Madison County Board of Elections

Meeting Minutes –Monthly Meeting

March 19, 2025

The Madison County Board of Elections held a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, March 19, 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; 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, JW) to approve February 26, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Members' Report:

- Secretary Smathers summarized House Bill 411 and its potential impact on future elections regarding the reduction of early voting hours for primary, second primary, and special elections. The Bill also allows the Governor the ability to adjust early voting hours in special primary elections held to fill vacancies in the US House of Representatives. The Bill is currently in committee but could become law.
- Secretary Smathers reported that Watauga County Board of Elections recently took public comment and discussed the purchase of new election equipment because Elections System &Software (ES&S) is phasing out support for the machines they currently have. He asked if the ES&S action affects any of Madison County's voting equipment. The Director assured Secretary Smathers that Madison County's voting equipment is not affected as the county has already gone through the process of updating its ES&S voting equipment from the earlier models that are being phased out.

Director's Report:

- The Director presented a deadline of June 30th to have completed plans and packets to the NC State Board of Elections for any proposed precinct consolidations. A discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of consolidating the North Marshall and South Marshall Precincts and the lack of available voting sites with the Sandy Mush and South Marshall Precincts. The need for more public input and technical information was discussed and emphasized. New information will be presented and considered at the April Board meeting.
- The Director reported that following consultation with the Director of AB Tech Madison Campus and Marshall Town Manager, the AB Tech Madison Campus is available and ideal for hosting the upcoming Town of Marshall Municipal Election.
- The Director reported 10 new laptops have been purchased and will be reflected in the next budget report.

- The Director reported there were no issues expressed during the proposed 2025-2026 budget meeting. Board Member comments were made regarding recruitment strategies for poll workers.
- The Director explained the reason for the credit made to the 2024-2025 legal advertising line item. Board member comments were made regarding the municipal election payments for election services, the possibility of municipal primary elections, and filing requirements for unaffiliated candidates.

Public Comment:

- Cheryl Williams thanked the Board for all its hard work. She also shared what she is learning while attending neighboring counties' board of elections meetings.

Adjournment:

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

Announcement:

Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

Chair Jerry Wallin

Secretary Dyatt Smalls