

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

75 Stamp Act Drive NE · Building H
PO Box 2 · Bolivia · NC · 28422
www.brunswickcountync.gov/elections

Phone: 910-253-2620
Fax: 910-253-2618
elections@brunswickcountync.gov

Board Meeting Agenda June 18, 2024 · 2:00 pm · Regular Meeting

This meeting will be held in the Commissioners' Chambers of the David R. Sandifer Building, 30 Government Center Drive NE, Bolivia, NC, 28422.

Members of the public may observe the meeting in-person or via live video feed online using [Zoom](#). You will need to have Zoom installed on your computer or mobile device prior to joining the webinar; no registration or passcode is required.

- 1. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - a. May 24, 2024 – Pre-Canvass & Canvass Meeting
- 4. Public Comments**
 - a. Any individual or group who wishes to address the board may make a request to be on the agenda to the Board of Elections Staff. Public comments should be limited to three to five minutes.
 - b. A public comment portal allows those not in attendance during a board meeting to address the board. Any comments received by the start of a board meeting will be read aloud during the public comment period. [Public Comment Portal Link](#)
- 5. Director's Report**
- 6. Old Business**
 - a. Public Comment Policy
- 7. New Business**
 - a. Consideration of alternative Early Voting Location in Southport
- 8. Adjourn**

The next board meeting is a regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Commissioners Chambers of the David R. Sandifer Administration Building.

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Meeting Minutes · Pre-Canvass & Canvass Meeting · March 14, 2024 · 9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Timothy M. Randall, and Member Randy Pelton (by phone for Canvass portion)

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, Assistant Computer Technician Walter Norton

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Julie Paladino and Christy Souter

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2024, Election Day meeting and the May 16, 2024, Sample Audit meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Supplemental Absentee Ballots

There are four ballots to be considered.

Mr. Johnson opened the central scanner and ran a zero-count report which board members signed.

Ms. LaVere presented supplemental absentee ballots recommended for consideration:

Ballots recommended for approval

- Three Civilian ballots

Board members reviewed each of the ballots.

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve the three ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Ballot recommended for disapproval – 1

- One ballot was received by mail on May 17, 2024. The deadline to receive ballots was Tuesday, May 14 at 7:30 pm.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to disapprove one ballot as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved ballots were removed from the envelopes and scanned into the Verity scanner.

Mr. Johnson announced that three ballots were scanned at today’s meeting. That was confirmed to be the number of ballots approved.

The ballots were placed in a bin which will be sealed with approved provisional ballots later in the meeting. The following vote count was logged.

- Ballot count: 3

Consideration of Provisional Ballots

Ms. Chambers explained the provisional process and presented provisional ballots for consideration.

Provisional ballots being considered today: 43

Vote Count	Provisional Voting Reason	# Ballots
APPROVED	ID Not Provided (No Exception Form, Provided Acceptable Photo ID to BOE)	1
	Incorrect Party (Poll Worker Error)	1
	Incorrect Precinct	28
	Unreported Move	1
	TOTAL APPROVED	31

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 31 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Vote Count	Provisional Voting Reason	# Ballots
NOT APPROVED	ID Not Provided (No Exception Form, Did Not Provide Acceptable Photo ID to BOE)	3
	Incorrect Party	3
	No Record of Registration	6
	TOTAL NOT APPROVED	12

Mr. Smith made a motion to not approve 12 ballots as recommended by staff.

The bipartisan team opened approved provisional ballots and duplicated as necessary. Ballots were scanned into the Verity Central Scan.

Mr. Johnson announced that 31 ballots were scanned, which was confirmed as the number of approved ballots.

Ballot bin seals were initialed by Mr. Smith and Mr. Randall.

Provisional and supplemental absentee ballot bin seals: 37471388 and 2616981

Consideration of Early Voting for the General Election

Ms. LaVere reported on the current state of the early voting plan for the general election.

Since the board's initial approval for use of the St. James Community Center for early voting, additional concerns have come to light about its use. Those concerns include not only traffic but contracting events for the space at St. James. The town has offered the use of two classrooms, but that space would not be sufficient. The town has stated that if we needed the larger space, there would be a charge, at the non-profit rate, of \$350 per day.

Staff has also looked for alternatives in Southport including Southport Presbyterian Church, Duke Energy, and even a trailer at Smithville Park. To date, no other suitable alternatives are available.

