

Columbus County Board of Elections

Monday, March 13, 2023

5:00 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Meeting Called to Order

On Monday, March 13, 2023, Chairman Jeffery Register called the Columbus County Board of Elections meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Jeffery Register, Chairman

Bonita Blakney, Member

David McPherson, Secretary

Brenda Ebron, Member

Ashley Collins, Director

Tucker Ward, Member

Agenda Items #3 and #4: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

- Invocation – Mr. Register
- Recited – Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item #5: Board Agenda Approval

Board member, Mrs. Blakney made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Mr. Ward seconded, and the motion passed.

Agenda Item #6: Approval of Minutes

Board member, Mr. McPherson made a motion to approve the minutes as printed, Mrs. Blakney seconded, and the motion passed.

Agenda Item #7: Lavern Coleman- Bolton Fire Department

County Commissioner Coleman came to speak on behalf of Mr. Smith, Fire Chief at the Bolton Fire Department with a request to move the Bolton precinct out of the fire department and possibly relocate to the Bolton Town Hall or Bolton Senior Center. The concerns were that if they have a fire during the elections the noise and fumes from the fire trucks could cause interruption and be hazardous. In addition, moving the voting equipment scrapes the floors and walls of the facility. Director Collins stated that the Bolton Senior Center would be more assessable for the elderly and the facility is owned by the county which could save money from rental fees. Board member Mrs. Blakney asked Commissioner Coleman if he knew how long Bolton had been voting at the fire department; Commissioner Coleman was unsure. Mr. McPherson stated that when he previously served on the board they had issues with using the Bolton Fire Department. He cited one incident in particular when they had to get the police to unlock the doors because the fire department would not allow elections officials entry. Mr. McPherson stated that if this would solve the issue that he would be in agreement with moving

to the Bolton Senior Center, if it is in compliance with what is required by the Board of Elections. Mr. Register asked Commissioner Coleman why Mr. Smith did not present his request in writing to the Board of Elections. Ms. Collins explained that Mr. Smith had sent a letter prior to the last election requesting to move the precinct to the Bolton Town Hall and she went to a town hall meeting in Bolton with the request; however, the request was denied. Mr. Register stated that the fire chief did not want voting to take place at the Bolton Fire Department then the Board should take the necessary steps in moving the location. Commissioner Coleman stated on Tuesday March 14, 2023, that the county commissioners are scheduled to meet and he would speak to Mr. Madden, the county manager about using the Bolton Senior Center as a voting precinct. Ms. Collins stated that she would also reach out to Mrs. Massey, Director of the Department of Aging about the using the Bolton Senior Center as a voting precinct. Mrs. Blakney asked how many precincts are currently located in fire departments. Ms. Collins shared that there are five locations, including Bolton.

Agenda Item #8: Public Comments

No public comments.

Agenda Item #9: Directors Report

Director Collins reviewed the Director's Report and informed the board that the NCADE Conference will be held in New Bern on March 26th through March 28th; registration has been completed and rooms booked for the conference. Mrs. Ebron asked the estimated cost for participants; Mrs. Collins informed the Board that the cost is around \$2,100.

Ms. Collins gave the board members a copy of the State calendar from April to December of all upcoming events.

Ms. Collins informed the board that In-Person District Manager Meetings will begin in April. The first meeting will be held in Harnett County on 18th or the 25th (specific date not determined). Ms. Collins and Mrs. Brown are scheduled to attend. Also, Ms. Collins shared that she volunteered to use the Columbus County Board of Elections Office to hold one of the In Person District Meetings. Mr. McPherson and Mr. Ward expressed their appreciation of finally having a location large enough to be able to host a meeting like this.

Director Collins gave copy of the 2023 & 2024 proposed budget that will be presented to the County Finance Office.

Agenda Item #10: Closed Session General

No closed session

Agenda Item #11: Adjourn

With all business having been conducted, Mrs. Blakney made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. McPherson seconded; the meeting adjourned at 5:49 pm.AC/amc*