**Brunswick County Board of Elections**

**Meetings and Canvass Activities on Tuesday, March 22 and Thursday, March 24, 2016 - 10:00 a.m. each day**

The board members were all present and Beth Kirschner and Gail Bromley observed. William Flythe was present at the first meeting and Mike Forte for the second. Both are candidates for office.

Gail spoke during Public Comments time. She remarked what a great venue the Cultural Arts Center in Leland was for Early Voting. She also mentioned the parking problems that she encountered when she went to the Middle School on Election Day.

Stuart Smith, Chairperson, confirmed he found the same problems while visiting there.

They have one polling place in Shingletree, Sea Trail’s Properties, which is privately owned. They are being asked to pay more for conducting Election Day voting there in the future. This is a problem that the Board must address. There are very few options in that area for polling locations.

There was some discussion on the second primary, scheduled for June 7. Early voting hours and locations will be less available than they were for the first primary. Turnout is expected to be very low and the cost of the early voting is a problem.

Canvass was postponed until Thursday morning at 10:00 a.m. due to a problem with getting historical data loaded and compared with provisional ballots.

The remainder of the first meeting was then devoted to absentee ballots. Over 40 ballots were deemed void and not to be opened, due to a lack of postmark and due to them being stamped as received after the election date of March 15. Some oversees military ballots were hand tallied.

At this meeting, provisional ballots were reviewed. The staff prepared a sheet “Provisional Voters Statistics by Result”. There were a total of 808 provisional ballots or nearly four times as many as in the last Presidential primary year. Six ballots were designated as pending or needing board approval. Others (260)were “not approved” and of those 23 had no photo voter ID and did not meet the follow up requirements for identity proof according to the 2013 law. One other “not approved” was later resolved so that it could be approved. It had to do with improper address number, the time of move to that unrecognizable address and past address. A total of 220 tried to vote but were clearly not registered and one did not sign the provisional ballot while two others did not have an address in Brunswick County. “Partial” approved ballots were also processed. These often had to do with out-of-precinct voting but part of the ballot applied and was counted. Lastly, of the 6 pending board review, three were approved and three denied.

The process for reviewing and counting these ballots is quite complicated and time-intensive. Melissa Monroe, Deputy Director, does most of the review initially with the final review of that work done by Sara Knotts, Director.

New information to us: If you fill out a provisional ballot but your ballot cannot be used for the general election for reasons that you moved out of county more than 30 days ago, or had not previously registered to vote in Brunswick, etc., your ballot becomes a voter registration at that point and you will be able to vote in the Fall election. It was hard to believe that 220 folks tried to vote but were not registered. However, most of them will be registered for the Fall election. Some don’t know which party they chose when registering and want to vote the other party’s ballot. A couple already voted in Early Voting but appeared on Election Day, hoping to change the party’s ballot. Sometimes a computer Geocode error occurs. Some registered at Early Voting and then don’t vote until Election Day, which is not legal.

There are so many variables and nuances in voting. The staff and the Board did what they could to make as many votes count as possible.

Comments prepared by Gail Bromley