

Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Berkeley County Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2023

Call to Order

The meeting of the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Berkeley County was held in the Assembly Room of the Berkeley County Administration Building on May 4, 2023, at 10:30am.

Board Members Present

Leon Brown, Truman Metts, Pam Lamb, Don Saturday, Darel Trout, Don Rose, Frances Taylor
Let the record show there is a quorum.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes of Board of Canvassers November 11, 2022, Board Meeting of February 23, 2023.

Motion to accept as submitted or changes needed.

Motion to accept by Darel Trout and a second by Truman Metts. Minutes are accepted.

Director's Report

Several South Carolina Legislative updates.

House Bill 3734:

Municipal election dates, Municipalities have a choice to choose a date of March, July, or November to hold their elections. That will be uniform across the state so elections will be held on one day.

Senate Bill 92:

Change election deadline for protest, in the instance of a holiday occurrence.

Senate Bill 405:

Electoral reform act, this is more at the state level as far as to certifying the election results for president.

Senate Bill 406:

Publishing of election results, submitting results of early voting and absentee.

Change of personnel at SEC:

Chris Whitmire, Public Information Officer, has left the agency. John Catalino has been promoted to this position.

Paige Salonich, Training Director, she is currently the training coordinator and county support specialists. Area representatives now report to her and only three area representatives currently, statewide. They are hiring for a 4th person. Hopefully within the new budget year they will hire a 5th person.

Our area representative was Travis Alexander, he has left the SEC to become the director in Richland County. Our new representative is Monique Bowman.

Audit Department, Courtney Philips is the director, and this is new position at the SEC. Berkeley County is ongoing an audit by Mrs. Philips.

In the board members packets you have two letters from attorneys.

First letter is from the SEC general council, Mr. Thomas Nicholson. There was a letter submitted from voter at the Foxbank location that she submitted as a HAVA issue, and they have determined that her issue showed no signs of HAVA. There may have been some procedural issues but not a HAVA issue. Second letter is from the Berkeley County assistant county attorney, concerning the domicile hearings held in October of 2022 and January of 2023. They will no longer have hearings without evidence being presented prior to the hearing being held.

We have undergone our annual security assessment by the department of homeland security. These reports go to the SEC and should be made available approximately May 15, 2023.

We have completed our biannual accessibility surveys of all our polling locations. This is required during each odd number year. We had a few locations that were different from 2021, Daniel Island Recreation Center and Net International Ministries and early voting locations (Hanahan and St. Stephen library and the voter registration office) were also surveyed.

On to redistricting:

Town of Summerville, all residents in Berkeley County are in town council district 2. Formerly some of those residents were in Town Council 1, due to county line change in 2019.

City of Charleston completed redistricting, a portion of Daniel Island 4 is now in city council district 8. All of City of Charleston was district 1, now Daniel Island 4 contains City Council 1 and City Council 8.

Mailing post cards to voters to notify the change, City of Charleston pays for the postcards and the postage.

Voter registration cards were mailed to every voter in Berkeley County prior to the General Election in 2022. Thousands of returned cards with no forwarding address were submitted to SEC for them to be removed as inactive/moved, as they are the only that have authority to do so. Cards with forwarding addresses within Berkeley County were mailed a letter and change of address form to update address, sign, and return. We have received a very poor response. This is an ongoing progress as letters are not being returned, very few voters are updating their address.

November 7, 2023, Municipal election day

November 21, 2023, Runoff (if necessary)

Registration deadlines:

In person Friday October 6, 2023

Online Sunday October 8 at 11:59pm

By mail October 10, 2023, post marked as Monday October 9th is Columbus Day (Federal Holiday)

Early Voting October 23rd – November 3rd 8:30am-5pm Monday Through Friday, with no weekend hours

Runoff November 15th – November 17th Dates (If Necessary)

Candidates that live within City of Charleston file with the City of Charleston.

Dates of Filing:

August 7th noon – August 21st noon

Filing fees:

Mayor \$1000.00

City Council and Commission of Public Works \$100

Town of Summerville, August 9th 8:30 am - September 8th noon

Candidates file with the Town of Summerville

Mayor \$200

Town Council and Commissioner of Public Works \$100

Town of Jamestown August 1st noon – August 15th noon

Candidates file with the Town of Jamestown

Town Council \$25

Town of Moncks Corner August 1st noon – August 15th

Candidates file with the Voter Registration Office

Mayor \$300

Town Council and Commission of Public Works \$100

Moncks Corner is the only one that files with Berkeley County

For the elections in 2024 we are working with library systems for use as early voting centers.

