

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Ken Raymond
Chairman

Stuart Russell
Secretary

Fleming El-Amin
Member



Tim Tsujii
Director

Lamar Joyner
Deputy Director

FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS **Meeting Minutes** **September 20, 2016 – 5 p.m.**

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FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2016 – 5 p.m.

Meeting Called to Order

A meeting of the Forsyth County Board of Elections was called to order in the third floor meeting room on September 20, 2016 at 5:00 p.m., Chairman Raymond presiding.

Board Members in attendance: Chairman Ken Raymond, Secretary Stuart Russell, and Member Fleming El-Amin

Staff Members in attendance: Director Tim Tsujii, Deputy Director Lamar Joyner, Chris Duffey, ,Monica Gary, and Kimberly Stuck

Other Staff: Lonnie Albright – Assistant County Attorney

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Raymond led the pledge of allegiance.

Moment of Silence

Chairman Raymond led a moment of silence.

Public Comments

Chairman Raymond opened the public comment session with instructions. Speakers were asked to complete a public comment card and would have two minutes or less to speak. The speaker's name and address should be stated for the record. Questions should be included during the allotted time and answers would be given at the close of the session. A speaker's time could not be given to another individual. At the close of the public comment session, no additional statements or questions would be heard from the public. The public comment session included the following speakers:

Carolyn Highsmith – 3335 Anderson Dr, Winston Salem, NC 27127

Josh Canzona – 50 W. 4th Street # 116, Winston Salem, NC 27101

Isaac “Ike” Howard (Winston Salem/Forsyth County NAACP) 8884 Red Bank Rd., Germanton, NC 27019

Asia Dukes (Winston Salem State University) 601 S. Martin Luther King Blvd, Winston Salem, NC 27110

Chairman Raymond called to close public comments; Member El-Amin motioned; Secretary Russell seconded the motion; **Motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Raymond addressed concerns regarding voting sites, particularly Winston Salem State University’s Anderson Center noting that site selection must take into consideration not only students but all voters in the precinct.

Approval of Absentee Ballots

Ms. Gary provided an overview of Absentee ballots to date:

3,125 – Total Absentee Ballots mailed

2,878 – Civilian

55 – Military

192 – Overseas

Ms. Gary recommended 90 for approval and 3 for disapproval that have been resent to gain signatures or other missing information. Member El-Amin motioned to accept staff recommendations, Secretary Russell seconded; **Motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Revised Pre-Processing Procedures

Director Tsujii stated that the Board approved the pre-processing of Absentee ballots during the September 08, 2016 meeting. Mr. Tsujii presented the Board with the revised pre-processing procedures for approval to enable pre-processing of Curbside ballots. Chairman Raymond inquired if any questions or discussion; Member El-Amin motioned to accept the revised preprocessing procedures as presented, Secretary Russell seconded motion; **Motion carried unanimously.**

At the request of Secretary Russell, Director Tsujii provided a brief overview of how the pre-processing procedures came to pass. Mr. Tsujii stated that the process allows ballots to be flattened, as well as to identify those ballots referred to as kickback ballots, ballots with check marks and coffee stains, for remarking by a bi-partisan team without loss of security.

Appointment of Precinct Officials

Director Tsujii requested that the Board replace one precinct judge at precinct 506. Mr. Tsujii stated that multiple attempts had been made to contact the judge; but to no avail. Director Tsujii presented Robette Davies name to the Board to fill the position at precinct 506. Member El-Amin motioned to accept Ms. Davies as replacement, Secretary Russell seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Polling Place Changes

Chairman Raymond brought back from the table the polling place changes that were presented during the September 08, 2016 meeting. Chairman Raymond began the discussion with precinct 405 – Sims Recreation Center regarding access to the site and the potential impact due to construction around the site. Chairman Raymond stated that he had reviewed the site and the construction around the site. Director Tsujii stated that he had contacted Pat Ivey of the North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 9 Engineer for the Salem Creek Connector Project to gain insight on the project and reconstruction efforts. Mr. Tsujii was told by Mr. Ivey that there would only be one permanent closure and that the closure would have no impact on the thoroughfare across North Carolina Highway 52. Chairman Raymond noted that with that information there would be no need to change the precinct; Member El-Amin spoke to the amount of time spent on Winston Salem State University's campus and noted that 80 percent of the voters live nearer to the University side of the precinct. Member El-Amin requested consideration of the matter in the light of a Kernersville precinct change based on one firefighter; noting additionally that based on his evaluation of Sims Recreation Center that it would not be easily accessible. Member El-Amin read N.C.G.S. § 163-128, which establishes policy and procedure for establishing and altering precincts, into record and for the public in attendance.

