

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Linda J. Sutton

Michael Flatow

Jonathan S. Dills



Robert H. Coffman
Director of Elections

Lamar Joyner
Deputy Director

FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS BOARD MEETING – July 19, 2011

Board Members Present: Linda J. Sutton
Michael Flatow

Staff Members Present: Rob Coffman, Director of Elections
Lamar Joyner, Deputy Director
Judy Speas, Senior Office Assistant

Guests Present: Susan S. Frye, Clerk of Superior Court

Call to Order

Linda Sutton, past Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM in the Cooper Cardwell Elections Room. The Organizational meeting of this two year Forsyth County Board of Election's term of office would be an instructional meeting for newly appointed members Linda J. Sutton, Michael Flatow and Jonathan S. Dills. Ms. Sutton requested that Susan Frye, Clerk of Superior Court, swear the members with their Oath of Office. Ms. Frye gave the Oath of Office to Ms. Sutton and Mr. Flatow. Jonathan S. Dills was unable to attend and would be sworn at a later date.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Sutton requested that the Board review and entertain a motion to approve the minutes for May 11, 2011. Mr. Flatow moved to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Responsibilities/Restrictions

Mr. Coffman distributed a handout containing NCGS 163-30 - County boards of elections; appointments; terms of office; qualifications; vacancies; oath of office; instructional meetings; NCGS 163-33 - Powers and duties of county board of elections; NCGS 163-39 - Limitations on political activities. He stated that the county attorney or the State Board of Elections general counsel were also available for any questions. Ms. Sutton acknowledged that board members were not allowed to publicly express support for a candidate or referendum in Forsyth County. A board member is allowed to make contributions but not to **solicit** funds for a candidate or committee. Board members agreed that political limitations were minimal.

State Mandated Training

Mr. Coffman presented information on the State Board of Elections mandated annual training for County Elections Officials. A September conference would occur at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill on September 8th and 9th. The State Board presents the conferences for board members, directors and staff members to be able to successfully administer changes in law and procedure. Attendance also enables members to meet the qualifications for the Certification in Elections Program.

Meeting Schedule

Mr. Coffman discussed the 2011 Municipal Election Schedule calendar, highlighting the required Board meetings and other events during the year. The Board is given flexibility in meeting times for the required meeting dates. A decision for a preferred time of the day to meet was postponed until Mr. Dills could express a preference. The next Board meeting on August 16, 2011 is scheduled to appoint precinct officials that have been nominated by the county political parties.

Municipal Elections

Ms. Sutton requested that Mr. Coffman explain the status of candidate filing in the Town of Bethania. Mr. Coffman explained that the 2011 Municipal Election would be held for the seven towns in the county, excluding Winston-Salem. The candidate filing period ended Friday, July 15. However, only two out of three available vacancies were filled by candidates in Bethania. Mr. Coffman and Ms. Sutton decided that the filing period for Bethania should be extended for five additional days in order to provide an opportunity for candidate filing for all vacant positions. Sample ballots will be prepared for the Board's approval at the next meeting.

Other Business

Besides poll worker training, staff are currently preparing for the WSSU Freshman Election. Mr. Joyner explained that the staff helps with this student body election in September. Mr. Coffman stated that elections are also arranged for the Winston-Salem Forsyth County School system. The Board discussed whether a decision would soon be made by the Legislature to change the Early Voting procedure. An effective date of January 1, 2012 for the law change was most probable.

Ms. Sutton stated that the next meeting date of August 16 should be satisfactory since no Board decision was needed earlier. Mr. Coffman said that the Board could approve ballots on that date. Ms. Sutton stated that the Board members would prefer to review the list of nominated precinct officials before the August meeting. Mr. Coffman agreed that the list would be sent to them in advance.

Mr. Coffman explained a handout of the Duties of Director of Elections which was approved in 2010. The document explains the duties that a county board assigns to staff and must be resubmitted to the State Board every two years. Ms. Sutton agreed that the Board would be able to review the document and compare it to the law for any changes needed.

Mr. Coffman stated that interviews had been completed for the Absentee Office Assistant position. He requested that the Board approve the recommendation of the selected applicant. Training for the position should begin soon for the 2011 November Election. The Board agreed with Mr. Coffman, Mr. Joyner and the Human Resources representative's recommendation of applicants. Mr. Coffman stated that Board member photographs should be scheduled by the next meeting. Mr. Coffman discussed the receipt of a voter letter regarding record confidentiality. After consultation with the State Board general counsel, it was agreed that the law did not allow public disclosure removal of a voter record without a court-ordered protective order. Names and addresses are public record without the protective order. The Board agreed that a letter of explanation, citing the statute, should be sent to the voter.

Adjournment

Mr. Coffman stated that he was scheduled to attend the Election Center's Annual National Conference and would miss the August 16th Board meeting. Ms. Sutton moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Flatow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.

Approved:

Linda J. Sutton

Michael Flatow

Jonathan S. Dills