

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

J. Eric Elliott
CHAIR

Linda J. Sutton
SECRETARY

Jerry D. Jordan
MEMBER



Robert H. Coffman
Director of Elections

FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS BOARD MEETING- October 17, 2006

Present: J. Eric Elliott, Chair
Linda J. Sutton, Secretary
Jerry D. Jordan, Member

Staff: Rob Coffman, Director of Elections
Pamela Johnson, Administrative Assistant

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM.

Announcement of Chair's Retirement and Words of Appreciation

Mr. Elliott announced that Mrs. Charles A. Cardwell has retired from the Board of Elections as of today. Mrs. Cardwell has served on the Board since 1979 and has served continuously for over 27 years. She has served as chair since 1993. The Board and Staff would like to wish her well.

Swearing-In of New Board Member

The Democratic Party submitted a name for a new Board Member. The State Board of Elections affirmed the new Board Member as Linda J. Sutton. Terry Holbrook, Clerk of Superior Court, delivered the oath to Ms. Sutton, swearing her in as a new Board Member.

Election of New Board Officers

Mr. Jordan moved to nominate Mr. Elliott as Chair of the Board of Elections. Ms. Sutton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Elliott moved to nominate Ms. Sutton as Secretary of the Board of Elections. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment Session

Mr. Harold Hairston of the African American Caucus questioned the Board about the use of the iVotronic voting machines in early voting, when a number of people came before the Board and argued against it. Mr. Elliott explained that the Board of Elections members and staff examined voting equipment for more than 2 years and the Board chose to use the optical scan with paper ballots for the precincts and to use touch screen voting machines for the one stop locations. He stated that anyone who wants to vote on a paper ballot may do so. He also explained that the individual ballots cast on the iVotronic were traceable in early voting if there is trouble on machine, which is one reason the Board approved them for use at the one stop locations.

Mr. Jordan explained that the problems have been with Diebold machines, not with the ES&S machines that Forsyth County uses.

Approval of Minutes- September 7, 2006

Mr. Elliott suggested a few minor changes to the September 7 minutes. Mr. Jordan moved to approve the minutes with these changes. Mr. Elliott seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Absentees

The Staff recommended 121 absentees for approval, 3 relative requests for approval, 5 absentees for rejection and 2 cancellations. The Board reviewed the absentees for rejection and Mr. Elliott recommended that 2 be approved. The voters signed in the wrong place. Mr. Elliott suggested checking to see if their signatures were on file to see if they match. The absentees were checked by staff and one voter had a signature on file. Mr. Elliott moved to disapprove 4 of the 5 recommended for disapproval. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Staff reviewed the signatures of the 2 voters who signed their absentee ballot envelopes in the wrong place. One voter had a signature on file and the other did not. Mr. Elliott moved to approve CIV 256 since the voter has a signature on file. Ms. Sutton seconded the motion and it passed 2-1. Mr. Elliott moved to disapprove CIV 267 since there is no signature on file. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Coffman stated that it may be possible for the voter to be contacted so the ballot can be spoiled and a new ballot be reissued. He stated he will clarify this with the State Board of Elections.

Ms. Sutton moved to approve 128 absentees as recommended by the staff. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Review of Absentee Ballots & Counting Thereof (no totals released)

Mr. Elliott stated the Board can count absentees at absentee meetings prior to Election Day so absentee totals will be available earlier. No results would be given prior to Election Day. The voting equipment used to count the ballots could be secured and password protected.

Mr. Elliott moved to count the absentees at the next board meeting. Mr. Jordan stated he would feel more comfortable if the Board waited until Election Day. Mr. Elliott stated that state law allows the absentee ballots to be counted prior to Election Day. Mr. Elliott and the Board decided to wait until the next board meeting to make a final decision regarding counting absentee ballots prior to Election Day.

Review of Election Preparations

The Staff completed the testing of the voting equipment. Mr. Coffman stated that no machine will go to a precinct or to the one stop location that has not been completely tested. He stated there were temporary employees hired to help expedite the testing.

The Board and Staff discussed one stop procedures. Mr. Coffman stated his goal is to have 12 machines for early voting. Mr. Elliott suggested ways to have more machines available for the weekends.

Mr. Elliott suggested sending instructions to all the precinct judges regarding the new provisional envelopes. The Board and Staff discussed precinct workers and placement of new workers.

The Board and Staff discussed the precinct manual. Mr. Coffman stated it is ready to be reviewed by the Board.

Mr. Coffman discussed the plan for the Board of Elections Staff to pre-run the zero tapes on the voting equipment prior to the delivery of equipment. He stated he has consulted with the State Board of Elections and they agreed it was a worthwhile plan and it meets the SBOE's security requirements. Mr. Coffman stated that after the reports run there will be a safety seal installed and as an added safety measure, the machines would be password protected. Additionally, he stated the PEB will be with the Chief Judge until Election Day. When the precinct workers open the polls, the machines will indicate zero votes on the screen. Mr. Elliott stated there should be a chain of custody and wants the signatures of the election worker who locks the equipment and the precinct worker who opens the polls.

Calendar Review

The Board stated the next meeting will be October 24 for the purpose of reviewing absentees and again on Election Day, November 7th.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Demonstration of One Stop Voting Procedures

The Board announced there will be demonstration of the voting equipment being used at the one stop location. Mr. Elliott stated that the Board would adjourn and then participate in the demonstration.

Adjournment

Ms. Sutton moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM.

s:/ Mr. J. Eric Elliott, Chair

s:/ Ms. Linda J. Sutton, Secretary

s:/ Mr. Jerry D. Jordan, Member