

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Ken Raymond
Chairman

Stuart Russell
Secretary

Fleming El-Amin
Member



Tim Tsujii
Director

Lamar Joyner
Deputy Director

FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2016 – 4 p.m.

1. Meeting Called to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Moment of Silence
4. Public Comments
5. Discussion of One-Stop Voting Schedule for General Election
6. Petition Review
7. Other Business
8. Closed Session (If needed)
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FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2016 – 4 p.m.

Meeting Called to Order

A meeting of the Forsyth County Board of Elections was called to order in the third floor meeting room on July 15, 2016. The meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m., Chairman Raymond presiding.

Board Members in attendance: Chairman Ken Raymond, Secretary Stuart Russell, and Member Fleming El-Amin

Staff Members in attendance: Director Tim Tsujii, Deputy Director Lamar Joyner, Chris Duffey, and Kimberly Stuck

Other Staff: Lonnie Albright – Assistant County Attorney

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Raymond led the pledge of allegiance.

Moment of Silence

Chairman Raymond led a moment of silence.

Public Comments

Chairman Raymond opened the public comment session with instructions. Speakers were asked to complete a public comment card and would have two minutes or less to speak. The speaker's name and address should be stated for the record. Questions should be included during the allotted time and answers would be given at the close of the session. A speaker's time could not be given to another individual. At the close of the public comment session, no additional statements or questions would be heard from the public. The public comment session included the following speakers:

Ronald Buchanon – 1772 Huntington Woods Ct, Winston-Salem, NC 27103

David Ajamy – 1022 Polo Rd., Winston-Salem, NC 27106

Cama Merritt – 1244 Arbor Rd. #224, Winston-Salem, NC 27104

Eugena Huary – 1834 Wake Forest Rd, Winston-Salem, NC 27106

Zachary Bynum (Democracy NC) – 1834 Wake Forest Rd, Winston Salem, NC 27106

Eric S. Ellison (Forsyth County Democratic Party) – 442 Wachovia St., Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Linda Sutton (Democracy NC) - 3025 Marmon St., Winston Salem, NC 27127

Annette Scippio – 531 Barbara Jane Ave, Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Issac Howard (WS/FC Branch NAACP) – 8884 Red Bank Rd., Germanton, NC 27019

Jake Gellargo – 5147 Winster Dr. #303, Winston-Salem, NC 27106

Serena Witzke – 5147 Winster Dr. # 104, Winston-Salem, NC 27106

T.H.M. Gellar-Goad – 5147 Winster Dr. #303, Winston-Salem, NC 27106

Marryann Leftwich – 4757 Topsail Ln., Winston-Salem, NC 27107

Jemma Johnson – 4609 Sun Valley Ln., Kernersville, NC 27284

Senator Paul Lowe – 807 West End Blvd., Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Carolyn Williams (Easton Community) 1001 Glencairn Rd., Winston-Salem, NC 27107

Chairman Raymond moved to close public comments; Secretary Russell motioned, Member El-Amin seconded; **Motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Raymond addressed speakers, as most spoke regarding the Anderson Center. Chairman Raymond assured those in attendance that sites would be equal, and accessible to all including students.

Chairman Raymond opened the discussion of sites and hours to the other Board members. Secretary Russell noted that in a historical context balanced plans have worked without the Anderson Center. Secretary Russell inquired of Member El-Amin if a plan without Anderson Center would be an issue, to which Member El-Amin stated that the plan he would present includes Anderson Center. Secretary Russell offered that Reynolds Park Recreation would provide good access for the area.

Director Tsujii stated that he had made inquiry with Harper Hill Commons for use in lieu of South Fork Community Center. Mr. Tsujii also suggested as an alternative the Odd Fellows Club House located directly behind South Fork Community Center. Both facilities are either private and/or non-profit and would require a minimal fee for use. Director Tsujii noted that the Odd Fellows representative did offer a large room for our use.

Secretary Russell verified the previous usage of Harper Hill Commons location; stating that he believed Harper Hill Commons to be a better option than the Odd Fellows Clubhouse due to previous experience with the site and its accessibility. Secretary Russell requested a letter be sent to South Fork Community Center noting understanding of the scheduling conflict this cycle, desire of the Board to use their facility in the future, and requesting communication prior to scheduling of events. Secretary Russell also commended the staff for their efforts in finding alternate sites.

Member El-Amin commented that he recorded 30 people that spoke to the use of the Anderson Center during the public comment session. Member El-Amin stated that the Anderson Center would be included on his plan and requested that if Anderson Center was not included on the other members' plan that an explanation be provided.

Chairman Raymond deferred to Director Tsujii regarding potential use of Calvary Baptist Church. Mr. Tsujii advised the site would not be available.

