Pender County Board of Elections

July 19, 2016

Donna Howard and Sheila Fellerath attended as observers on behalf of the League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear. Chairperson Betty Fennell called the meeting to order at 10 am.  She asked the Director (Dennis Boyles) if there was an agenda.  There was not an agenda – only one item had to be signed by the board members and there needed to be resolution of the one stop voting plan.  Mrs. Fennel had contacted an attorney but he could not advise the board, as he would have to represent the state Board of Elections.  She is contacting another attorney, but no resolution yet.

Dennis read from the NC General Statutes where the required number of hours (577) came from. That is the number of hours of early voting in 2012; 2012 had 17 days of early voting compared to the reduced 10 days.

Dennis has four plans ready to be submitted IF all board members sign the plans.

Plan 1 – has a schedule for 577 hours.  The poll workers would be there until 10:30 pm.  The plan was voted on and no one was in favor; Barbara Melluso was opposed.  No Sunday voting.

Plan 2 – Barbara Melluso’s plan – utilized 6 locations, scheduled 579 hours, Sunday voting.  There are 2 main problems with this plan – there is no equipment for the extra location and there is confusion as to the exact location of the building in Maple Hill and if it is ADA compliant.  Barbara will work on clarifying this.  The plan was voted on and 2 were opposed and 1 in favor.

Plan 3 – has only 425 hours scheduled, no Sunday voting, 5 voting locations.  The plan was voted on and 2 were in favor and 1 opposed.

Plan 4 – Dennis had drawn up this plan as a compromise.  578 hours were scheduled, the polls would be open until 10 pm, and Thurs. and Fri would be open until 10:30.  Sunday voting would be from 3-6 pm.  The plan was voted on with 1 in favor and 2 opposing.  This had 5 locations.

Dennis stressed that he has to start printing absentee ballots in 30 days and he has to have an approved plan to do this.

The reasons why the board can’t agree:

1. Disagreement about Sunday voting.

2. Having poll workers work 10 straight long days is too much (many over 65).  This could be dealt with by more poll workers.

3. Having the staff work 14 days straight is too much (I’m not sure why this is not 12.)

Dennis mentioned that it is the political parties’ responsibility to recruit poll workers.  Nothing was said about asking parties to submit more names for training.  (I have submitted my name for training.  Dennis said that he had received the form, but I would have to be voted on by the board.  I have not heard anything.)

After much discussion, the meeting ended with Dennis saying he would send in all 4 plans, none of which will be liked by the state as the plans were to be signed by all board members – these are not signed at all.

There were many people at the meeting including a reporter from the StarNews who did a good write up in the paper.

Submitted by Donna Howard