

**MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
REGULAR SESSION
Board of Elections Conference Room
Wednesday, March 8, 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 4 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved, Seconded (RL, JW) and Carried (3,0) to approve the meeting minutes for February 8 and February 28, 2017.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Smathers acknowledged that the Board of Elections lost a very important member of the Board of Elections team with the recent passing of Beech Glen Precinct Chief Judge Neal Willis. He reported a huge crowd at the funeral home visitation. He commemorated Mr. Willis for his exemplary service and longevity (over 25 years) as a county poll worker and precinct official, and expressed appreciation for Mr. Willis' efforts. He added that Mr. Willis was fun to be with, worked hard, on time, knowledgeable, cooperative, and took care of problems.

Chair Smathers commented that there will be a new Board Chair with the new Board member appointments. The composition of the Board will depend upon pending court rulings.

Chair Smathers stated that he had set 2 personal goals to accomplish before the current Board leaves office. The first was to see something done about the voting equipment. Secondly, he wanted to complete the Board Member Certification Program.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The February 28, 2017 budget and expenditure report was presented and discussed.

The Director provided information regarding the Wilmington Conference and expenses.

The Director provided information regarding the 2017 Municipal Election Packets. She indicated that the enclosed cost estimates and the 2017-2018 budget proposal do not include funds for providing absentee voting services.

The Deputy Director provided information regarding the filing dates for the 2017 Municipal Elections.

CLOSED SESSION (PERSONNEL)

The Chair moved the closed session to follow CITIZENS COMMENTS

OLD BUSINESS

The Chair commented on the problems the Board experienced while using the old election equipment (m100 optical scanners) during the 2016 November General Election.

Moved, Seconded (DS, RL) and Carried (3,0) to allow Dr. Ray to negotiate with ES&S the purchase of 2 DS200 ballot imagers and software, utilizing the funding the county has set aside for the purchase of new voting equipment.

NEW BUSINESS

The Director requested 2 temporary staff members cover the office during the July 2017 Elections' Center classes as the classes and the Municipal filing period occur concurrently.

Moved, Seconded (JW, RL) and Carried (3,0) to hire Shirley Ponder and Jacob Ray as temporary office assistants during the July Elections' Center classes.

The Director requested to move the May 10, 2017 regular Board meeting to May 3, 2017. The May 10th date conflicts with the Auburn University Elections' Center classes.

Moved, Seconded (RL, JW) and Carried (3,0) to hold the May Board meeting on May 3rd at 3:00 p.m.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

A citizen commented about reports of closing out the Sandy Mush Precinct. The citizen requested the criteria for closing precincts. The Chair summarized the Board's action on identifying and rating all the current and potential polling sites during the February 28th special called meeting. He inquired about the use of churches as polling sites.

He also expressed that has a problem with the system that designates party responsibilities and names the parties. He pointed out the growth in the Unaffiliated population and indicated that there are other legitimate political parties that do not have sufficient numbers to get on the restricted ballot and lack sufficient representation.

A citizen expressed concern about the distances voters would have to drive on Election Day if Sandy Mush Precinct is closed. She suggested that many polling site issues could be solved if the state moved to a voting by mail election system.

A citizen commented that, from his understanding, the quality of leadership is more of a political question. The Board provides the mechanics.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Board of Elections meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19, 2017.

The NCADE District meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 2017.

The Printelect Buyer's Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21, 2017.

The Wilmington NCADE Conference is scheduled for April 10-11, 2017.

The Concord SBOE Conference is scheduled for August 7-8, 2017.

CLOSED SESSION (PERSONNEL)

Moved, Seconded (DS, RL) and Carried (3,0) to go into a personnel session to discuss salaries.

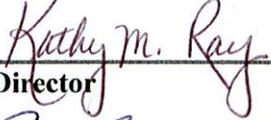
The Chair expressed appreciation for the job performance of Deputy Director Wade Gahagan. He informed the Deputy Director that the Board is struggling with the need to keep overtime hours at a minimum. The Chair has asked the Director to research exempt vs. non-exempt employment status for future payroll discussions.

The Board reconvened in open session at 4:56 p.m.

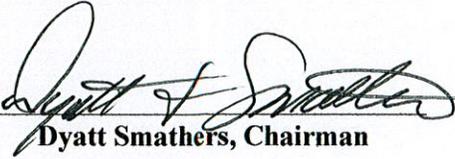
Moved, Seconded (DS, RL) and Carried (3,0) to use the salaries temp line item in the current budget to pay all the overtime due to Deputy Director Gahagan.

Moved, Seconded (JW, RL) and Carried (3,0) to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

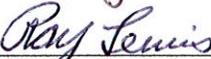
The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:00 P.M.



Kathy Ray, Director



Dyatt Smathers, Chairman



Ray Lewis, Secretary