There is the option to open voting at the government complex the same hours at satellite locations, but this could also impact the Sheriff's Office Fall Festival.

The deadline for submitting a plan is by close of business today. However, Ms. LaVere believes the state would be amenable to amending the plan if it added a location or changed to a location more suitable to voting. As such, staff will continue to pursue options for Southport.

Mr. Smith stated it is imperative that there is a voting location in Southport. Mr. Randall was in agreement that we need to find a suitable location for the citizens in Southport.

The matter was tabled until after recess and Mr. Pelton joins the meeting.

Sample Audit Count and Voter History Audit

Sample Audit

The sample audit was conducted on May 16. Two bipartisan teams hand tallied the Lieutenant Governor contest for the WB01 Waccamaw and SB01 Bolivia election day polling places. The hand-to-eye count produced the same results as the machine count.

Voter History

Voter history is matching exactly in all precincts.

Recess

Ms. Clarity made a motion to recess until 11:00 AM. Motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from recess at 11:00 AM. Mr. Pelton joined the meeting via phone to vote on remaining matters.

Finalize Results

Mr. Johnson read in supplemental absentee ballots, approved provisional ballots, and results were finalized.

Mr. Smith made a motion to certify the results. Motion carried unanimously.

Documents were signed by the board.

Consideration of Early Voting for the General Election

Ms. LaVere recommended that since the board has already voted on the use of St. James and no current suitable alternatives, that the plan be submitted to the state with the locations previously voted on. Staff will continue to look for suitable alternate locations.

Adjournment

Mr. Lewis thanked the staff and bipartisan team for their excellent work.

Mr. Randall made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Date: 6/18/2024

Time: 2:00 pm

Location: Commissioners' Chambers

Agenda Item: Director's Report

Summary:

1. Backlog of voter registrations have been processed – new registrations and party changes were on hold from February 9 through canvass of the second primary.
2. Staff is looking at solutions to precincts and polling places and will bring recommendations to the July 16 regular meeting.
3. Upcoming poll worker orientation sessions
 - a. In-person
 - i. Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at 2 PM
 - ii. Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 10AM
 - iii. Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 2PM
 - b. Virtual
 - i. Wednesday, August 14, 2024 at 6 PM
4. Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit – Voices and Votes
 - a. Southwest Brunswick Branch Library through July 13
 - b. Brunswick County election artifacts are on display
5. Community Photo ID events scheduled throughout the summer
 - a. Wednesday, June 12, 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM, Carolina Shores Branch - Southwest Brunswick Library, 9400 Ocean Highway W, Carolina Shores
 - b. Thursday, June 20, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, The Brunswick Center at Leland, 121 Town Hall Drive, Leland
 - c. Wednesday, June 26, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, Oak Island Library Branch - G.V. Barbee, Sr. Library, 8200 E. Oak Island Drive, Oak Island
 - d. Wednesday, July 10, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, The Brunswick Center at Shallotte, 3620 Express Drive, Shallotte
 - e. Tuesday, July 16, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, The Brunswick Center at Supply, 101 Stone Chimney, Supply

- f. Thursday, July 18, 10:00 AM – 1:00PM, Southport Library Branch - Margaret and James Harper, Jr. Library, 109 W. Moore Street, Southport
 - g. Monday, July 22, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, Leland Library Branch, 487 Village Road, Leland
 - h. Wednesday, July 31, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, Shallotte Library Branch - Rourk Library, 5068 Main Street, Shallotte
 - i. Tuesday, August 13, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, The Brunswick Center at Southport, 1513 N. Howe Street, Southport
 - j. Thursday, August 15, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, The Brunswick Center at Calabash, 10050 Beach Drive SW, Calabash
6. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Clearie Award for Distinguished Voter Education and Communications Initiatives in Small to Medium Jurisdictions
- a. We were one of 32 programs that won a Clearie Award for 2023
 - b. Recognized for the Voter Education Seminar Series we held in 2023.

