

COMMISSIONERS  
Adell Adams, Chair  
Jane Dreher Emerson  
Sylvia Holley  
E. Peter Kennedy  
Shirley Mack

# *Voter Registration & Elections*



Rokey W. Suleman II  
DIRECTOR

## *Richland County, South Carolina*

### Minutes of the Richland County Board of Elections & Voter Registration Elections & Voter Registration Conference Room

December 6, 2017  
4:00 PM

#### In Attendance

#### Board Members

- ❖ Adell Adams, Chair
- ❖ Jane Emerson, Vice Chair
- ❖ E. Peter Kennedy
- ❖ Shirley Mack
- ❖ Sylvia Holley

#### Staff Members

- ❖ Rokey Suleman II, Director
- ❖ Lillian McBride, Deputy Director
- ❖ Yonita Simmons, Outreach Coordinator

#### Others Present

- ❖ League of Women Voters Representatives (LOWV)

#### Call to Order

A meeting of the Richland County Board of Elections & Voter Registration was called to order in the Elections & Voter Registration Conference Room on December 6, 2017 at 4:00 PM, Chair Adams presiding.

#### Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Emerson moved that we adopt the agenda as published. The motion to adopt the agenda; was seconded by Ms. Mack. The vote in favor was unanimous.

#### Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Adams requested that the minutes from the October 10, 2017 board meeting, be amended by removing EEOC matter under Executive Session items. Ms. Emerson moved that the minutes be adopted with the correction aforementioned by Commissioner Adams. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy. The vote in favor was unanimous.

#### Board Chair Comments

No comments.

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### Directors Comments

#### Agency Status

- We are expected the number of registered voters in Richland County to decrease by the end of January as the state will do a purge of all records. The purge includes, move, deceased and inactive voters.
- 260,567 Registered voters in Richland County
- 1, 536 New voters registered
- 269 (New and Address changes were received through the online portal)
- 13 Voter ID's
- Our office is currently struggling with space. As a result some of the new registrations from the past year and a half have not been filed. Despite these items not being filed, they are organized and can be easily located if needed. We are trying to reorganize the office and add additional storage and filing cabinets to reduce the number of unfiled documents. As we prepare for the future new office spaces that can accommodate this office is at the top of the list.
- This month is a slow month and we utilize this time to allow the staff to take much needed breaks and vacations, after working countless hours during the Election season. This gives them time to rest and rejuvenate themselves for the upcoming voting season in 2018.
- All managers have been asked to produce budgets for the upcoming Primary Election. They were asked to request all items needed to run this election. A manager's meeting will be held next week to discuss their budgets and deem what is and isn't necessary.

#### Post November Election

- Election Day went well and there were no issues. We submitted all of our numbers to the state. The staff has been working at the warehouse to assess the machines and determine what we need to replace as it relates to batteries, PEB's, flashcards, etc. This is just a prime example of how costly this equipment is. We are currently estimating spending \$6,000 for batteries and PEB's There is also a box prepared to go to the State Election Commission.
- We are wrapping up the final numbers from the November Election to submit them to the cities and towns for reimbursements. This will help us determine how much funds will be returned back into our budget.

#### Budget

- We are on target with our budget. We are not anticipating any budget crunches at this time.
- We will have a clear picture of our budget going into January after we have a final number from reimbursements.

#### County Council

- We requested that the County Council rescind the ordinance that currently prevents us from paying legal fees out of our budget.
- During this time I was admonished to live within the means of the funds that were budgeted. As director I informed them that a part of living within the means of the restricted budget may result in losing certain amenities, this office has previously provided; such as satellite polling locations for the upcoming elections. Not having satellite locations reduces the amount of funds spent by this office.

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- We are currently working on the upcoming budgets for 2018 and 2019, to submit to the Budget and Finance departments. This budget shows in detail where we are, areas in which we have been historically low and underfunded and gives an insight to the areas that need to be reviewed in detail in the future.
- There is an issue that needs to be clarified; the \$85,000 that was used to hold the Special Election for District 10 was never credited to our account. We have requested that the budget department verify when the funds were deposited and to what account was the \$85,000 placed in. This is important because they reduced our initial amount of \$400,000 (original amount of the advance/reimbursement, given by County Council) minus the \$85,000. If no record shows for the \$85,000 deposit then we will also request that the \$85,000 be added back to our budget.

