



Beaufort County Council

Board of Elections & Registration
15 John Galt Road
P.O. Drawer 1228
Beaufort, SC 29901-1228

Board of Elections and Registration Board Minutes

June 24, 2010

12:15 pm

15 John Galt Rd, Beaufort, SC

The special called board meeting of the Beaufort County Board of Elections and Registration was held on June 24, 2010 immediately following the Republican Primary Runoff Canvass hearing.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Ron Clifford, Chairman. It was recognized that a quorum was not present. Mr. Clifford announced that, since no quorum was present, no votes on issues would be taken.

Since the Pledge of Allegiance was recited prior to the Canvass Hearing, it was not repeated.

Board Members Present:

Ron Clifford, Chairman
James Rowe

Marilyn Caprielian, Vice Chairman
Emile Bernard

Staff Members Present:

Scott Marshall, Executive Director
Marie Smalls, Deputy Director

Eric Montgomery, Programmer

Public Present:

Norma Stewart Marty Caprielian

Mr. Clifford turned the meeting over to Scott Marshall, Executive Director. for his report.

Mr. Marshall informed the Board about some of the challenges that were encountered during the preparation for the Runoff. On Thursday, the office was informed by the Beaufort County School system that several schools would be unavailable for use as a polling location because of renovation projects underway. They were concerned about the voter safety during the construction. Staff was not aware of the renovations. However, through negotiation all schools that normally serve as polling places were

used as such. The Board publicly expressed their gratitude to Beaufort County Schools for their flexibility.

Mr. Marshall stated he was impressed both positively and negatively with the performance of the poll workers through observation when visiting precincts. He said that there were identifiable items that would need further emphasis in future training sessions. As an example, out of the 23 provisional hearing envelopes presented at the canvass hearing, only two were filled out correctly; 15 envelopes had no challenger listed; and 21 of the 23 did not indicate that a copy of the hearing notice was issued to the voter. Ms. Caprielian interjected that Board members wanted to know if it was one of their workers in order to address them directly to pay particular attention to the problem. Mr. Marshall said it is an overall problem with training and adherence to standards set by the Board. Storage of flash cards was another concern. Mr. Marshall said he would compile list for the Board of specific problems so that board may address them with their poll workers, as needed.

Mr. Marshall stated that he was grateful for poll workers' service and noted that while some are outstanding, some should be reevaluated by commissioners to see if their services are still desired. There was also a lengthy discussion among the board about the iVotronic voting machines and corresponding cases being mismatched when closing precincts. Mr. Marshall also mentioned that he felt some defensiveness from some board members when feedback was given regarding poll managers performances and noted that progress cannot be made in absence of the ability to offer and receive feedback constructively.

Dr. Bernard suggested that more emphasis be placed on the job at the registration table to make sure the right people vote. His perception was that some poll workers weren't asking the right questions at the table during check-in.

Mr. Rowe wanted a summary of what went wrong with the machines on Election Day. The error "Terminal not configured for this Election" occurred on machines in locations throughout the county. Mr. Marshall took full responsibility for the errors and said they were the result of a failure to communicate properly on his part. He explained that he contracted with a temporary agency to hire workers to help deliver voting machines and associated equipment. He said that he was not aware that past practice has been that temporary workers also aided in preparing voting machines, thus he did not stipulate that the temporary workers needed any technical skills. Mr. Marshall said he did not communicate to Mr. Montgomery that the temporary workers were employed to move equipment only. In absence of this information, Mr. Montgomery followed past practice and asked the temporary workers to assist with preparing machines. The temporary workers' technical abilities were limited, and likely resulted in the pervasive errors when poll workers opened their machines on Election Day. Mr. Marshall

emphasized for the record that, although these errors were encountered, all voting machines were cleared and configured properly before any votes were cast on them.

Mr. Rowe wanted to know what the plans were to get ready for the November election. Mr. Marshall explained that a major event will take place in August with the iVotronic voting machines. PrintElect will be on site to replace the motherboard batteries on all 368 machines, scheduled for the beginning of August. This occasion will also afford opportunity to thoroughly examine and test all voting machines.

Mr. Marshall said there were some lessons learned from some of the new initiatives he wanted to try during the primary and the runoff. Some worked out well; others did not. He noted while some efficiencies were gained, there is still a need to evaluate cost considerations for the November General Election.

Mr. Clifford spoke with Mr. Marshall about reducing the number of machines to help reduce wear and tear. Ms. Caprielian wanted to know if the law determines the number of machines we have at each precinct. Mr. Marshall replied that Title VII of the SC Code of Laws is very specific regarding number of voting machines to be used; however, Beaufort County does not own enough machines to meet the standard prescribed. Historically, machines are distributed according to past voting trends at each polling location. Mr. Marshall suggested establishing a formula to determine number of machines to distribute per polling location, based on historical turnout numbers.

Mr. Marshall suggested meeting dates be set for July and August. If a meeting is not needed, it will be canceled. Possible meeting dates of July 20, July 28 and August 25 were discussed.

Mr. Marshall reminded board about the need for committee assignments review and feedback. He noted that no feedback has been received from board members so far.

Mr. Marshall reported that he was informed that the County will provide funds to purchase the first round of Electronic Voter Registration List (EVR) laptops. A total of 150 laptops are needed for county-wide deployment, however, Mr. Marshall suggested that they be phased in and would like to start with 50 units. Ms. Caprielian suggested that Sun City be one of the areas to use the EVR systems. There was a lengthy discussion by the Board concerning how many and which precincts will be assigned laptops. The latest estimated cost of the laptops was \$700-\$750 per unit. Mr. Marshall will work with the MIS and Purchasing Department to move forward with the acquisition.

Mr. Marshall reported the status of House Bill 3418. The Legislature has recessed without final passage of the bill. However, through a joint resolution, it is one of several items that may be considered during a special three-day session over the course

of the summer. If the bill passes as is, it will only allow for one Voter Registration Office in the county. Mr. Marshall suggested the Board should continue to explore the possibility of a site south of the Broad River. Two sites currently under consideration are the Hilton Head Beaufort County Government Annex where the Department of Special needs has vacated, and a portion of the Bluffton Recreation Center located on Ulmer Road in Bluffton, which is more centralized. Mr. Marshall will be meeting the Facilities Director, Mr. Morris Campbell, and Mr. Clifford to discuss the alternatives.

Mr. Bernard wanted to discuss the problem of how to eliminate those poll workers who are no longer capable of working. Ms. Caprielian explained that the Commissioners are responsible for making that determination.

No further discussion.

Meeting was adjourned by Mr. Clifford at approximately 1:00 p.m.