DPP February 3rd, 2024, no early voting dates have been determined.

RPP no date for election or early voting

Filing for offices in 2024

March 18, 2024, Noon – April 1, 2024, Noon

The date of law states the 15th but those dates are Saturdays so following workday under section 7-11-15, it will be the following Monday.

Primary June 11, 2024

Runoff June 25, 2024 (If Necessary)

Early Voting May 24, 2024 – June 7, 2024

Early Voting Runoff June 19, 2024 – June 21, 2024

Early voting 8:30am – 5:00pm, no weekend hours during primary elections

This concludes the directors report

Board Member questions?

Pam lamb asked about a few dates.

Old Business

Move ahead to old business. Is there any old business to discuss farther? Hearing none we will move to the new business.

New Business

Is there any new business to be brought to the board this morning?

Hearing none.

Next meeting scheduled, I want to comment we will publish these as we are not prepared to do this today, but we will schedule through the end of year and around November we will schedule through 2024. We used to do this, and we want to get back on track.

Only known date for meeting that I know we need to have will be prior to Municipal election just to make sure we have workers, and you approve the list.

Certification for election will be on November 9th.

So, we can anticipate that needs to be probably in October.

Next meeting date we will plan the following year schedule and on into 2024 later in the year.

Suggestions by any board members regarding the next meeting?

Don Saturday would like to hold one in June, is there any date in June that works for everyone?

Typically, we meet on Thursdays so check dates in June.

June 22nd next meeting 10:30 am.

We will continue to schedule meetings for this room and Ms. Brown will schedule and make sure it's available.

Verify room available on June 22nd and will make appropriate posting on website.

Public Comments

Public comments are welcome, the agenda states five minutes.

Please be on point and brief. We may need to reduce to three minutes depending on number of comments.

This will be first come first serve, approach podium, state your name, if you are representing a group, and that you are a resident of Berkeley County.

Darel Trout will keep time.

Tara, a concerned citizen of Berkeley County with regards to our elections.

I brought to the attention to the board of elections of the 2020 election of over of 300 voters that should not have been on the voter rolls, I did find that less than 3% should not have been on list. This has been a learning process for everyone. The board insisted on focusing on that 3%, rather than using the time to review the evidence I have brought forth. I received a letter from the Berkeley County legal department stating no violations were found and will not pull any more information related to this. I brought all my binders to every meeting and met with Rose Brown and 2 others from the voter registration office. They did check 2 affidavits but I don't think there was ever any interest in looking into this evidence. Also, in the letter I received it stated they cannot remove voters from the voter roll, this must be done on a state level. They informed me to take it up with SEC. They gave me several examples of where they have submitted things to the SEC to get these voters removed from the roll. They stated they are overwhelmed with returned mail and are working vigilantly on it. From this I am saying Berkeley County board of elections is at least 3 years behind.

Ken, Berkeley County resident and a poll watcher on 2 occasions and many more times in the future.

Seals used and process used on machines, a very simple process, and on both occasions this process was not being followed. This should identify that there is a problem with the staff at that polling location and these people should be fired and refuse to rehire in the future to perform those activities. There seems to be no consequences for not following these processes. It has been reported in the past and haven't heard anything to correct them in the future.

Ann Conder, I came to you in September of 2022 because of concerns. I came then because of the problems that happened during the primary that I told you about in March of last year. I wanted to make it known to you of the proper training of your poll workers and poll clerks. Mr. Saturday and Mrs. Lamb assured they were properly trained. I was given a lot of lip service. She quoted things from the last months minutes. Concerns with voter integrity. Requests not unreasonable, they were legitimate and legal. September meetings were not accurate or complete, sloppy, and improper. No mention that I asked who did the training and Ms. Brown stated she does. Several FOIA violations were also made. My point today minutes are of public record and need to be as precise as possible leaving little doubt. FOIA laws, should be familiarized with it. Title 30 chapter 4, South Carolina code of laws. As of today, you failed in your reassurances to me, five different precincts candidates not following the law. Greeting and asking for support within 500 feet. Your sloppiness dismissive attitude and excuses for your failings are not acceptable and I demand your resignation today.

