Madison County Board of Elections

Meeting Minutes –Monthly Meeting

January 15, 2025

The Madison County Board of Elections held a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at Suite E, Room 16, 5707 US 25-70 Hwy, Marshall, 28753. In attendance: Jerry Wallin, Chair; Dyatt Smathers, Secretary; Brian Ball Member; Ray Lewis, Member; Debbie Ponder, Member; Jacob Ray, Director; Brandi Rice, Madison County Human Resources Director; Kathy Ray, Board of Elections Assistant; and one member of the public.

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

Agenda:

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

Minutes:

- Motion (DS, BB) to approve October 29, 2024, Absentee Meeting Minutes, November 4, 2024, Absentee Meeting Minutes, November 5, 2024, Meeting Minutes, and November 14, 2024, Absentee Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Personnel:

The director introduced Madison County's Human Resources Director Brandi Rice to the board and informed the board of the county's intent to change the director's employment status from exempt to non-exempt status. Ms. Rice discussed and answered questions from the board on why the county had proposed this change in the director's exemption status. Discussion ensued by the board, staff, and Ms. Rice.

Motion (DS, BB) to have the county attorney review the Fair Labor Standards Act and provide an opinion on the exemption status of the director's position. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Members' Report:

- Member Lewis expressed his concerns with the potential change to the director's exemption status.
- Member Ball commented on the discussion with Ms. Rice and the NC Supreme Court protest.
- Secretary Smathers commented on the discussion with Ms. Rice and his research of the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Member Ponder requested that the chair, secretary, and director meet with the county attorney to discuss the board's position on the exemption status of the director.
- Chair Wallin spoke about his experience as a county commissioner dealing with the Board of Elections and the potential conflict of interest that could happen if the county commissioners had more influence over the Director of the Board of Elections.

Director's Report:

- The Director provided an update on 2025 municipal election planning, changes to the Hot Springs charter, Hurricane Helene reimbursement, equipment procurement this fiscal year, changes to poll-worker training, and Senate Bill 382 withits election law changes.

Public Comment:

- Cheryl Willaims complimented the board on how they addressed the personnel matter and commented on the improving poll worker training.

Adjournment:

Motion (DS, JW) to adjourn at 4:15 p.m. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Announcement:
Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

Chair Jerry Wallin

Secretary Regina Smallin