



MONTGOMERY COUNTY **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

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

BOARD MINUTES **Tuesday, December 10, 2024** **5:30PM**

The Montgomery County Board of Elections (BOE) met December 10, 2024 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 and Debbie Burris. Member Tasha Medley called prior to meeting to advise she would be unable to attend. BOE staff present were Deputy Director Kimberly Walter and Office Assistant Donna Moore.

Chairperson Benson called the meeting to order at 5:29PM.

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

Old Business

Signing of the September 10, 2024 minutes

Deputy Director Walter explained that she discovered that 9/10/24 Board meeting minutes were not on the website nor in the Board Minutes book. She commented that these were the first minutes she had prepared, they had been signed by all members, given to Director Rhonda Johnson to submit to County to be included on the website and was certain the minutes were in a stack of papers in a tray on the Director's desk. She reported that the entire stack of papers had been removed from the office over Thanksgiving. Chairperson Benson commented that she remembers signing them. Deputy Director Walters stated that she now has the authority to submit minutes directly to the County. Member Adams confirmed that they basically disappeared, and Deputy Director Walter reiterated this was the case. Chairperson Benson stated that the Board has them now and all Members present signed the Minutes and returned them to Deputy Director Walter for submission to the County.

The remaining Old Business items noted on the agenda were summarized in Deputy Director Walter's report as follows:

11/21/24 – Reopened Canvass due to 28 vote discrepancy, machine recount successfully completed and Abstract including the 28 votes signed on 11/22/24.

11/24/24 – Received notice of Protest from GOP on behalf of Judge Jefferson Griffin, Board completed required Preliminary Review of Protest filing and scheduled Evidentiary Hearing for 12/3/24. Notices for hearing were sent to all invested parties.

12/2/24 – Hand recount of randomly selected precinct ordered and scheduled for 12/4/24.

12/3/24 – Protest Hearing completed with Board dismissing the protest and ordering that the voter's protested vote count. Attorney Russ Hollars prepared the Order, presented it to the Board for review, Chairperson Benson signed the Order on 12/4/24 and Deputy Director emailed it to the Legal Counsel for the Protester and other candidate and to State Legal.

12/4/24 – Hand recount completed on Troy Early Voting site, the sample precinct which was randomly selected by the State. There was a one vote discrepancy. The machine count included an overvote and the hand count did not. On the ballot, both candidates were marked. The machine would have counted it an overvote. The voter made a large “x” over one candidate and a clear mark for the other making their intent to vote for one candidate clear and the Board Members present at the hand recount determined that the vote was to be cast as a single vote for that candidate.

12/5/24 – Deputy Director Walter reported that administrative post-election tasks have started, but only those which can be done without changing any voter registration. She advised that currently staff is scanning in the ATV (Authorization to Vote) forms to the voter records and reviewing them through the established checks/balance system. A special brainstorming session was held with Office Assistant to plan and prepare for full county hand recount if it is required. A plan was developed that would have coordinated activities and staff need and allowed the recount to be completed in a single day, however, the State Board announced earlier today that a full recount would not be required.

12/6/24 – Precinct Officials’ checks were issued by the County and they were called to inform them that their checks were available for pick up beginning on Friday. Most workers picked up their checks on Friday (12/7/24), some were delivered by Chairperson Benson at their request and the remaining were mailed to them today (12/10/24).

Deputy Director reported that there are two meetings scheduled tomorrow (12/11/24). At 10:00AM, there is a Huddle, a bi-weekly Elections meeting. At 12:00PM, the State Board of Elections will be meeting to discuss the protests and other topics. The agenda for the State BOE meeting and meeting information was emailed to BOE members. She also reported that Steve Adams, Elections Field Specialist said he would be visiting the BOE office tomorrow.

New Business

FMLA for Director Rhonda Johnson

Deputy Director Walter reported that Director Johnson’s FMLA ends on January 15th. She noted that her FMLA was made retroactive to begin on November 6th once approved. Chairperson Benson asked if that meant that she is to be back in to office on the 16th and Deputy Director Walter said that she did not know and was not sure of the process as to how she could find out.

Voter Record Maintenance / Possible Countywide Recount

Deputy Director Walter explained she is expecting the Election to be declared official since no full county recount is required. Once it is official, staff can begin working on the other post-election tasks including, but not limited to, uploading the provisional applications which would begin the registration process for those individuals and making any changes to voter records that they noted on their ATV’s.

