

Observations from Brunswick County Board of Elections Meeting

Monday, February 15, 2016 at 2p.m.

Board of Elections Meeting Room Bolivia

Present at the meeting were: Staff Director, Sara Knotts, Deputy Director, Melissa Monroe, Chairman Stuart Smith, Randy Pelton, and Boyd Williamson.

League of Women Voters members present were Gail Bromley, Linda Kurta, and Beth Kirschner.

During the time for public comments, Gail shared material on voting information with the board members used in our registration drives which provide voters with basic information and direction to the BOE website, and she also thanked the Board Staff for their helpfulness in providing information to us.

Minutes of the January 19 meeting were read and approved.

The Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, Kim Strach, has sent Memo 2016-01 which explains the policy and procedures with regard to the voter ID requirement and any challenges to those who claim an impediment that prevents obtaining an ID. Registered voters with Brunswick County may bring an evidentiary challenge by filing a form and submitting it by the 3rd business day after the election. By statute the scope of an evidentiary challenge is limited to factual evidence that calls into question the veracity of the claimed impediment. The challenger cannot challenge whether the impediment, itself, poses a reasonable barrier to obtaining an acceptable photo ID. The county attorney will be present when determining the validity of any challenges .

Plans for the March 15 Primary continue as no information has been received from the state regarding redistricting for the Congressional election or any changes in date although the Board and staff are aware that changes could come at any time. Training for early voting check in has been completed.

A complaint has been received from the Public Interest Legal Foundation with regard to voting list maintenance. This group feels that the list of registered voters is too high based on population. While the list will be reviewed, it cannot be done in time for the March investigation.

November election one-stop voting will be considered at the June 20th meeting. The commissioner's chambers, which provide more space, are available only if the meeting is held at a different time or the time allowed for discussion is limited so that the room could be vacated for another meeting. There was much discussion on whether to change the time, or limit discussion by asking each group to have only one spokesperson represent them and speak for a designated amount of time. Neither way is satisfactory as a time change might mean some might miss the meeting, and individuals as well as groups often wish to be heard. Some speakers also wish to rebut another position. Further investigation must be done to determine the best way to handle this situation. It would be really helpful if as many

League members as possible attend this June 20 meeting. Please mark your calendars for June 14 at 2p.m., and we will update time and place as we learn the final decision. One member of the board in particular has been very receptive to opening early voting to allow more registered voters the opportunity to vote. He needs our support.

Submitted by: Beth Kirschner