

Board Of Voter Registration and Elections of Berkeley County Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2023

Call to Order

The meeting of the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Berkeley County was held in the Berkeley County Assembly room on September 14th, 2023, at 6:00pm.

Board Members Present

Leon Brown, Pam Lamb, Frances Taylor, Don Rose, Darel Trout, Don Saturday

As a reminder, please speak into the microphone. Let the record show there is a quorum.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Everybody has a copy of the minutes. Can I have a motion to approve the minutes that were submitted? Motion to approve by Mr. Trout and seconded by Ms. Taylor. Any discussion or any changes? Those in favor to accept the minutes as submitted all in favor say Aye. Unanimous

Directors Report

Director Brown: From the last meeting, just as a reminder that the South Carolina State Election Commission mailed confirmation cards to voters that have not voted in any election since November of 2018. They gave all voters a 90-day period to respond to that mailing. If they did not respond by Monday September 11, 2023, those voters are now placed in an inactive moved status. The total number of voters in Berkeley County that the state put in inactive status is 13,255 voters. These voters will still remain on the voter's registration list for another election cycle in case they do appear at their polling location to vote. They would have to do as everyone does on election day, present their photo ID in order to cast their vote in the election. This coming Tuesday, September 19th is National Voter Registration Day. This day is recognized across the nation for new voter registrations and changes of name or address. If you or anyone needs to update their address this would be the perfect time in order to do so. This is ahead of the deadline for the November 7th Municipal elections. The voter registration by mail application is available online at scvotes.gov. Voter registration applications are available in our office if you need to pick up some forms in order to perform some voter registration drives, those forms are available. Also, you can register to vote online at scvotes.gov as well as coming into the voter's registration office between the hours of 9-5 Monday through Friday and providing some ID.

We have four municipal elections this November 7th; The Town of Jamestown, The Town of Summerville, The Town of Monck Corner, and The City of Charleston. The deadline for these elections are October 6th if you are registering to vote in person, October 8th online and October 10th if you are registering by mail. The Town of Jamestown has their own Municipal Election Commission. The candidates filed with the Town of Jamestown Clerk. There are two Town Council seats that are open, and two candidates have filed for that seat. The Town of Summerville is in three counties: Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester. They have Mayor on their ballot and there are three candidates for Mayor. There are three candidates for Summerville Town Council 2, which is in Berkeley County. And one candidate for Commissioner of Public Works. The City of Charleston has three candidates for the Commissioner of Public Works, six candidates

have filed for Mayor and only one candidate for City Council District 1 which is within Berkeley County. The Town of Moncks Corner, Mayor is on the ballot there are two candidates for that seat, Town Council there are three available seats and three candidates, and the Commission of Public Works has one seat and one candidate for that election. Therefore; for the City of Charleston there is a great possibility that they may have a runoff election. If there is a runoff that would be held on November 21st.

Board members you have in your packet you have a list of poll workers that say they are available for working these elections, either early voting or Election Day, you have a list of each. If you would take a minute to look over the list of people saying they are available to work these elections. We have anticipated training classes for these workers on Tuesday, October the 10th at 2:00 PM for the early voting workers, Wednesday, October 18th at 11:00am and again at 6:00pm for election day workers. Currently online poll worker training is unavailable. The state is updating that website. For the City of Charleston, we have three polling locations: Daniel Island Elementary, Daniel Island Recreation Center and Phillip Simmons Elementary school. For the Town of Summerville there are three polling locations: Sangaree Middle School, Nexton Elementary and Summerville Fire Station #4. Jamestown will use the Jamestown Town Hall and Moncks Corner will use the Moncks Corner Town Hall as set by law. Early voting will begin on Monday, October 23rd through Friday, November 3rd, the hours each day are from 8:30am to 5:00pm, there are no weekend hours. The election day is November the 7th, 7:00am to 7:00pm at those polling locations. Certification of these elections will occur on Thursday, November 9th at 10:00am. You will certify Town of Moncks Corner election; the other elections will be certified by the municipalities as they have their own election commissions to certify the elections. If a runoff is needed, the runoff will be November 21st. Early Voting runoff days will be Wednesday through Friday, November 15th, 16th, and 17th, those hours will be 8:30am to 5:00pm. The municipality of the City of Charleston may have a runoff, they will set their time on Wednesday, November the 22nd to certify that election. Board members would you approve the list of tentative workers for the November 7th election?

