



## **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Teddi Benson Chairperson  
John Adams, Secretary  
Debbie Burris, Member  
Dree Wynkoop, Member  
Tasha Medley, Member

### **BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

October 8, 2024  
5:00 PM

The Montgomery County Board of Elections (BOE) met October 8, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at the BOE office located at 327 N. Main Street in Troy, NC. Board members present were Teddi Benson, Chairperson; John Adams, Secretary; Debbie Burris, Dree Wynkoop and Tasha Medley. BOE staff present were Rhonda Johnson, Director of Elections and Kimberly Walter, Deputy Director of Elections.

Chairperson Benson called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Minutes from the September 10th board meeting were approved. Member Dree Wynkoop made a motion to approve minutes, Member Debbie Burris seconded the motion. All members approved and the motion was passed.

Board Meeting Agenda was approved. Secretary, John Adams made a motion to approve agenda and Member Tasha Medley seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Director, Rhonda Johnson presented the Director of Elections report. See attached.

### **Old Business**

#### **Precinct Officials**

John announced that there were 5 precinct officials that needed approval.

Teddi asked about the Star precinct when she saw the new vacancy. Director Johnson explained the vacancy situation; Donna Moore would be unable to work in Star due to her cleaning lady for her beach rental having surgery and not being able to clean for the next renters' arrival. Roy Moore also couldn't work as Chief Judge in the Little River Precinct due to working in Western North Carolina assisting with the efforts after Hurricane Helene, he will be there helping with heat & air.

Rosa Little, Democratic Party Chair, confirmed she was working on Precinct Officials.

Jordan-Cheeks Creek Approved

Benjamin Zeck-Uwharrie Approved

Rita Zeck-PeeDee Approved

Lynn Gibson Varner-Troy II Approved

Travis Quick-Wadeville Approved

Kelsey Brown, Republican Party Chair, confirmed all Republican spots were filled.

Board Member John Adams, let Rosa Little know that her main priority was to find a Chief Judge in Little River Precinct, and a Precinct Official in Star.

Rosa Little had a question about an Unaffiliated voter that was up for approval to work in a precinct in the place of a Democratic Precinct Official. Her concern was based on this voter's past history voting mostly Republican. The Board assured Rosa it was her decision whether or not to use this voter as a Precinct Official. Deputy Director Kimberly Walter asked if she could speak, she shared that Kathy Rollins was a phenomenal Precinct Official, even when being assisted at the precinct due to a health issue by emergency personnel, Kathy was concerned about them voting.

There was some confusion between Rosa and the Chair of the Board Teddi Benson concerning a previously removed official, Teddi discussed that Tse' Lane LeGrand was not on the list and Rosa confirmed. Teddi then admitted she had gotten Tse' Lane LeGrand and Felicia Chambers mixed up.

Susan Eggleston has been called.

Board was OK with Susan Eggleston working, Kelsey Brown then spoke up that Susan Eggleston was a Republican.

Rosa then reported that Abby Jean Hurley would work as a Little River Assistant. Member John Adams' suggestion for Little River Precinct was to have Brenda Brock as Chief Judge and Abby Jean as a Judge.

Ophir Democrat placement was fine.

The discussion returned to the Unaffiliated Precinct Official Kathy Rollins and Stacy Shook in Uwharrie. Board decided to discuss these two Precinct Official appointment/placements at next Tuesday's Board meeting on October 15, 2024. In conclusion Precinct Official approvals will finish next Tuesday.

Office will plan backup training class for those appointed after regular training classes.

Rosa Little requested to be notified why people are taken off of the Precinct Official work schedules.

Concerning Substitute workers there are 3 Republicans.

Teddi Benson asked Rosa Little to contact folks about substitute workers. At that point Rosa shared she didn't know why Carolyn Maness wasn't working on Election Day. Carolyn Maness, who was present at this meeting, let the board know it was such a long day and hard for her but if need be she would be a substitute worker.

1 Dem Carolyn Maness

Rosa Little questioned how the Chief Judge during early voting worked? Director Rhonda Johnson let her know there is not a Chief Judge, but there will be a Precinct Official designated to be in charge of the precinct.

