

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Linda J. Sutton
CHAIR

Frank M. Dickerson
SECRETARY

Jerry D. Jordan
MEMBER



Robert H. Coffman
Director of Elections

Lamar Joyner
Deputy Director

FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS BOARD MEETING – October 22, 2010

Present: Linda J. Sutton, Chair
Frank M. Dickerson, Secretary
Jerry D. Jordan, Member

Staff: Rob Coffman, Director of Elections
Lamar Joyner, Deputy Director
Judy Speas, Senior Office Assistant

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM in the Fourth Floor Meeting Room of the Forsyth County Government Center.

Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes for October 19, 2010. Ms. Sutton requested any corrections or additions to the minutes. Mr. Dickerson moved to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

One Stop Voting Locations

Ms. Sutton explained that the Board of Elections was holding a special meeting to review One Stop Voting Locations. The WSSU Anderson Center location had been in the news lately because a university staff member had sent an email to 6,400 students, staff members and faculty members encouraging them to vote early and to support the Democratic Party. The local Republican Party opposed this action to be inappropriate. University officials agreed that the email was an improper use of a state employee's authority and use of state property to support or oppose an election issue. Speaker cards were distributed to anyone who wanted to speak for the allotted three minutes each. Several concerned citizens spoke on both sides of the issue. Nathan Tabor, chairman of the Forsyth County Republican Party, requested that the Board remove WSSU as an early voting site since state law pertaining to the emails had been broken. Rep. Larry Womble said that many poor citizens in the neighborhood would be unable to vote without the WSSU site because they lacked transportation. Ms. Sutton asked the Board members to express their comments. Mr. Dickerson thanked everyone for attending and stated that he shared many of the spoken sentiments. However, he was concerned that it was impossible to change an early voting location to another site at this late time. The site had been publicized and approved by all Board members. It would be impossible to create another nearby site in the short time allowed. Mr. Dickerson stated that WSSU should not be approved as an early voting location in the future unless procedures were in place to prevent similar issues. It must be a fair and equitable location to vote.

Mr. Jordan stated that he appreciated the attendance of the meeting. In the past, since WSSU was within walking distance to the Board of Elections office one stop location, he

had never been in favor of approving it as a one stop location. He questioned Mr. Coffman whether the WSSU site would be secure for a voting location. Mr. Coffman stated that it was owned by the university and they had direct control of the facility. The voting equipment would be password protected and the location would be secured by Elections staff. Six electronic voting machines and four staff members would be at the site. Mr. Jordan stated that it was good to see citizens concerned about the voting process. Since the area would be secure, he would not vote against removing the site for early voting in this election. However, he would petition the State Board of Elections to review the use of the WSSU site in future elections to assure that the process would be fair and impartial.

Ms. Sutton stated that she was appreciative of the good attendance at the meeting. The Board would always welcome suggestions for early voting locations. She believed that the WSSU incident was very unfortunate, but the intent was not malicious. The Board of Elections would insure that the location is secure with trained staff. She stated that since the WSSU site serves students and staff from several colleges and a large surrounding neighborhood population, she would not be in favor of closing the site. Previously, the Board unanimously voted for the location and the State Board approved the early voting plan. Even though this mistake occurred, the Board must always provide the most convenient locations for early voting. Ms. Sutton encouraged the audience to help the Board when the early voting locations are being planned in the future.

Mr. Dickerson proposed a motion for the Board to request that WSSU officials notify them of procedures planned to prevent a similar incident in the future. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Ms. Sutton asked the Board members if there was any other business. No other business was discussed.

Adjournment

Ms. Sutton requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dickerson moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 PM.

Linda J. Sutton, Chair

Frank M. Dickerson, Secretary

Jerry D. Jordan, Member