Secretary Russell offered to go with the site map that included Reynolds Park, substituting Sprague Street Recreation with Harper Hill Commons. Secretary Russell stated the plan provides coverage for the dense areas as well as satellite sites around the county; the plan also offers extended hours on Saturday.

Chairman Raymond read for the record and public the sites on Plan 1: Board of Elections, Reynolds Park Recreation, Polo Park Recreation Center, Clemmons Library, Mazie Woodruff Center, Kernersville Senior Center/Library, Lewisville Library, Old Towne Recreation Center, Rural Hall Library, Southside Library, Walkertown Library, Brown Douglas Recreation Center, Miller Park Recreation Center, Harper Hill Commons, and Sedge Garden Recreation Center. Secretary Russell agreed with list provided.

Member El-Amin read for the record and the public the plan he was recommending: Board of Elections, WSSU – Anderson Center, Brown Douglas Recreation Center, Industries for the Blind, Clemmons Library, Kernersville Senior Center/Library, Lewisville Library, Mazie Woodruff Center, Miller Park Recreation Center, Old Town Recreation Center, Polo Park Recreation Center, Rural Hall Library, Southside Library, Sprague Street Recreation, and Walkertown Library.

Secretary Russell proposed using Industries for the Blind in lieu of Brown Douglas; Chairman Raymond spoke to the staff's findings regarding potential parking issues. Member El-Amin stated that Industries for the Blind and their representatives came to the meetings on two occasions. Continuing Member El-Amin stated that he believes that both Brown Douglas Recreation Center as well as Industries for the Blind serves a specific need in the community.

Chairman Raymond commented that the Board had received a report from the staff that parking could be an issue and would not support using the site based on staff recommendations. Chairman Raymond stated that he was prepared to support the use of Harper Hill Commons in lieu of Sprague Street Recreation.

Chairman Raymond read for the record and public Early Voting Plan 1: Board of Elections, Reynolds Park Recreation, Clemmons Library, Maize Woodruff Center, Kernersville Senior Center/Library, Lewisville Library, Old Town Recreation Center, Rural Hall Library, Southside Library, Walkertown Library, Brown Douglas Recreation Center, Polo Park Recreation Center, Harper Hill Commons, and Sedge Garden Recreation Center. Chairman Raymond also recommended using Plan 1's hours (see attached).

Chairman Raymond motioned to accept Plan 1 sites and hours; Member El-Amin inquired if anyone in the Harper Hill Commons area had requested the site; Chairman Raymond noted that without South Fork Community Center the western part of the county would not have coverage. Chairman Raymond motioned to accept the Early Voting sites and hours as provided by Plan 1, Secretary Russell seconded; Member El-Amin called for a point of discussion before voting, requesting Chairman Raymond to read the hours for Early Voting Plan 1 for full disclosure. The hours were read (see attached). Secretary Russell verified that all members of the Board had a copy of Plan 1, all stated yes.

Chairman Raymond stated motion two in favor as stated in original motion and Member El-Amin opposed. **Vote carried by majority.**

Petition Review

Director Tsujii stated the process of re-verification of the names submitted by Ms. Allen was nearly complete and that upon completion a spreadsheet outlining the status of the signatures whether approved or disapproved. Mr. Tsujii noted that 27 signatures so far were identified to be approved and provided the Board two signatures for verification against their voter registration form.

Chairman Raymond responded to Ms. Allen that the Board had received her letter. The Board continued through the review process, approving signatures reviewed.

Chairman Raymond moved forward to address the letter submitted by Ms. Allen. Director Tsujii stated that he had forwarded a copy of the letter submitted to the Board of Elections office with

questions and concerns regarding the handling of her petition as well as the verification process and the staff. Mr. Tsujii addressed the last letter submitted by Ms. Allen calling for an investigation of performance of the staff about the handling of her petition. Director Tsujii reiterated statements made in a prior meeting regarding review by the Board to allow for additional review to insure the signatures were handled correctly and a desire for transparency in the petition process. Mr. Tsujii also noted that the entire process has been done in consultation with the State Board of Elections agency counsel and staff.

Director Tsujii addressed Ms. Allen's first point in the most recent letter concerning misinformation; Mr. Tsujii restated that the State Board of Elections was fully aware of the actions and information provided by the Forsyth County Board of Elections and staff. Director Tsujii also addressed the concern for written guidelines; noting that she was provided the only written guidelines available from the State Board of Elections. Mr. Tsujii went on to provide an overview of the guidelines and the petition checking module noting that per N.C.G.S. §163-296 which states, "The Board of Elections shall examine and verify the signatures on the petition, and shall certify only the names of signers who are found to be qualified registered voters in the municipality."