End of discussion concerning Precinct Officials

## **Public Comment**

Chairperson Teddi Benson did a roll call from the sign-up sheet, many present weren't planning on speaking and didn't realize the sign-up sheet was specifically for speaking. Those that did speak are as follows:

**Jimmy Johnson** Spoke in support of his wife, Director Rhonda Johnson. He also addressed allegation of an early event involving him and Board Member John Adams as being false.

**Larry Emmerett** Spoke in support of Director, Rhonda Johnson and asked the Board for a reason why the Board wants to get rid of her. The Chair of the Board: Teddi Benson's response was, "We aren't allowed to respond concerning personnel issues."

**Brenda Ritter** spoke of her work relationship with Director, Rhonda Johnson and wanted to know why the board wanted to get rid of Rhonda now? especially as she (Rhonda Johnson) is undergoing cancer treatments.

**Jennifer Delpizzi** Shared her love and admiration for Rhonda as her friend and the kindness Rhonda has always shown to her and others.

**Pastor Glen Hancock** -Director Rhonda Johnson's Pastor-He was very appreciative of the time here at the Board Meeting and shared the long-time relationship he has shared with Rhonda and her husband Jimmy. He asked the Board to consider the toll cancer and treatment takes on a person and please show compassion on her.

**Bruce Hamilton** shared how Rhonda has always treated him with nothing but kindness, and her medical situation should be considered.

**Bridgette Bennett** Started by showing concern for Rhonda and stated she was praying for her as she undergoes cancer treatments. She then began accusing Rhonda of, "having it out for her." She spoke of an incident at the Troy Library between her and another precinct official. She proceeded with further accusations of the Director and the Wadeville Precinct voting site conditions and occurrences during voting in the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Primary 2024. She ended passionately asking why she was being blamed for Wadeville which has resulted in her not being able to continue working as a precinct official. During Bridgette's time Rhonda interrupted with a brief comment.

**Jennifer Delpizzi** stood and wanted to respond to Bridgette's accusations of her in the precinct but was asked to sit down. This is just a comment time.

**Andrea Marshall** Has worked for Rhonda for years and has always known Rhonda to be a hard worker and a good Director. She also commented that if Bridgette and Jennifer had a problem while working in the precinct where she was in charge she was never made aware of it.

**Vicky Ingold** expressed her love for Rhonda and length of years she has known her. She also shared that she worked early voting at the auditorium in Mt Gilead and that building had many issues, but they worked, they stayed. She expressed the desire to remove Rhonda was a witch hunt and it was totally unnecessary. Shame on the Board!

**Ed Huneycut** has been a county worker for years and has helped with elections for at least 14-15 years. He asked the board to consider the job we do and keep Director Rhonda Johnson.

**Koop** requested the Pastor's (Pastor Glen Hancock) comments be removed from the minutes because the Pastor did not reside in Montgomery County

**Kelsey Brown** Informed those present concerning political signage needing to come down, he had already spoken to Rosa Little and reminded her of the guidelines. Encouraged the public present that they should come to every meeting. The attendance tonight was great. He explained the County Chair of each Party's responsibilities. He also explained to the public as far as Director Rhonda Johnson's removal there would be no decision tonight by the board, that it is now in the State's hands to finalize that decision. He also stated that the decision for the Director's dismissal would have happened months ago, Director Johnson interjected that it had started 2 weeks ago. He asked that everyone leave their emotions out of the situation and look at the facts. He pointed out that the request for removal was not only due to Wadeville Precinct issues but other issues as well such as Precincts not being contacted prior to the election, keys made illegally to a precinct by staff, mock election results weren't taken out of the system before election results were entered...at this point Kelsey's time was up...

**Wilson** Shared that he believed Rhonda was of the wrong party and that is why she is being picked on by the Board.

### New Business

Absentee portion of the meeting opened with Member John Adams making a motion that the Absentee Ballots be opened during the meeting and then put into the DS200 instead of waiting until the end. Board agreed.

There were 29 Regular Absentee Ballots and 3 Overseas Ballots

Member John Adams explained to remaining public the process of Absentee Ballot Approval or Denial.