Cherie Gross, native Berkeley County resident. I attended last meeting, and asked 3 questions

Why are the meetings not posted for every meeting?

Why are the meetings not live stream? I was told it is the discretion of the board chair that you oppose of live stream.

Several members responded to having no objection and stated they will look into it.

Last question, why are the meetings held during the middle of workday, we have always done it, does anyone oppose of different? I'm positive council members can say its available on Thursday evenings Any comments from members, we will look into it.

I made you aware the last time I was here that Don Rose told me and other ladies to stop worrying about election fraud and get a boyfriend. I waited around after last meeting to see if anyone wanted to talk with me about it further and no one did. I formally request he be removed from the board. If he doesn't take it seriously, he should not be allowed or privileged to serve Berkeley County.

Nancy, Berkeley County resident.

A couple weeks ago, there was a long summary of last month's meeting on Facebook. I looked for a video file, there wasn't one. I looked at all kinds of commissions and boards meetings on record on video, and I don't understand why this commission is not on video so everyone can see and judge you accordingly. Every meeting in this room is live stream and taped. If you're going to insist in mornings and others can't get here let them see. Then looked at minutes and agenda, sloppy agenda, nothing on it, except headaches. Now I see why you had no new business because you had none. Normally on other agendas what they are going to talk about is listed under new business or old business. Put a little more thought into on how you present it. I simply request you to please video tape and live stream

Heather Hickman Berkeley County Resident

One reason to hear acknowledgement of many things we discuss.

Statement this morning, aren't responsible to help Americans vote, SEC does that.

It is your response expect to hear some acknowledgment, statement made to ladies, discuss elections with the board, Don Rose must give public apology.

Another reason acknowledgement of misrepresentation of inmates helping with audit; told different stories. Why hide it with the evidence given? Speaking of a photo, phone call from sled saying they were told of photo of polling location. I grilled agent, agent was evasive, wasn't given any evidence. Observer being invested by SLED but not the complaints, there's something wrong.

Last month, February, we were presented of 500 pages of how to be doing elections in future. I would get rid of voting machines. Going back to complaints, audit in Aiken, supposedly being done since last August. There is supposedly an audit going on in Berkeley County, where are our audit results? Why don't we have them? Why are they being hidden? Waste of taxpayer to investigate me. A proposed budget of 7 million, let's get rid of machines and use paper ballots with a hand count.

Thank you for your time I do not need your lack of responses.

Berkeley County Resident, President of Goose Creek NAACP

Misinformation of false rumors, this can be used to mislead voters. The reality is this, election officials regularly update with importance and with legal protection. Protect voter choices, including election officials, include that individual ballot cannot be traced back to the voter. Its not evidence that the vulnerability have been exploited.

We should push for free and clear elections and trust the process. I support Berkeley County Voter Registration and Elections and the Director Rose Brown. She is a dedicated election official and someone who knows Berkeley County inside and out. I have full confidence that her and the board will continue to do so.

Tory Liferidge, Berkeley County resident

It's interesting we can get this uproar about minutes, however you all by delegation don't get this way about other things. There is a statewide GOP protocol to try and make sure they are in control of every board of elections. Same people over and over and saying the same thing, trying to make a case for the dismissal and removal of Rose Brown. Which is why we will stand to make sure that will not happen. Nobody I know more that goes by the book more than Rose Brown. We need you to actually stand in that same integrity. People already testified that they all say, when they have called previous directors in the past, they would say let me ask Rose. The same person that has head over the past 3 directors is now in the chair and you are questioning her, and suddenly, she is messy and sloppy? That's a load of crap! We need to see past that crap. We need to make sure that for Berkeley County we can read and see through it and actually stand for what is right and make sure we continue to do what's right for the voters of Berkeley County, all of them, not just the GOP.

Ed Vice, Berkeley County Resident. I am continuing from last time and wont piggyback off it. I want to commend you all. You all are doing what you can to correct problems. This group here today, we need to take a minute and work through together and fix the problem. Berkeley County could be an example for this whole nation. Rec center, support we have gotten, with Brown and her staff to make sure it all ran right. How can it be good here and not there, we got to work together? The idea to go back to paper ballots, its an idea, but to me that would be disastrous! When we went to the machine there's no way

going back. I can understand using a machine and get a receipt, to say this is what I did, and this is what was entered. I'm here to commend you all for this and over the years and haven't seen this kind of crowd. I don't understand why not in the past, now the way things going now you are going to see size and bigger. Let's find the solution to work the solution. Let's get them to learn process and work with it at same time. Let's not come here and be up on it, lets find a solution together and be an example for the whole nation.

