



McDowell County Board of Elections

MEMBERS

Dean Buff, Chairman
JR Hachadurian, Secretary
Kim Welborn, Director of Elections

MEMBERS

Dean Buff
JR Hachadurian
Tom Cline
Kay House
Della Watson

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Board Members Present: Dean Buff *AB*
JR Hachadurian *JRH*
Kay House *KBH*
Tom Cline *TC*
Della Watson *DW*

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Kim Welborn, Director
Jane Propst, Deputy Director

Public Attendees: Barbara Hilty
Marty Elliott
Susan Elliott
Suzanne Fisher
Karen Honor

Opening

Quorum is present.

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, March 5, 2024 were presented. Kay House motioned to approve, seconded by JR Hachadurian. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Old Business

New Business

1. The board agreed to allow the staff to prepare and sort the ballots for the Random Sample Audit.
2. The Supplemental Absentee Ballots were presented, 6 Civilian and 2 Overseas received on Election Day. Della Watson motioned to approve Civilian, seconded by Tom Cline. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. JR Hachadurian motioned to approve Overseas, seconded by Kay House. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. The ballots were placed in tabulator.

PO Box 1509 2458 NC 226 S., Marion, North Carolina 28752
Phone (828) 659-0834 FAX (828) 659-3294

E-mail: mcdowell.boe@gmail.com * Web page: www.mcdowellboe.com

3. The Provisionals were presented. 29 in total (2 from Early Voting and 27 from Election Day). See attached list. Mar 4-1 Photo ID Exception Form Kay House motioned to approve, seconded by Tom Cline. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. Glenwd 10-1 Photo ID Exception Form Kay House motioned to approve, seconded by JR Hachadurian. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. M Cove 12-4 Photo ID Exception Form Tom Cline motioned to approve, seconded by Kay House. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. Della Watson motioned to approve 11 of the 29 provisional ballots presented, seconded by JR Hachadurian. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. Three ballots are still pending until Friday, March 15 at Canvass. The voters have until March 14 at 5:00 p.m. to bring in Voter Photo ID.
4. An incident report from Glenwood precinct on Election Day was presented. A voter contacted the office on March 6, 2024 and spoke with the Deputy Director about a precinct official that made inappropriate political comments. The precinct official beside them heard the comment. The voter reported the comment to the tabulator precinct official and then to the Chief Judge. After much discussion JR Hachadurian motioned to remove the precinct official, seconded by Kay House. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.
5. A second primary request from the Lt. Governor (Rep) was submitted to the NC State Board of Elections. The Director and Deputy Director met with the Finance Director yesterday and discussed the budget. Additional funds will be necessary to complete this budget year. A second primary would be held May 14, 2024.
6. The Early Voting for the Second Primary was discussed. Dean Buff motioned to conduct the early voting within the board of elections office, with voting hours the same as business hours 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. with one Saturday, May 11, 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. which is required by law, seconded by Della Watson. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.
7. The Voter ID Seminar conducted by the NC State Board of Elections will be held on Tuesday, March 19 at 10:00 a.m. in the board of elections office.
8. The Required 30 Day Sort Count will be conducted within the board of elections office on Monday, March 18 at 9:00 a.m. 16 precinct officials will (both Dem. and Rep.) feed the Provisional, Absentee, Early Voting ballots back through the tabulators after separating by precinct. These totals will then be reported to the state.
9. The Director and Deputy Director visited the Ashford North Cove Fire Department Monday, March 11 to view the new section of the fire department for the voters to use. This is a request from the fire department and will allow the voters to be on the end where the parking lot is and to ensure the voters will not block the fire truck bays. This setup is accessible and is much better flow for the voters. The buffer zone would need to be updated from the side door of the fire department 50' from the door to the well house. Tom Cline motioned to make the change approving the buffer zone change as well, seconded by Kay House. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. This change meets the 45 day deadline to include the change effective for the May 14, 2024 Second Primary. A change from the Higgins site, and move to the new Sugar Hill Fire Department will be the same for Second Primary as used in the Primary. These two polling places will be viewed after the Second Primary in preparation to make the change effective for the November General Election.
10. A new Public Comment Policy was presented. There is not one of these in place for the McDowell County Board of Elections since public comments was placed on the agenda for each board meeting. Each board member will view and will vote on this Friday, March 15, 2024.
11. The 2024-2025 budget was discussed. Kay House motioned to approve as presented with request for additional employee and monies for early voting site in Old Fort, seconded by JR Hachadurian. No further discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

12. For the Second Primary in order to lower the cost, the staff recommends a temporary transfer of voters for the Second Primary only. By law if the lines between precincts are contiguous then a transfer can be done. Transfer Crooked Creek and Old Fort #1 to vote at Old Fort #2; transfer North Cove and Pleasant Gardens to vote at Turkey Cove; transfer Marion #2, 3, 4, 5 to Marion #1; transfer Higgins and Dysartsville to Nebo; and transfer Montford Cove and Glenwood to West Marion. After much discussion, JR Hachadurian motioned to make the changes, seconded by Kay House. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. This will be contingent on the Executive Director of the NC State Board of Elections approval.
13. The random sample audit was completed by the board and matched the tabulator totals perfectly. Higgins and Marion #3 precincts were assigned to count the Presidential Preference contest on each. Tom Cline motioned to approve the Higgins count as perfectly matched, seconded by Della Watson. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. Tom Cline motioned to approve the Marion #3 count as perfectly matched, seconded by Kay House. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

General Discussion

Public Comments

Suzanne Fisher

Adjournment

Dean Buff motioned to adjourn at 11:30 a.m.

The next meeting will be held March 15 at 11:00 a.m to conduct Canvass of the Primary election.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly Welborn, Director

March 12, 2024

PO Box 1509 2458 NC 226 S., Marion, North Carolina 28752

Phone (828) 659-0834 FAX (828) 659-3294

E-mail: mcdowell.boe@gmail.com * Web page: www.mcdowellboe.com