Member Dree Wynkoop called the names, Member John Adams explained the photo ID or exception form requirement of the Absentee Ballots.

1 Absentee Ballot received was put on hold, ID was not visible. Rhonda had called the voter, and the voter advised that the ID was inside the envelope.

The board decided to open the envelope to see if ID was inside, Member John Adams opened the envelope, and the ID was indeed in the envelope.

Member John Adams informed the audience that the NC Mtn counties affected by the recent hurricane, are able to turn their Absentee Ballot in to any Board of Elections office across the state.

1 voter-Envelope not sealed-Director Johnson said if the ballot was disapproved, we could spoil the ballot and reissue a new absentee ballot to the voter.

1 voter ID copy not visible- once Absentee ballot envelope was opened ballot was inside.

There was one out of state driver's license included inside of one Absentee Ballot ID sleeve. Office staff was able to verify that this out of state ID is ok to use as long as the voter has moved to this county within the last 90 days. Director Johnson was able to confirm this information, and ballot was approved.

28 Approved

1 Rejected

3 overseas ballots Approved

Member Dree Wynkoop made the motion to open ballots, Member, Debbie Burris 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Opening the ballots began.

Ballots were opened and the 3 overseas ballots were duplicated by Members Dree Wynkoop (Republican) and Member Tasha Medley (Democrat).

The ballots were cast into the DS200 Absentee Voting machine.

The next topic up for discussion was the Budget.

Conversation began with the Board Chair, Teddi Benson conveying her concerns about not seeing the budget. She would like to see the budget before it is approved. The board agreed.

Rhonda shared her feelings about the budget.

Member John Adams wanted to know when the budget was due every year.

Director, Rhonda Johnson informed the Board of how the county approves the budget.

Member John Adams asked, "What the Board of Elections submits, when is it due to the county—When is it due?"

Director Rhonda Johnson assured the Board she would let all of them know when the next Budget meeting is scheduled. She let the Board know she starts working on the budget between April and May.

Member John Adams commented that the county doesn't know what we (the Board of Elections) needs.

Director Rhonda Johnson agreed that if she and the Board were united concerning the needs of the office to conduct elections in Montgomery County, that would help the approval process. Rhonda also would be more than happy for the board to be involved.

The current budget sheet was passed out to each board member.

Member John Adams informed the Board to take the budget and go over it, he also explained what the reference "controlled expense" refers to.

Member Tasha Medley asked for a copy of what has been spent from start of this fiscal year to date.

Director Rhonda Johnson said the report each board member had was a report of what we received, what was used and what was left.

Member Tasha Medley said what we received was the budget for the year, not what we have spent out. Member Medley and Chair Benson also stated that we have only received the actual budget.

Member Medley asked Director Johnson, after receiving the report, why the dates on the report were Current period 10/01/24 to 10/01/24 and not from the start of the fiscal year to current date. Deputy Rhonda Johnson stated that this was how the system was.

Next topic of discussion was Emergency Sites.

How to best communicate to voters that we have moved the precinct to the emergency site.

Chair, Benson questioned Rhonda to see if the Emergency Sites could be listed on the Voter Card?

Director, Rhonda Johnson let Benson know that what appears on the Voter Card is a SEIMS notification system, we really don't have the ability to put additional information on the card.

Member Dree Wynkoop also mentioned listing the Emergency location for each precinct in the paper.

Member John Adams explained that the voters really didn't need to know about the emergency location until there was an emergency due to the fact that it would cause confusion.

Deputy Director Kim Walter suggested having prepared announcements of the Emergency closing of the regular Election Day polling site and the location of the Emergency Site for voters

to make their way to that location. These announcements would be laminated and included in the Chief Judge notebooks so they could be easily placed on the precinct doors upon evacuation.

Director Rhonda Johnson showed the Board the form to be put inside about the photo ID.

Motion was made by Member Dree Wynkoop to adjourn, Member Debbie Burris 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.  
Meeting was adjourned at 7:21pm

Jeddi Benson

CHAIR

Debbie C. Burris

SECRETARY

[Signature]

MEMBER

Dree Wynkoop

MEMBER

[Signature]

MEMBER