

October 15, 2019

The Cumberland County Board of Elections met at the Board of Elections Office for a 1:00PM Absentee Meeting.

Present: Floyd Johnson, Chairman
Irene Grimes, Member
Terri Robertson, Director

Linda Devore, Secretary
Bobby Swilley, Member

Staff: Angie Amaro and Vicki Hilburn

Guest: Michael Haywood

Chairman Floyd Johnson called the meeting to Order at 1:00PM and presented the Agenda.

ACTION: Secretary Devore moved to add to the agenda an item for consideration of an absentee meeting schedule for the March 3, 2020 primary election. Seconded and passed unanimously.

ACTION: Secretary Devore submitted minutes of October 8th, 11th, and 14th for approval. Approved unanimously.

Vicki Hilburn presented 5 absentee ballots for consideration. One military and four civilian overseas ballots have been received by email with no irregularities.

ACTION: Member Swilley moved to approve the five overseas absentee ballots as presented. Seconded and passed unanimously.

Director Robertson presented a schedule for March 3, 2020 absentee meetings for consideration by the Board. State statute requires meetings on February 11, 18 and 25. During the 2016 Presidential Primary we received 647 absentee ballots. Suggest we add additional absentee meetings on February 20 and 27 to manage the number of ballots we anticipate in 2020, for a total of five absentee meetings before our statutory absentee meeting the day before primary election day. We may want to stay with our 1:00 absentee meeting times to accommodate longer meetings for the volume of absentee ballots expected in a presidential primary.

ACTION: Member Swilley moved to adopt the proposed Absentee Meeting schedule for the March 3, 2020 primary election, with meetings at 1:00PM on the dates of February 11, 18, 20, 25 and 27. Seconded and passed unanimously.

Director Robertson also presented the statutory schedule for additional meeting dates for the March 3 primary. March 2nd and 12th at 5:00PM for absentee meetings in addition to our March

3rd election day meeting. March 13th at 11:00 for Canvass meeting. For the general election in November 2020 we will have thousands of absentee ballots and may need 3-4 absentee meetings each week.

Member Grimes stated that she will want to scrutinize the absentee ballots. We do not want anyone observing our meeting to walk out saying that we didn't even look at the ballots [envelopes].

Member Swilley stated that he has past experience comparing signatures, and he might also want to look at signatures on the ballot envelopes, as he did in 2016. Perhaps our chairman would want to make an announcement at our absentee meetings describing the process that has taken place to scrutinize ballots for consideration.

Secretary Devore suggested that it would be the discretion of each board member whether they want to individually review absentee envelopes before our meetings.

Director Robertson stated that any discrepancy with an absentee ballot envelope is brought to the attention of the Board for consideration.

Director Robertson reported that staff met with School Board personnel last Friday to discuss school security concerns at our polling sites located in public school buildings. Their staff plans to meet with principals at the schools we use to develop standards for safety on election days. Robertson reported that they talked about School Resource Officers being used at the school polling sites, though some SROs cover more than one school that we use. County may be able to assist with recruiting through the Angel Parents program for additional volunteers. We mentioned a letter requesting closing on election days; however, they believe there may not be leeway in the school calendar to consider a student holiday on election days. The legislature sets the calendar start date, so we should consider a letter to our legislative delegation asking that schools be closed on election days. Our schools are planning to be closed for students for the November 3, 2020 presidential election, but not for March 3. Other counties have the same challenges, so if we ask, then others may join us.

Board members discussed presenting our concerns about election day security to our legislative delegation and asking for whatever they may consider appropriate to provide flexibility for school calendars. The goal is to enable local school boards to designate election days as non-instructional days for students.

Chairman Johnson suggested that we send a letter to our legislative delegation, and that Helen and Linda work together to draft the letter—I want our legal minds involved in it.

Secretary Devore stated that Terri has asked her, as board secretary, to draft a letter to the school board. A draft can be circulated to all board members. Specifically, we should ask the School Board to adjust the school calendar for March 3, 2020. Legislation would be for elections further down the road after 2020, since it is too late for anything in this session.

Director Robertson suggested that the County Commissioners may be willing to join us in approaching our legislative delegation.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40PM.

Submitted by,



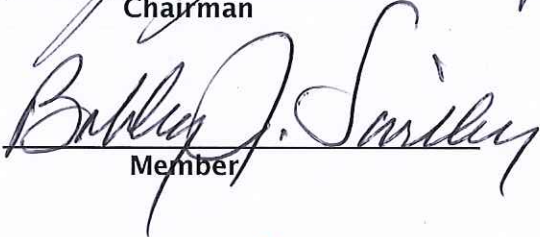
Linda Devore, Secretary



Chairman



Member



Member

Nelson not present

Member



Director