



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

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

### **BOARD MINUTES** **Tuesday, January 14, 2025** **5:30PM**

The Montgomery County Board of Elections (BOE) met January 14, 2025 at 5:30PM at the BOE office located at 327 N. Main Street in Troy, NC. Board members present were Teddi Benson, John Adams, Dree Wynkoop, Debbie Burris and Tasha Medley. BOE staff present were Deputy Director Kimberly Walter and Office Assistant Donna Moore.

Chairperson Benson called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

Board Meeting Agenda was presented for approval. Member Wynkoop made a motion to approve the agenda and Member Medley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the agenda was approved.

The minutes of the December 10, 2024 Board Meeting were presented for approval. Member Burris made a motion to approve the minutes and Member Medley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were approved, signed and returned to BOE office staff to file and make available for posting to the BOE website.

Deputy Director Walter provided the Deputy Director's Report summarizing the actions completed by the office staff since the last board meeting as follows:

- Mailed a total of 947 Voter Verification cards (735 on 12/13/24 and 212 on 12/20/24). Deputy Director Walter stated that the mailing of cards had been on hold since the election and protest, but that the office is now caught up.
- Updated voter records with the missing ID numbers (i.e. SSN and/or DL which had been provided previously but not entered into voter records) and mailed 91 ID letters informing those voters numbers were needed. Chairperson Benson inquired about the status of the voters without numbers. Deputy Director Walter advised that they are active. Member Adams commented that they will have an opportunity to provide that information.
- Processed Felon County and Felon State reports. The office identified and mailed Felon Letters to a total of 54 active voters (2 from County report mailed 12/20/2024 and 52 from State report mailed 12/27) with current felony convictions. Letters notified the voters that they will be removed from active voter registration status due to the felony conviction and provided them 30 days to appeal their removal. The voter's status will be automatically changed to "Removed" when the deadline for appeal has passed if there is no appeal. If a recipient appeals their removal, the Board will have a hearing to consider the appeal. Those with a felony conviction who have been removed are able to re-register once they have completed their sentence.
- Packed, stored and labeled, with 11/2026 destroy date, all Voted and Unvoted ballots from the 2024 General Election.
- Continued to scan ATV forms from the 2024 General Election into voter records.
- Continued to train Office Assistant Moore and list maintenance reports/duties are being completed weekly.

- Completed Biennial List Maintenance on 1/13/2025. The Biennial List Maintenance involves the removal of those voters who were inactive since 8/10/2022 who have not responded to confirmation mailing sent and have not voted in two general elections for the US House of Representatives; and mailing Confirmation cards to active voters who have had no contact with the county BOE for two congressional general elections. A total of 1439 Confirmation cards were mailed. Removed voters are eligible to re-register.
- Purchased Voter Verification cards and window envelopes to replenish depleting supplies, and tabs for mailing cards. Cards were being stapled, but several returned as undeliverable by the USPS damaged/separated. After discussing this matter with the USPS, the clerk recommended using tabs. The tabs were used in the last two mailings as recommended and fewer have been returned since this change.

### **Old Business**

FMLA for Director Rhonda Johson

Deputy Director Walter confirmed that FMLA for Director Rhonda Johnson ends tomorrow.

Finalize September 10, 2024 Minutes

Chairperson Benson wanted to confirm that these minutes were signed, filed and posted on website. Office Assistant Moore advised that Member Medley was not present at the December Board Meeting, did not have the opportunity to sign them and they have been held for her to review/sign at today's meeting.

Payroll for Precinct Officials

Chairperson Benson advised that all final payroll to the Precinct Workers for the recount has been distributed.

Finalize November 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Board Minutes

Chairperson Benson advised that the minutes of the November 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> meetings are being passed around so that the blanks (what Member made and/or seconded motions) could be filled in. Member Medley stated that she has the information needed to complete the minutes, but did not have it with her. She stated that she would email them to the office.

