Madison County Board of Elections

Meeting Minutes –Monthly Meeting

April 16, 2025

The Madison County Board of Elections held a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at Suite E, Room 16, 5707 US 25-70 Hwy, Marshall, 28753. In attendance: Jerry Wallin, Chair; Dyatt Smathers, Secretary; Brian Ball (via telephone), Member; Ray Lewis, Member; Debbie Ponder, Member; Jacob Ray, Director; Kathy Ray; Elections Specialist; and one member of the public.

Call to Order:

- Chair Wallin called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Agenda:

- Motion (DS, JW) to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Minutes:

- Motion (DS, RL) to approve March 19, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Members' Report:

- Secretary Smathers reported on fielding the publics questions regarding the Griffin-Riggs election dispute. Questions are difficult to answer as the case is still being litigated, and there are no definitive answers.
- Secretary Smathers cited House Bill 440. If the Bill becomes law, there will be no 2025 special election for a bond referendum.
- Secretary Smathers cited House Bill 85. If the Bill becomes law, it will amend the requirements regarding the required number of emergency day assistants. He commented that we are very fortunate with staffing our polling sites.

Director's Report:

- The Director reported that the IT department has ordered the laptops.
- The Director gave an update on the current budget and plans for using surplus funds. He also informed the Board of an upcoming 2025-2026 budget meeting, April 29th at 11:05 a.m., and invited them to attend. He elaborated that the line items for travel and training are being eliminated from the 2025-2026 budget proposal. Funds for these expenses will have to be requested as needed across the fiscal year.
- The Director gave an update on the Griffin lists of challenged voters. Madison County has only 2 voters on the lists whose votes may have to be extracted from the count. The State Board of Elections is providing guidance for the county boards of elections as court decisions are being made.
- The Director gave an update on the court case regarding the Board Member appointment date. A court ruling will be made by May 1st.
- The Director commented on the Presidential Executive Orders to make changes to election rules. The North Carolina State Board has emphasized that county boards stay focused on their work and wait for court decisions and State Board guidance.

- Due to the time constraints, the Director recommended a pause on the South Marshall – North Marshall Precincts consolidation decision until after the 2026 elections to allow ample time for public input and planning. A discussion ensued regarding public responses to consolidating the two precincts, the loss of precinct representation during potential county official vacancies, budget implications, and potential polling sites. Concluding comments indicated that a decision will be made following the 2026 elections and by citing **General Statute §163-128 Election Precincts and Voting Places Established or Altered** as the ruling guide for county boards of elections.

Public Comment:

- Cheryl Williams commented that the elections office staff does a great job and complement each other. She also thanked Secretary Smathers for letting her know about the resource, **Electionline**. She informed the board that the League of Women Voters of NC has joined in the litigation on the Riggs case on the side of "Never Lived in NC" in part because of the counties targeted. She added that the league has also started its registration season and has been invited back to the High School's Senior Resource Fair. She concluded her comments by sharing her plan to attend the upcoming State Elections Conference.

Adjournment:

- Motion (DS, JW) to adjourn at 4:01 p.m. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Announcement:

Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

Chair _____ Secretary _____