Darel Trout: What is the date of certification for The Town Moncks Corner?

Director Brown: Certification for Moncks Corner is November 9th; it would be that Thursday at 10:00am.

Don Saturday: Board members, do you want to take a little time to review this list before you offer your recommendations to approve? Or are you comfortable approving these tonight? Go ahead and approve these tonight.

Ms. Lamb: All of these are regular staff members?

Director Brown: All these poll managers are workers that have worked previous elections.

Don Saturday: These are experienced clerks?

Director Brown: Yes, these are all experienced workers.

Don Saturday: Can I therefore get a motion to approve these workers for the election day?

Moved and seconded.

I have a motion by Ms. Lamb and a second by Reverend Brown. Any discussion? Everyone who approves of these workers says aye.

Aye.

It's unanimous.

Don Saturday: Anything else, Director Brown?

Director Brown: That will conclude my report. Are there any questions from the board members?

Don Saturday: I noticed you are talking about the primary; these are proposed dates, or just dates they discussed, as it says, they have not been confirmed?

Director Brown: Those are dates have been provided by the State Election Commission and on their calendar, they have those set as tentative.

Don Saturday: As tentative?

Director Brown: Yes sir.

Director Brown: Ppp's they have tentative dates. For June and November those will be the dates of the elections.

Don Saturday: Do you have dates set for the training classes?

Director Brown: October the 10th and October 18th.

Don Saturday: Just as a reminder to the board members to help the minute taker asked to be recognized if you would call out your name. That would be better for the person taking the minutes if you don't mind. Any other questions from the board members?

Don Saturday: There is no old business carried over from the last meeting. Let me ask if there is any new business that needs to be brought up?

Ms. Lamb: Nothing for discussion tonight, the question was presented to me today about the procedure for moving a voting location. So, I wanted to possibly see if we could find out, I know we have done some before, but that had come as a request from that location. This had to do with the fire station in Hanahan on Williams Lane was much too small and now Bowens Corner Elementary is opening down the road, not far.

Don Saturday: Director Brown what is the procedure necessary for getting precinct locations?

Director Brown: You must seek permission first from the location you wish to use and that they will accept you as a polling location. You must submit that to the local delegation along with maps showing the distance that the polling location will be moved from to. Once the delegation approves it, then the polling location can be moved. Then the voter registration office will issue new voter registration cards to all voters that will be affected that will have the new polling location printed on card, so the voters will know that their polling location has changed.

Don Saturday: Director Brown will you get with board member Lamb about those new locations and be prepared to talk about it at our next meeting as to what we are going to do moving forward for that?

Director Brown: Yes

Don Saturday: Any other new business that needs to be brought up? There are items to be discussed in executive session. Just a minute and I will ask for a motion to go into executive session. Everyone is welcome to stay here, I don't think it will take a whole lot of time. When we come back, we will allow members of the audience to speak and so stand by. May I now have a motion to go into Executive Session?

Ms. Taylor has made a motion to go into executive session. Do I have a second. Second By Mr. Rose seconds the motion. Any objection to going into executive session? Those in favor say Aye.

Aye

Executive Session

Following Executive Session

I'd like to call the meeting back to order. For the record there was no action taken into executive session. Let that be part of the record.

So, at this time I'd like to ask if anyone would like to come up and speak? The podium is there and please state your name. I'll give you five minutes, let's try to stay on point. Speak your mind. Does anyone want to come up and speak?