Attachment:

Voter registration statistics

Brunswick County Voter Registration Statistics Monthly Report

	2024											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total Registered Voters	131,873	132,571	133,351	134,117	134,589							
Voters Removed	543	354	212	152	476							
New Registrations Processed	1,821	517	35	1	622							
Registrations Processed w/ No Changes	964	926	451	220	522							
Voter Registration Changes Processed	1,041	619	542	142	633							
Total Monthly VR Transactions	4,369	2,416	1,240	515	2,253							
Verifications Mailed Out	5,486	1,566	586	162	507							
NCOA Mailing	1,172	0	0	0	0							
Verifications returned undeliverable	197	907	28	47	15							
Voter Returned Confirmation Card Update	2	12	17	3	2							
Confirmations Mailed Out	41	1,006	56	35	25							
Democratic	27,331	27,355	27,439	27,539	27,536							
Republican	53,218	53,569	53,869	54,186	54,397							
Libertarian	712	717	721	729	722							
Green	18	18	19	20	20							
No Labels	72	81	85	89	96							
Unaffiliated	50,522	50,831	51,218	51,554	51,818							
Democratic	20.73%	20.63%	20.58%	20.53%	20.46%							
Republican	40.36%	40.41%	40.40%	40.40%	40.42%							
Libertarian	0.54%	0.54%	0.54%	0.54%	0.54%							
Green	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%							
No Labels	0.05%	0.06%	0.06%	0.07%	0.07%							
Unaffiliated	38.31%	38.34%	38.41%	38.44%	38.50%							
Female	64,973	65,312	65,671	66,030	66,239							
Male	56,210	56,481	56,763	57,092	57,294							
Undesignated Gender	10,690	10,778	10,917	10,995	11,056							
American Indian	387	387	388	389	388							
Asian	521	524	530	536	539							
Black	9,009	9,034	9,068	9,089	9,100							
Multi-Racial	251	251	251	251	251							
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	9	9	9	9	9							
White	109,878	110,463	111,056	111,728	112,133							
Other Race	2,223	2,256	2,293	2,314	2,344							
Undesignated Race	9,595	9,647	9,756	9,801	9,825							

Statistics for this report are generated using the NC State Board of Elections NVRA report.

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Date: 6/18/2024

Time: 2:00 pm

Location: Commissioners' Chambers

Agenda Item: Public Comment Policy

Summary:

- Staff recommends implementing concise guidelines for public comments to streamline the process.
- The County Board Member Manual issued by the State Board of Elections in February 2024 provides this guidance for public comment during board meetings.

The board decides whether to allow public comment during meetings. A public comment period is not required by law. If it is allowed, it should be conducted in an orderly fashion, with reasonable limits and procedures. This could include a sign-in sheet, time limits, or advance registration.

Current Procedure:

- Rule 5 of the board's Rules of Procedure outlines public address to the board, with a three to five-minute limit per speaker.
- An online portal for public comments was introduced in 2022, with staff reading comments during meetings.

Procedure Changes Recommended by Staff:

1. Public comment period will be offered at all regular meetings.
2. Speakers must sign in on a Public Comment Sign-in Sheet.
3. Speakers will begin their comments by stating their name and address.
4. Specify a time limit of 3 minutes, time to be kept by staff.
5. Limit public comments to the designated public comment agenda item or online portal submissions received by 5:00 pm the day before the meeting. Comments or questions outside of the public comment period will be at the discretion of the Chair.
6. Set a 5:00 pm cutoff the day before the meeting for online portal submissions. Comments received will be included in the agenda packet.
7. Comments that come in through Zoom during the meeting will not be addressed.
8. Emphasize that public comments are not for impromptu questions, and the board will not engage in dialogue.

At the February 20, 2024 board meeting, the public comment policy was presented and discussed. Ms. Clarity recommended public comments be limited to one platform per

commenter. Meaning, a commenter could submit a comment online or speak in person, but not both.

Board Action:

Discuss and approve policy

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Date: 6/18/2024

Time: 2:00 pm

Location: Board of Elections Office

Agenda Item: Alternative Early Voting location in Southport

Applicable Statutes and/or Rules:

[GS 163-227.2](#), [GS 163-227.6](#)

Summary:

- The official request to use St. James Community Center was sent after the last meeting, allowing them 20 days to respond.
- St. James responded denying the request to use the space for early voting.
- Staff have continued to research alternate locations for early voting in the Southport area.
- Oak Island Moose Lodge, 4239 Long Beach Rd SE, Southport is a viable location for early voting
 - They are excited to work with us and very amenable
 - Large voting enclosure that will allow use of more voting equipment
 - Meets ADA requirements
 - Space for parking. Some parking spaces are paved and some parking will be in grass. Staff have been in contact with Parks & Recreation about painting/chalking parking spaces in grass area.
 - Central location in the Southport area

Staff Recommendation:

Alter the early voting plan to replace the use of St. James Community Center with use of the Oak Island Moose Lodge.

