

**MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
REGULAR SESSION
Board of Elections Conference Room
Wednesday, January 11, 2017
3:00 PM**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smathers called the meeting of the Madison County Board of Elections to order at 3:04 p.m. at the Board of Elections Conference Room. In attendance were 3 members of the public; Dyatt F. Smathers, Chair; Ray Lewis, Secretary; Jerry Wallin, Member; Wade Gahagan, Deputy Director; and Kathy Ray, Director.

AGENDA

Moved, Seconded (RL, JW) and Carried (3,0) to set the agenda. The Director requested adding the Certified Elections Registration Administrators (CERA) training under New Business and a discussion of Voter Registrations and 1861 Old Murray Road under Other Matters.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved, Seconded (RL, JW) and Carried (3,0) to approve the May 11, 2016 meeting minutes.

Member Wallin commented that the minutes from the December 14, 2016 meeting contained a citizen's comment that may be taken out of context and misinterpreted to mean that all three board members did not conduct board business in an impartial manner. The Chair acknowledged Member Wallin's input and expressed that the intent of the citizen's comment was to express her satisfaction with the impartial actions of the current county board of elections even though its membership was determined by political party affiliation and recommendation.

Moved, Seconded (JW, RL) and Carried (3,0) to approve the December 14, 2016 meetings minutes.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Smathers commented that the uncertainty surrounding recent legislative actions and judges' rulings regarding North Carolina elections laws has presented planning challenges for 2017 election activities. He added that the State Board of Elections will need to provide guidance before the local board of elections can move forward with discussions about voting equipment replacement.

The Chair complimented the office staff for the office running so smoothly and the Board for its collegial decision making.

The Chair finalized his report by responding to fielded concerns regarding the gridlock in decision-making that could result from bi-partisan four member boards of elections. He referenced how the current three member board had successfully reached compromises to obtain the required unanimous votes to avoid having to submit proposals and/or plans to the State Board of Elections for resolution, and that he felt that a bi-partisan board would act likewise to achieve the required majority votes.

MEMBERS' REPORT

Secretary Lewis affirmed The Chair's comments and indicated we were waiting on further instructions from the State Board of Elections.

Member Wallin commented that the current Board has worked well together to make the best decisions for the county and voters.

Chair Smathers expressed his opinion that the recent changes to election laws and technology advancements are taking politics out of the elections business.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The December 31, 2016 budget and expenditure report was presented and discussed.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion ensued regarding voting equipment needs. Deputy Director Gahagan supplied the Board with data on voting equipment currently in use across the state. The voting equipment discussion will continue at the February 8th meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

The Director presented a breakdown of training costs for all State Board of Elections and Certified Elections Registration Administrators (CERA) trainings through July 2017. The cost projections for CERA trainings include expenses for the Deputy Director to begin the certification program.

Moved, Seconded (DS, RL) and Carried (3,0) to approve the February, May, and July Certified Elections Registration Administrator (CERA) trainings for Director Kathy Ray and Deputy Director Wade Gahagan and for Temporary Office Assistant Jacob Ray to cover the Board of Elections office during all SBOE and CERA trainings. Excess funds in the salaries temporary, professional services, office supplies, and capital equipment line items will be shifted to travel and training related line items to cover SBOE and CERA training workshop expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The Chair read State Board of Elections Public Information Officer Patrick Gannon's January 5, 2017 email statement that the merger between the State Board of Elections and State Ethics Commission is off for now, as are any changes to the makeup of county boards, pending the outcome of the *Cooper vs. Berger* court case.

OTHER MATTERS

A discussion ensued regarding voter registrations at 1861 Old Murray Road and e911 residential address assignments. The Board asked the Director to follow up with e911 regarding the need for a residential address for a home on a tract of property adjacent to 1861 Old Murray Road.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

A citizen expressed concern that voting equipment vendors will be able to meet the supply and demand of states and counties that are replacing voting equipment.

A citizen expressed her concern about the state legislature's ruling to disband the current composition of the Board of Elections and make it a four member bi-partisan board. She emphasized that gridlock between political parties could occur on decisions such as determining early voting sites.

The Chair stated for the record, "Member Wallin as a senior member of the board has been kind to the other party people here and a pleasure to work with. We have disagreed occasionally, but we have never been disagreeable."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Board of Elections meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 8, 2017.

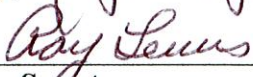
Moved, Seconded (RL, JW) and Carried (3,0) to adjourn at 4:15 P.M.



Kathy Ray, Director



Dyatt Smathers, Chairman



Ray Lewis, Secretary