: Laura Owen
Sandra Watson	Deputy Director: Julie Dennis
Wendy Warwick	
Nona Walker	

Visitors: Jeff Brewer, Don Henderson, Nancy Henderson, Barb Jackson, Herschel Johnson, Kathy Voltz.

Review and Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Member Warwick, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

Review and Approval of Previous Minutes

The board reviewed minutes for the previous board meeting. On a motion by Member Watson, the minutes for August 10, 2023 were unanimously approved.

Absentee Board Meeting Schedule

Chair Champion provided an overview of the 2023 municipal absentee board meeting schedule. On a motion by Member Watson, the board unanimously approved the schedule.

Precinct Official Appointments and Modifications

Director Storey provided suggested recommendations for the Rosman Eastatoe (RE) precinct to temporarily replace Chief Judge Lynn Bullock whose brother is on the municipal ballot. On a motion by Member Watson, Berlis Owen was promoted to chief judge and Stacy Hufziger was promoted to republican judge for the 2023 municipal election. Lynn Bullock will resume chief judge appointment for the 2024 primary. Mr. Owen and Ms. Hufziger will resume their previous appointed positions for the 2024 primary.

Photo ID Public Seminar and Policy

Director Storey noted the State Board of Elections delivered two additional photo ID printers. The existing printer in the office was replaced leaving one spare. The director suggested having an open house photo ID forum on site before the primary with opportunities to inform the public

on several topics. Director Storey has received a request from the non-profit organization Common Cause to use the Election Center Conference Room for a photo ID seminar. The director was also asked to attend a festival on September 20 to provide photo IDs to the public. Director Storey asked the board to establish guidance regarding staff involvement with mobile photo ID voter drives. The board specified non-partisan events with groups of twenty or more were reasonable to utilize election staff resources.

DIRECTOR UPDATES

Director Storey held a zoom call with election workers to keep them engaged and provide updates on election events. Next one will be scheduled in December.

The director provided the board updates on senate bills 747 and 749. Still in election rules committee.

Director Storey provided election updates to the board including the ballot proofing process, logic and accuracy testing, and mock election procedures.

The director specified training dates for the election workers. Precinct training will be held October 10 at 6 p.m. Early voting training will be October 17 at 9 a.m. OVRD (electronic pollbook) training will be multiple classes from October 24 through October 26.

Director Storey provided follow up to a question from a previous meeting regarding the Brevard #2 precinct mailings. The director clarified whether the mailing was considered a "contact" for list maintenance purposes.

Election Day Precinct Review

Director Storey submitted data for board analysis on Election Day precincts. The data included voter registration, voter history, precinct locations, population density, and driving distances for each precinct. Monetary costs for adding additional precincts were included. Considerations were given to precinct boundaries and census blocks. The board weighed the request for additional precincts with the data provided. **On a motion by Member Watson, the board unanimously concluded no changes were warranted for 2024.** A countywide precinct review in 2025 would be appropriate after collecting the voter history for 2024.

BOARD COMMENTS

Chair Champion voiced concerns over public awareness with the photo ID exception form. The chair suggested outreach to Meals on Wheels and "College Walk." Member Warwick suggested photo ID flyers for distribution. Member West also suggested radio spots and social media outlets to disseminate the information. Director Storey indicated State Board guidelines on the photo id exception form will be forthcoming for continuity of operations.

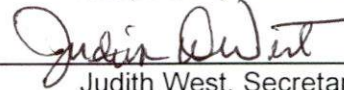
Chair Champion asked about the absentee by mail ballot return process. The board agreed staff will provide the preliminary review of ballots received per state guidance. The director reiterated staff do not open ballots, just the new exterior envelope containing the sealed ballot and the provided photo id information or exception form. Staff will provide an overview of the processes to the board at the first absentee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

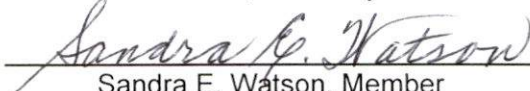
Mr. Brewer voiced concerns over the change in meeting time believing it led to less public attendance. Mr. Brewer felt the data presented to the board should have also included the 2008 election to provide more turnout data for the former precinct locations. Mr. Brewer felt rural voters are being disenfranchised and urged the board not to close the book on adding additional precincts. The director responded that the issue of voter access is evaluated by the board every year and is never considered closed. The board reiterated the collection of 2024 voter turnout data will aid in a countywide evaluation of precincts in 2025 with a better opportunity to identify trends while factoring in census block data, population density, voter participation, facilities, and monetary costs. Member Warwick thanked the director for the work involved with the precinct review.

On a motion by Member Watson, the meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m. The next scheduled meeting will be at 5 p.m. on October 3, 2023, at 150 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC 28712.

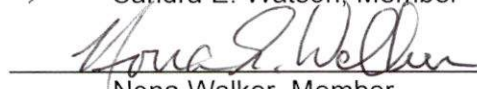
Respectfully submitted,



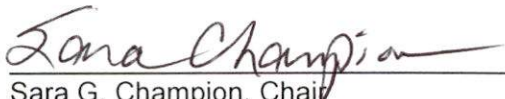
Judith West, Secretary



Sandra E. Watson, Member



Nona Walker, Member



Sara G. Champion, Chair



Wendy Warwick, Member

Approved by Board on: 12-14-2023