Board Action:

Consider approving the use of the Oak Island Moose Lodge and appealing to the state to amend previously approved early voting locations.

Attachment:

Letter from the Town of St. James

LAW OFFICES OF G. GRADY RICHARDSON, JR., P.C.
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW
1908 EASTWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 224
LUMINA STATION
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28403

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**Licensed in NC & VA
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6 June 2024

VIA EMAIL ATTACHMENT ONLY
(sara.lavere@brunswickcountync.gov)

Sara Lavere, Elections Director
Brunswick County Board of Elections
P.O. Box 2
Bolivia, NC 28422

Re: Firm Client: Town of St. James
Firm File No. 447.0182-1

Dear Ms. Lavere:

I am the Town attorney for the Town of St. James (“Town”). I understand that on 24 May 2024, you communicated to the Town’s Manager, Jeff Repp, that the Brunswick County Board of Elections (“BOE”) requested to use the Town’s Community Center (“Town’s Center”) for a period of twenty-four (24) continuous days from 14 October 2024 to 6 November 2024 for early voting operations. Furthermore, we understand the BOE’s present request is to use either one of the largest ballrooms in the Town’s Center, or to use three of the remaining four other rooms within the Town’s Center.

In accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-166.35(c), the Town does not wish to grant the BOE’s request. As an explanation of the reasons supporting the Town’s rejection, I present the following facts and figures for your consideration:

The Town's Center has four classrooms and two multi-purpose ballrooms. All of these spaces within the Town's Center are utilized by citizen groups, nonprofits, governmental entities, and for-profit entities on a scheduled and reserved basis. Town residents and certain nonprofit entities are eligible to use spaces at the Town's Center at reduced cost, but generally speaking, persons or entities wishing to use and reserve space at the Town's Center do so for a fee. Part of the Town's annual budget is based upon the revenue generated from renting rooms within the Town's Center.

Since it opened in 2011, the Town's Center has become a popular meeting site for the community and is often booked up to 18-months in advance. The BOE's presently-requested dates of 14 October 2024 through 6 November 2024, will preclude the Town's Center from hosting numerous groups and events with pre-existing reservations that have been scheduled, reserved, and advertised for months in advance. Several of these events are of a size that requires the full use of the Town's Center as well as the full attention of the Town Center's staff. These events include but are not limited to the following:

- (i) the Brunswick County Home Builders Association's banquet on 24 October 2024 (hosting approximately 230 people and generating an estimated \$1,000 for the Town);
- (ii) the Brunswick Arts Council's fundraiser on 26 October 2024 (hosting approximately 500 people and generating an estimated \$2,700 for the Town);
- (iii) the St. James POA's annual meeting on 19 October 2024 (hosting approximately 300 people);
- (iv) the St. James Service Club fundraiser event on 25 October 2024 (hosting approximately 300 people and generating an estimated \$400 for the Town);
- (v) the Knights of Columbus fundraiser on 2 November 2024 (hosting approximately 240 people and generating an estimated \$975.00 for the Town); and
- (vi) the Cape Fear Flyfishers event on 16 October 2024 (hosting approximately 35 people and generating an estimated \$175 for the Town).

In addition to the foregoing, which is not a full listing of the events booked for the Town's Center from 14 October 2024 to 6 November 2024, there are also multiple, smaller groups who have planned and reserved space in the Town's Center during the period the BOE has requested to use the Town's Center. Those groups include the American Legion Honor Guard Practice; a 50th wedding anniversary celebration; multiple bridge, cribbage, and mahjong groups; and, several service organizations who meet to plan community projects. Even if the BOE uses solely Rooms 1-3, the Town expects to lose an estimated \$3,200 in revenue from rentals that will have to be canceled. The Town estimates it will lose more than that in revenue once renters who have reserved other spaces in the Town's Center realize the strain that BOE's requested use will place on the Town's Center, its facilities, and the Town's staff. Further, it is possible that the forced cancellation of reserved events may detrimentally affect the Town's ability to retain future rentals of its rooms as people may be concerned about the certainty of their reservations. Please keep in mind that many of the larger fundraising events may have started advertising their events, selling tickets, arranging catering, and securing sponsors. The Town has yet to assess the cost of any potential liability for the Town when it is forced to cancel previously-scheduled, paid events because of the BOE's requested use.