Secretary Russell noted that the statute applies to all precincts up for discussion and that precinct changes should be done on a permanent basis not based upon an election cycle. Secretary Russell spoke to the need to change due to construction; noting that the construction around Sims Recreation Center would be temporary. Secretary Russell spoke to the one hour travel time and that in his review of the site it was a 16 minute round trip. Secretary Russell also stated that approximately 40 percent of voters in that precinct participate in Early Voting and that the precinct for Early Voting is on the East side of the precinct; having Sims Recreation will provide an opportunity for those on the West side of the precinct. Secretary Russell

also addressed the issue of permanent changes of precincts due to complaints versus temporary changes. Member El-Amin considered Secretary Russell's analysis but did not agree; stating that the people of the precinct were asking for Winston Salem State University's Anderson Center and that is what he felt the consideration should be based.

Chairman Raymond stated that all voters need to be considered; including low income and elderly. He questioned the reason for the change as well as the need; noting that construction in and around Winston Salem/Forsyth County is a constant and that any changes can not be made over construction.

Secretary Russell provided two points for consideration: one, voters on the western side of the precinct will have the same issues; two, that sites should accommodate the whole precinct.

Secretary Russell motioned to keep Sims Recreation Center; Chairman Raymond seconded; **Motion carried 2-1 with Member El-Amin dissenting.**

In an attempt to calm those in attendance Member El-Amin encouraged those chanting "Uncle Tom" to direct their action to the three Saturday's of Soldier's to the Polls effort. Member El-Amin thanked attendees for their attendance.

Chairman Raymond opened discussion for change from precinct 602 – First Alliance Church to Heritage Hills Baptist Church or Advent Moravian Church. Director Tsujii stated that multiple attempts had been made to contact the Pastor at Heritage Hills Baptist Church, but had not had communication as yet. Mr. Tsujii noted that Advent Moravian Church, located outside of the precinct boundaries, was open to allow use of their facility; however, sites on the border of a precinct or outside the boarder of a precinct have to be approved on an annual basis. Chairman Raymond stated that he supported continued use of FirstAlliance Church.

Chairman Raymond had spoken to the Chief Judge of the precinct who had indicated that arrangements could be made to move the voting enclosure from the sanctuary to the dining hall. Chair reiterated that he was inclined to keep First Alliance as a polling location; Member El-Amin stated that on principle he would not be inclined to move the polling location; Secretary Russell noted that he would need a compelling reason to change locations. Secretary Russell motioned to keep First Alliance Church, Chairman Raymond seconded motion; **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Board next considered a change from 709 – Ward Elementary to Hope Moravian Church. Director Tsujii stated that the issues with Ward Elementary had not changed. Chairman Raymond inquired of the deadline for any change. Director Tsujii noted that any and all changes had to be made by September 26, 2016. Chairman Raymond provided a brief overview of the traffic issues seen at Ward Elementary; citing the comingling of voters, school buses, and car riders being picked up as a reason for a permanent change to Hope Moravian Church. Chairman Raymond motioned to change the polling location from Ward Elementary to Hope Moravian, Member El-Amin seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Raymond addressed the letter from Riely Woosley offering same concerns for precinct 131, Vienna Elementary, as those seen at Ward Elementary. Director Tsujii stated that attempts had been made to communicate with Vienna Baptist Church in order to replace Vienna Elementary School however they were unsuccessful in getting a response. Chairman Raymond suggested any change be delayed due to schedule and no alternate site to consider. Member El-Amin commented that schools will be closed on

November 8, 2016. Chairman Raymond noted that Vienna Elementary will remain until which time an alternate site is available.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chairman Raymond called for the approval of the minutes. Secretary Russell motioned to accept the minutes for August 11, 2016 and September 8, 2016, Member El-Amin seconded; **Motion carried unanimously.**

Closed Session (If needed)

Chairman Raymond inquired of need for closed session; none given.

Other Business

Director Tsujii put before the Board a request by a professor of graduate studies at Auburn University to visit the Board of Election's office on October 25th, to oversee operations, attend precinct officials training and to sit in on a Board meeting. Mr. Tsujii noted that it would be at no cost to the Board.

Secretary Russell addressed the racial slurs directed by Winston Salem State University students at Chairman Raymond for opposing Winston Salem State University as a precinct site and the disrespectful nature of those comments and those like them; Secretary Russell hoped that Member El-Amin would join him in his sentiment. Chairman Raymond responded to the outburst and slur; noting that there is and should be diversity in thought in the African American Community as with any other ethnic group. Chairman Raymond thanked Member El-Amin for getting control of those in attendance.

Assistant County Attorney Albright reminded the Board that according to N.C.G.S. § 163-34 (see attached) the Board of Elections possesses the authority to maintain and enforce order during the meetings; Mr. Albright stated that he was not advocating or recommending jail but simply reminding the Board of the authority they possess. Attorney Albright also stated that he was saddened by the comments as well.

Member El-Amin stated that after 35 years in the classroom; he applauded their energy but noted they must respect appointed officials. Member El-Amin also applauded Chairman Raymond and Secretary Russell for their restraint; noting that even with differences in opinion that he had respect for both of them.

Adjournment

Chairman Raymond moved to adjourn, Secretary Russell motioned; Member El-Amin seconded; **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Approved:

Ken Raymond, Chair

Date

Stuart Russell, Secretary

Date

Fleming El-Amin, Member

Date