### **New Business**

Upcoming Conferences

- "New Director Training" scheduled for March 10-14, 2025. Deputy Director Walters called Elections Field Specialist (EFS) Steve Adams who encouraged her to register for this training. She contacted the coordinator of the training, Jessica Buie, who suggested that she wait until more was known about Director Johnson's status, but EFS Adams told her to have Ms. Buie put her on the list. She is now on the list. Member Medley asked who is responsible for paying for training and conferences. Deputy Director Walter said she thought it was the County. Member Medley expressed concern about funding being available and Member Adams reassured her that funding would be available.
- NCADE (North Carolina Association of Directors of Elections) Conference will be held in Durham and is scheduled in for March 23-25, 2025 with a registration deadline of 3/1/25. Deputy Director Walter advised that she plans to register herself

and OA Moore. Chairperson Benson asked about the BOE office being open if both staff members are at conference and Deputy Director Walter replied that a decision would have to be made to hire someone or ask the county to provide another county employee to cover the office.

- Summer Conference, which is for BOE Board Members and Staff will be held in Wilmington and is scheduled for July 27-29, 2025. Deputy Director Walter advised that she plans to register all board members and staff.

OA Moore asked if a motion was needed to permit Deputy Director Walter to complete the noted registrations and Member Adams advised that no motion needed.

#### Incident Reports from 2024 General Election

Deputy Director advised that she had compiled all the incident reports the BOE received and prepared a summary for the Board to review. She provided each Member with a copy of that summary. Chairperson Benson stated that she thought the Members should table this item for a future meeting to permit Members an opportunity to read them before discussing them. Member Wynkoop made a motion to table this item and Member Burris seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

#### Protest Update

Deputy Director Walter shared with the Members the update provided during the 1/8/2025 Huddle meeting advising that the State Board has dismissed all protests filed by NC Supreme Court candidate Jefferson Griffin. The Griffin protest was appealed to both State and Federal courts. Member Burris advised that the Federal Court has sent it back to the State. OA Moore explained that this was the only contest in the State that has not been certified.

#### Deny Voter Registrations for Applicants Actively Serving Felony Sentence

Deputy Director advised that there are 3 new voter registration applicants, 2 which voted provisionally and 1 who submitted a new voter registration application, who are currently serving a sentence for felony conviction. She explained all individuals who vote provisionally have their applications processed to register them to vote whether their provisional ballot was determined eligible to be counted or not. She also explained that the Staff checks the NC Offender database for all new voter registration applications and if it is discovered that the applicant is currently serving a felony sentence (sentence could be incarceration, probation, post-release or parole), their registration is queued so it can be reviewed by the Board. Deputy Director Walter presented the Board with the Voter Registration Application and criminal record for each of the 3 individuals. She asked the Board to review the documents and explained that if the Board denies the registrations, those individuals will be sent a Felon Denial Letter notifying them of the reason for the denial and providing them an opportunity to appeal. If they appeal, the Board will conduct a hearing. If there is no appeal, the status will automatically be changed to "Denied" after the appeal deadline. OA Moore explained that the individuals being considered here are not the same the voters to whom felony letters were sent because those were in active voter status to be "Removed", but these are pending voter registrations to be "Denied" if approved. Members reviewed the documents presented and Member Adams made a motion to deny the 3 voter registrations due to their felony convictions and still serving a felony sentence. Member Medley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Deputy Director Walter stated that she wanted to share with the Board the ATV form and criminal record for the individual who voted and was an active felon. She advised that this information will be sent to the State Board of Election for review. She reiterated that when the List Maintenance reports are processed in a timely manner, this does not happen.

#### Montgomery County Board of Elections Fee Schedule

Deputy Director Walter provided a copy of the current fee schedule dated January 2020 and advised that it was posted in front lobby. She stated that she is presenting it to the Board to see if they wanted to update it. Member Adams made motion to change the cost per page for copies to \$0.10 per page, email lists remain free and will no longer make/distribute computer CDs. Member Burris seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

#### Zoom Subscription

Deputy Director Walter advised that the office is charged monthly for Zoom. She stated that she contacted the County IT Director, Janet, and she said that Zoom was not needed because the County uses Microsoft Teams and it provides everything that Zoom would. Member Adams made a motion to cancel the Zoom subscription. Member Wynkoop seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

#### Jury Excusal: Non-citizen Process Update

Deputy Director Walter explained that law requires the removal of voters who requested to be excused from jury duty because they state that they are not US citizens. A person must be a citizen to be a registered voter. If a registered voter requests excusal from jury duty because they advise that they are not a citizen, the Clerks of Superior Court from each county notes their reason for jury excusal and submits the jury excusal lists to the State Board. The State Board received and processed the noncitizen information from the Clerks' submissions and contacted the counties impacted begin the removal process for those voters. Montgomery County was not impacted during this review; therefore, no action was needed. The Clerks are to send the jury excusal list again in July 2025.