Director Tsujii read for the record and public guidance provided by George McCue – North Carolina State Board of Elections Agency Counsel (see attached) detailing the review, verification, and the need for review of signatures.

Mr. Tsujii addressed Ms. Allen's third point regarding questions and concerns regarding the performance of Ms. Kimberly Stuck on the processing of the first 400 signatures that were verified by Ms. Stuck. Director Tsujii reiterated that Ms. Stuck was not the only one that was involved in processing the first 400 signatures referring to the SEIMS Petition Operator Summary.

Director Tsujii addressed the statutes referenced in Ms. Allen's letter and provided clarification of N.C.G.S. §163-182.1 which pertains to procedures and rules for counting official ballots not petition signatures; additionally that N.C.G.S. §163-296 is the statutory guidance for verifying petition signatures. Mr. Tsujii noted that the process is necessary and is important to insure that those that sign the petition are in fact in the municipality, are registered voter and for the protection of the public. Director Tsujii stated that he has the utmost confidence in the staff and that is why it was being presented in purview of the public.

Chairman Raymond inquired of the other Board members if they had any questions, prior to addressing Ms. Allen directly, no questions were asked. Ms. Allen insisted that Mr. Tsujii did not provide the Board the complete summary and requested to respond to Mr. Tsujii's comments and the process. Chairman Raymond asked the Board if they had any objections to giving the floor to Ms. Allen, none were given.

Ms. Allen stated that the Board was in place to help everyone. She addressed 23 signatures that were missing. Ms. Allen stated that her goal was to make sure that everyone did his or her job. Ms. Allen addressed comments in a previous letter that she would be responsible to bring any perceived

discrepancy or request for re-verification. Ms. Allen stated that the Board of Elections works for the community, and addressed her concerns regarding the work of the staff and requested that people be held accountable.

Chairman Raymond deferred to Mr. Tsujii to address resolving the discrepancy in the count of signatures. Chairman Raymond requested staff to recheck the petition signature sheets to verify that none were missing or were not full sheets.

Chairman Raymond read from Ms. Allen's July 4, 2016 letter, paragraph 4, regarding the missing 23 signatures as well as the verification process and procedures. Chairman Raymond addressed the letter given to Ms. Allen regarding the petition module procedures. Ms. Allen addressed the process, and asserting that the process was not followed. Chairman Raymond presented an overview of the information provided to Ms. Allen that provided detailed reasons for disapproval. Ms. Allen asserted that the process wasn't followed in verifying, and stated that she wanted to make sure that the Board understood the process. Director Tsujii showed the Board the process of verifying signatures in a live demonstration using a name from the petition sheets.

Chairman Raymond asked Ms. Allen for a response to the petition signee Billy Phillips and his comments that he did not sign the petition. Ms. Allen stated that Mr. Phillips stated that he was a victim of identity theft.

Chairman Raymond also responded to Ms. Allen's comments regarding an investigation by the FBI, made it known that none of the Board members or Mr. Albright have been contacted by the FBI. Chairman Raymond reiterated his confidence in the leadership of Mr. Tsujii and performance of the staff.

Secretary Russell stated that he is satisfied that the staff has explained the issues, noting that he did not believe a resolution would be found at this time.

Chairman Raymond spoke to the willingness to present the information in a public forum and commended Mr. Tsujii for his transparency.

Member El-Amin spoke to the transparency being above board, the 200 hours invested being proof that the staff has been diligent in processing the petitions; and offered his disapproval of Ms. Allen's questioning of the staff's integrity and the assertion that the staff was intentionally trying to do harm to anyone. Member El-Amin applauded the staff and accepted the recommendations. Chairman Raymond verified the number of hours that have been utilized in processing Ms. Allen's petition; Mr. Tsujii verified 200 plus, 10 staff, and himself.

Other Business

Director Tsujii provided an updated on a public request to record the Board of Elections meeting. Mr. Tsujii spoke with the County Manager and he explained it would be a capital expense to cover equipment and personnel. Additionally, the County Commissioners room would not support Canvass, and if in scheduling a meeting there were to be a conflict with the Commissioners schedule, their meeting would take priority. Mr. Tsujii also noted that no other Forsyth county boards record their meeting other than the County Board of Commissioners.

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Member El-Amin inquired about the cost per meeting; Director Tsujii stated it was \$400 per meeting or \$200 with one person to operate the equipment. The Board and Mr. Tsujii discussed recording alternatives.

Member El-Amin referring to the Early Voting plan noted that an alternate plan would be submitted. Director Tsujii stated the submission date was July 29, 2016.

Chairman Raymond motioned to adjourn meeting, Secretary Russell seconded; **Motion carried unanimously**. Meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

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Approved:

Ken Raymond, Chair

Date

Stuart Russell, Secretary

Date

Fleming El-Amin, Member

Date