Office staff training

Deputy Director Walter advised that she has started training Office Assistant Moore today on reviewing/ processing underage registrations and sending pre-registration letters; reviewing/processing DHHS (Dept. of Health and Human Services) report which lists the death certificates/notification of deceased voters; and reviewing/processing Cancellation report which

includes voters who moved out of the county. Deputy Director said that she will soon be training Office Assistant Moore on reviewing/processing Duplicate Registration, Felon Completed and DOC Felon reports. These reports are to be processed weekly. She explained that these are necessary to bring the voter registration records up to date and to maintain voter records.

Member Adams asked what would be done in the future to address the problem of missing identification numbers revealed by the protest. Deputy Director Walter replied that the office will be updating voter records for those who have provided the information, but whose information was not entered. For those identified in the protest who did not provide identification numbers and for those newly registering going forward, the office would follow the established procedure of sending letters weekly requesting them to bring/send it in to the BOE office. She commented that nearly 200 of these letters have been sent since she became Deputy Director and that she had created a form for those who responded to the Protest letter to provide the identification number and sign. She explained that no changes are made to a voter's record without their signature and that the signed document reflecting the change would be scanned into the voter's record.

Member Adams questioned what if they did not respond to the letters and then show up to vote. Deputy Director Walter explained that there is an alert in the system to notify the Precinct Official that their ID number is needed. Member Adams asserted that, going forward with precinct official training, there needs to be assurance that the workers get the required information from the voters. She said that precinct workers are trained to obtain the information if alerted by the system that it is needed, but noted this may not have been emphasized as much as it should've been. She said there are plans to revamp the worker training and obtaining the required identification numbers will be a topic fully discussed in future training. Member Adams also asked that Elections Field Specialist Adams be consulted about taking this concern to Raleigh and the State Board about how to prevent this from happening in the future.

Holiday Schedule

The Board of Election office will be closed December 24-26, 2024 for observance of the Christmas holiday.

Chairperson Benson requested the other Board Members submit their evaluations, including their comments, to her as soon as possible so she can collate all of them and have it ready before January if it is needed. Member Burris asked if there has been anything received from the State Board since the County Board declined mediation. Chairperson advised that nothing has been received. Deputy Director Walter said she would speak with Elections Field Specialist Adams to see if he has any insight. She also wanted to express her gratitude for their willingness to serve and for the time they committed and the help they provided during this election. Member Wynkoop returned the expression of gratitude.

Chairperson Benson asked if anyone in the audience had any comments or questions. Katherine Rollins made comment expressing concern that it took almost two months for workers to get paid, that there is nowhere on the paystub stating the payrate and that the workers had not been told the rate. Member Adams replied that there is an approved pay schedule establishing the rate for each duty, that the Board decided in the October Board meeting that there would be no difference in the Judges and Assistants payrate and that workers will be told in training what their position will be and what rate they will be paid. Office Assistant Moore added that for this

past election, Chiefs were paid \$11.00/hr, Judges were paid \$10.00/hr and Assistants were paid \$9.00/hr. and that all Judges and Assistants will be paid \$10.00/hr for future elections per recent change made by the Board. She also explained that every worker is paid a flat fee of \$15.00 for completing training. In response as to why it took so long, Chairperson Benson explained that she learned that the County was holding all the payroll until everything with the election is done so that they would only have to run it once because every time they run payroll it costs them money. Office Assistant Moore explained that, with the Paylocity system, the County pays for each employee per month whether or not they worked that month. Because the precinct workers only work during elections, the County adds them to the system during elections and removes them from the system after it is over to save costs. Therefore, the workers were added during the Primary - removed after they were paid, added back for the 2nd primary - removed after they were paid, and added back for the General Election - to be removed after being paid so that the County would not have to pay for them during the months there was no election. This administrative process takes time to add workers in the Paylocity system and results in delay of payment.

With no further comments or business on the agenda, Chairperson Benson called for a motion to adjourn. Member Wynkoop made the motion and Member Burris seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:03PM.

<u>Jeddy L. Benson</u>	CHAIR
<u>[Signature]</u>	SECRETARY
<u>Debra C. Burris</u>	MEMBER
<u>Jasha Moore</u>	MEMBER
<u>Dee Wynkoop</u>	MEMBER