Peggy Lasanske Berkeley County resident

I was the trainer of 53 poll watchers for past election. I am also the coauthor of the 50-page report presented to you by the Berkeley County GOP. I cannot let the testimony or comments of 2 previous gentleman stand. No GOP to run election offices. The intent of that report was to bring to the board's attention the issues, no one has an agenda against Ms. Brown. She works to do her job and accommodated many requests. There is no racial component and I resent that. We ask the board to please consider comments presented, we care about election integrity, and for people to say let's work together, is all were trying to do. We ask there be more transparency. Not one word in old business, lack of minutes, audit we heard nothing about. We as voters deserve to be updated, we put the work in to make sure to work with her, to make sure elections are free, fair, and conducted properly. That's our privilege and ask you respect that and provide us with information and act on the issues. We see no movement and we are frustrated. I thank you very much for your attention, and I cannot let stand that it's a GOP agenda, it's a citizen agenda. I do it because I care, not because I am a republican. People need to be involved, now we are engaged there are charges of racism and that is unfair, and its flat out wrong and I stand on that.

Bill Shelton, Berkeley County resident

One of the things for democracy to work is people must have confidence, integrity, elections to be held fair for all parties. One thing I heard last week is we allowed voting machines to be taken home, relying on a piece of tape, if we allow this to happen, we may not need yall and will not have another election that means anything. So that must stop. So, my questions for you, Johnny Cribb gave us a call about the surplus and are trying to build for the county for the future. Can we not build buildings to secure the voting machines? Politics to get hired poll workers. Observers and impartial poll workers.

Jen Berkeley County resident

Briefly address on the whole machine asset, I worked as a canvasser. As part of the work, we purchased voter rolls, \$2500 fee, before and after elections and doing analysis on them. Found in spreadsheet, all sorts of reversed you voted but didn't. Glitch in the data, new file with updated info. When its in a spreadsheet, very easy to manipulate and change things. Anybody ever been a subject in type of fraud? I'm not good at computers but know that when its remote anyone can get in and do whatever, steal your home because it's all electronic. That's the purpose. My voter record isn't correct, this is what we have. Unless you can prove you voted in primary, can you bring proof voting in 2018? Unfortunately, problem with systems can be manipulated. Paper can be FOIA, you can ask for it and you can say I want to see the physical paper. Its much easier on paper. A lot harder to manipulate that system too. When it comes to machines and voting on machines, even with a printout, no guarantee somewhere down the line that someone isn't going in there and flipping a switch. Private organizations are in it for the money, their running machines to make money. Poll workers can't fix the machine if it goes down, because they

want it to be only done by the private organizations. Private company is running the elections. Then your results get sent to another private company, redirect you to private site where election results are kept. You are no longer on Berkeley County servers. They aren't in it for Berkeley County, they are in it for the money.

Barbara Bates Berkeley County resident

I hear a lot about poll watchers, have you ever thought about being a poll worker? How many of you have been poll workers? Okay, what about watchers? It's easy to stand on the outside and pick them apart. Get on the inside and learn and be a positive aspect to our voters.

Any other speakers?

Close out

Board Comments

Don Saturday

I want to make a comment because the audit has been mentioned, I emailed director of audits which is a newly established department through the state election commission. It is brand new and has still not been fully staffed. The director of audit is the one conducting our audit and said this morning she hopes to have it finalized by end of May. That's her timeline, we have no control of that. I would imagine the audit will be available, but I don't know for sure as that is state run. The timeline is the end of May. That is the best I can tell you about the status of the audit.

We have gone through all the parts of the agenda; I'm going to ask for a motion to adjourn. Does anyone want to make a comment, any board member comments?

Darel Trout

I have no problems with evening meetings, it suits me better because of work, and I have no problem with it being live streamed.

Don Saturday

We will discuss evening, live streaming is a good idea, I have no objection to meeting at night. This phenomenon that has occurred very recently where we had this number of people interested in what we are doing and we are not opposed to having large crowds, we will work in the direction to satisfy you. You can be assured to that.

Next Meeting

June 22, 2023 at 10:30am

Meeting Adjourned

Motion to adjourn, second, all in favor say I
Meeting adjourned.