#### Legislative Updates (SB 382 became Session Law 2024-57 effective January 1, 2025)

Board Appointments: Deputy Director Walter stated that Session Law 2024-57 moves the governor's appointment power for election boards to the State Auditor. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Auditor appoints all 5 members of the State Board for four-year terms. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, the State Board appoints an executive director for a two-year term. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the State Board appoints 4 board members for each County Board and the Auditor appoints the chair, all for four-year terms. The Board members are sworn in July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Deadline/Procedural Changes: Deputy Director Walter advised that Session Law 2024-57 also changed election activity/deadlines. The deadline for voters to provide missing information on Voter Registration forms, to cure HAVA ID, to return with photo ID and to cure Absentees is noon the Friday after Election Day. Use of the State Board's voter assistance log at polling places is now required. In the past, the voter assistance log was available for use but not required. Per new law, all provisional ballots must be counted by 5PM on the Friday after election day. Deadline to request absentee ballot is 2 weeks before election day and all election day absentees must be counted on election day night in an ongoing meeting (supplemental absentee meeting is only permitted for UOCAVA ballots). Absentee ballot tallies must be announced at 5PM 3 days after election day.

2025 Calendar

Deputy Director Walter provided all Members with a copy of the 2025 Election Calendar and explained that candidate filing normally starts the first Friday in July, however for 2025, that Friday is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, a federal holiday, and the State Board ruled that BOE offices do not have to be open on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Therefore, candidate filing begins on Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup> at 8AM and ends on Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup>. She noted that other key dates are as follows: Absentee-by-Mail starts October 3<sup>rd</sup>; Voter Registration deadline is October 10<sup>th</sup>; Early Voting is from October 16<sup>th</sup> – November 1<sup>st</sup>; Election Day is November 4<sup>th</sup>; and Canvass is November 14<sup>th</sup>.



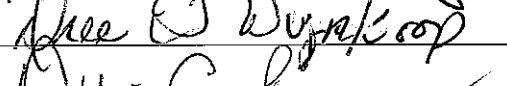
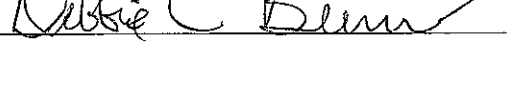
2025 Election Preview

Deputy Director Walter reported that there will be municipal elections for Biscoe, Candor and Mt. Gilead. It was noted that there may be some annexations in Mt. Gilead that will need to be checked to determine if changes are needed so those voters can be taken care of.

Deputy Director Walter shared her Planning Board with the Members. She noted that these are items she may bring before the Board for discussion/consideration in the future. As an example, she noted possibly changing the Pee Dee emergency polling location. Currently the Woodrun Clubhouse is the emergency location. The Clubhouse is in a gated community and every voter would have to go through a gate to vote. Another item noted is possibly using the Uwharrie Community Building for the Uwharrie precinct in lieu of the Eldorado Community Center. She emphasized that this is future planning and not something for the Board to consider currently.

Chairperson Benson asked if anyone in the audience wanted to speak. Republican Chair Kelsey Brown asked if the Voter Assistant Log would be public information and if the public would have access to that log. Deputy Director Walter replied that she did not know but would find out and get an answer for him. He also asked if he could get a copy of the incident reports, and she said he could. Tammy Dunn, Editor of the Montgomery Herald, asked if she could get a copy of the packet the Board Members were given for tonight’s meeting, less any personnel information, and Deputy Director Walter said she would make her one.

Chairperson Benson advised Deputy Director Walter has requested a closed session and if there is no further comments or business on the agenda, she called for a motion to adjourn. Member Wynkoop made the motion and Member Burris seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:20PM.

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
|  | CHAIR     |
|  | SECRETARY |
|  | MEMBER    |
|  | MEMBER    |
| _____   | MEMBER    |