Public Comments

Heather Hickman, I am a resident of Berkeley County:

First, I'd like to read a passage from the South Carolina State Constitution. Article 2 is the right of Suffrage Act. Elections are to be by secret ballot, but the ballots shall not be counted in secret. I just wanted that on the record. We have 138,500 registered voters in Berkeley County right now and I'm wondering how many more we might anticipate being registered in time to vote for the upcoming November election. And part of my question is, how many people can you register to vote?

Don Saturday: Those are good questions. Let's get an answer before you go any further. Director Brown, would you like to answer that question?

Director Brown: I can't tell you exactly how many we anticipate registering by the Municipal Election deadline. It depends on how many wants to be registered to vote in this county. We have some people that are here temporarily and have voted absentee back in their hometown that they have claimed as their legal resident. You can only claim one location as your legal residence and vote from that address. We have people moving into Berkeley County by the hundreds every day. They are offered the opportunity to register to vote when they change to a South Carolina Driver's license, they can register to vote there if they'd like to do so. They can also come to our office. Once they have a South Carolina driver's license or ID card they can go online to scvotes.gov and do their voters registration there as well. There are also many other government agencies which they may visit that also offer voter registration. They must be registered thirty days prior to any election.

Heather Hickman: Thirty days prior to early voting or election day?

Director Brown: Thirty days prior to Election Day.

Heather Hickman: Is there a limit on how many people you can process on any given day or week?

Director Brown: There is no limit to how many we can process during the day. We process them as quickly as we can, and of course as we get closer to election there is more activity on those sites, so the number per day increases. We work as quickly as possible to get those processed and their voter registration card mailed out to them. Not only new registration, but name changes and address changes.

Heather Hickman: Thank you very much. I was on the SEC website; they posted a limited review of Berkeley County corrective action plan. I noticed that Article 9 was completed in October 2023. I was curious about that.

Don Saturday: Where did you get that information?

Heather Hickman: Where you have the status on working your corrective action. On the Berkeley County website, never mind it's on the SEC website under audits.

Don Saturday: Was that a future date?

Heather Hickman: Yes, it was completed October 2023.

Don Saturday: We don't post that information, that had to be from the Director of Audit where we had to submit the corrective action plan and that had to be approved. So, I'm assuming that could have been just a typo on the date. I could buy October 2022. I have not posted any dates since we submitted the corrective action.

Heather Hickman: Based on these findings, it looked like one of the things was in the Ballot tally sheets, it seemed to be the biggest standoff. What I interpreted that to mean was that everyone is doing the best they can. Poll works, speakers, trainers and board members are doing the best they can. I was going to put out a call for people to become poll workers. I did apply and I haven't heard anything, so I don't know what the process looks like from there. I did find that on Berkeley County's site there is a voter's application. I did that about 3 months ago. Haven't heard anything. I think anyone who is interested in helping can apply and that is the best they can do.

Don Saturday: I appreciate your efforts to get people to join in and help is very much needed. Thank you. Anyone else? Wow, alright this is a quiet crowd.

Don Saturday: Alright, Thank You all for coming. This is our first evening meeting. I like it and we will be scheduling the meetings in January for the remainder of 2024, and we will include in some of those scheduled meetings, evening meetings, if you like it. We will continue to live stream, this is the first opportunity we had to live stream, we hope people joined in through our county website where they can link in. We like transparency, we like input, sometimes we don't always like what's been said but we are big people. We accept it, move forward, and try to do better. That's what we intend to do.

Director Brown: Next meeting will be Thursday, November 9th at 10:30am. The Board will meet as Canvassers at 10:00am and the board meeting will begin at 10:30am.

Don Saturday: That will be done following the certification. Some of us travel a great distance to get here, so traditionally when we get certifications, we become the Board of Canvassers we're already here, it's easier to transition from the board canvassers right over to the Board of Voter Registration and Elections. That's why we do it during the day. When we are not having certifications, we will schedule evening meetings.

Don Saturday: Any other questions? No further business that I am aware of, so I'll entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Trout made a motion and seconded by Ms. Lamb. All in favor of adjournment say Aye.

Aye. Unanimous

Meeting adjourned, Thank you very much!