In addition to the loss of rental revenue, the BOE's use of the Town's Center for early voting will also detrimentally affect the Town's revenue and budget by requiring the Town to hire additional staff during the period of the BOE's requested use and/or pay significant overtime wages to the staff. Presently, the Town employs three full-time staff members. The BOE's "2024 General Election Early Voting Schedule" states that satellite locations, such as the Town's Center, would be open for voting for 11.5 hours each weekday (8:00am-7:30pm) and 5-6 hours each weekend day – and that is just the actual, voting hours. As you are aware, the Town's Center will have to be open until the last voter in line at the time of closing the polls has their opportunity to vote, which could extend the hours of operation even longer. The Town's employees would obviously have to arrive earlier each day and leave later each day to accommodate the requirements of maintaining the Town's Center, cleaning the space, and preparing for their workday. The Town's Center has never operated under such business hours let alone maintained those working hours for 24 continuous days. Not only will the Town incur expenses in paying its present staff members significant overtime during the 24-days of proposed use by the BOE, but the Town is likely going to need to hire and train new staff at a cost both in terms of hourly pay, any associated benefits, and workers' compensation costs, and also in terms of the Town's time spent advertising, vetting, and training said temporary staff. The present cost of this aspect to the Town is roughly estimated to be more than \$1,500.00.

Also, the Town does not have its own police force. Thus, either the Town would

need to be reimbursed for hiring security to appropriately monitor and protect the Town's Center, its staff, and all who enter therein; or the BOE would need to provide Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputies to be present during all times when the Town's Center is open for voting as dictated by the BOE. Again, this is either a cost to the Town that would need to be reimbursed, or a service the BOE would need to agree to provide to the Town.

Access to the Town's Center will also present a significant challenge to the public. The Town's Center is just off Highway 211 at a portion of that highway which has a speed limit of 55 miles per hour. It is very likely that traffic will back up along St. James Drive and affect the traffic on Highway 211, which creates a very dangerous situation for vehicles moving 55 mph. In just the last two weeks, there have been four major accidents along Highway 211. Part of the problem with traffic is the on-going highway widening project at the intersection of Highway 211 and St. James Drive which necessitates large construction vehicles crossing St. James Drive multiple times during the construction workdays, further exacerbating traffic congestion. The BOE would have to agree to provide to the Town dedicated Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputies to assist with directing traffic between 14 October 2024 and 6 November 2024 to ensure the safety of voters, other drivers, and the Town's visitors who may still come to the Town's Center.

It is still unclear why the BOE has selected the Town's Center as its requested location for early voting instead of using the Brunswick Center at Southport, owned by Brunswick County. That long-standing BOE voting location is not along the high-speed portion of Highway 211 and has been the site for early-voting for at least the past 15 years.

In summary, even if the BOE seeks to only use one ballroom or Rooms 1-3, it is unlikely that the Town will be able to continue business as usual at the Town's Center in its other spaces. Not only will Town staff be stretched to their limits, but the traffic to enter the Town, the Town's Center, and the anticipated congestion in the parking lot once arriving there, will be so prohibitively problematic that the Town's paying customers are likely to cancel their reservations. Further, the queuing voters will be lined up outside the Town's Center creating an impediment to other groups seeking easy, peaceful entry to the Town's Center and their rented space. Added noise, cluttered campaign signs, congestion, and associated debris will accompany the BOE's proposed use of the Town's Center and preclude it from serving its contracted customers. The strain that the BOE's requested use will place on the Town, its staff, and the Town's revenue stream and budget, is disproportionately prejudicial to the Town. The BOE's request will directly cost the Town substantial revenue losses and a substantial increase in the costs of security and traffic assistance, while increasing potential liability incurred from the BOE's demanded

Sara Lavere, Elections Director
Brunswick County Board of Elections
6 June 2024

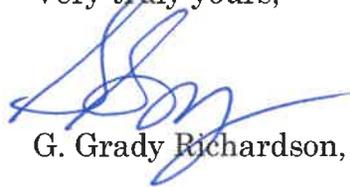
use.

For the foregoing reasons, the Town respectfully declines the BOE's request.

If you would like to contact me to discuss, all of my contact information is provided above.

With best regards, I remain

Very truly yours,



G. Grady Richardson, Jr.

GGR/

cc: The Honorable Senator William Peter Rabon
The Honorable Representative Charles W. Miller
Town of St. James
c/o: The Honorable Jean Toner, Mayor
Susan G. Renton, Esquire