### Administrative

- I will be speaking to the Managers concerning evaluations. I will complete manager evaluations throughout this month and January. The managers will evaluate their staff and we will review them together and then meet with each staff member individually. Managers have been asked to have evaluations completed by the end of January. We are using an evaluation tool that I created in the past.
- SCARE Conference is February 3 – 10. We have made reservations for the board members who have indicated that they will be attending. There will be training available for Board Members and Directors who need to complete certification or complete their yearly recertification.
- Delegation annual meeting will be held on the same date as our office Christmas party.

### Speaking Engagements

Served as guest speaker for the following organizations:

- Richland County GOP
- Joseph Nasair
- Rotary Club
- Northeast Democrats (this coming Saturday)

### Board Comments

**Shirley Mack:** We are currently behind the deadline date for our Director's review. The original date of completion was November. We need to agree on a date to meet for the review.

- Response: Mr. Suleman: If you would like to schedule it around my availability, please note that I will be traveling to Ohio, Virginia and possibly Liberia to monitor an Election.
- Response: Ms. Emerson: We need to meet for a work session to compile our responses and then we should meet with Mr. Suleman to review our responses.
- Response: Ms. Mack: I am new to the board, but I have a question have you ever done an evaluation on your directors?
- Response: Ms. Emerson: We have done one previously, but we were unhappy with the results.
- Response: Ms. Mack: Question: Is your trip personal?
- Response: Mr. Suleman: No, this is election related and it is no cost to the County.
- Response: Ms. Emerson: Is the 20<sup>th</sup> a good day for all members?
- Response: All board members: December 20<sup>th</sup> is good.
- Response: Mr. Kennedy: There needs to be one change, can we receive and email with the final revisions?

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- Response: Ms. Mack: If we are meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>, are we going to meet after the meeting with the director if he is here?
- Response: Ms. Emerson: It depends; if we work through the instruments provided and have a clear consensus
- Response: Ms. Mack: For a clear understanding we are meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> for what?
- Response: Ms. Emerson: To ensure that this instrument works, in the past it didn't check out or give us a clear idea of the performance.
- Response: Ms. Mack: We went over this instrument previously and we asked if this was acceptable, now we hearing that it is not.
- Response: Ms. Adams: On the 20<sup>th</sup> if he's here we will meet with him if we are ready.
- Response: Ms. Mack: Ready for what? I don't understand.
- Response: Ms. Emerson: I would like to have a frank conversation with the board without Rokey present.
- Response: Ms. Mack: After that will we bring him in for discussion? What's next?
- Response: Board Members: If he's here.
- Response: Ms. Adams: If he's here on the 20<sup>th</sup> after our meeting we will bring him in if we are ready.
- Response: Ms. Mack: Ready for what?
- Response: Ms. Emerson: It did not happen last time we were here. The previous time once we met the formula did not work out.
- Response: Ms. Adams: We will proceed on the 20<sup>th</sup> if he is here, if not we will provide dates that he is available.
- Response: Mr. Suleman: This election may or may not happen. If I am here on the 20<sup>th</sup> I am available to meet.
- Response: Ms. Mack: Next week is a clear week, what date can we plan on next week?
- Response: Board Members: The 12<sup>th</sup> is fine.
- Response: Ms. Adams: The 12<sup>th</sup> of December at 11:00 am.
- Response: Ms. Mack: If he is here, then we can keep the 20<sup>th</sup> to meet with him.

**Mr. Kennedy:** Adell discussed the absentee ballots. We would like for two board members there each time the ballots are opened. The question is does that need to be included in the bylaws?

- Mr. Suleman, I will not have a decision on that I can provide input but no answers. If you would like to keep it informal then that's an option or you can make it formal and include it in your bylaws.
- Response: Ms. Mack: Why did this question come up? Was there a previous problem?
- Response: Mr. Kennedy: No it is just a way to protect ourselves.
- Response: Ms. Adams: Like for the Election we had we really didn't need that.
- Response: Mr. Suleman: Remember that if you require this we start opening ballots at 9:00 am and this would limit your availability. Two members will be required to be present all day if this is placed in your bylaws.
- Response: Mr. Kennedy: Rescind the motion.
- Response: Mr. Suleman: I don't think just one board member is a good idea especially with a board that is as politically lopsided as this.
- Response: Ms. Mack: Explain politically lopsided.

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- Response: Mr. Suleman: Yes, you have 5 members, 4 represent one party and 1 represents the other. Typically when you require 2 members you have one from each party. That will limit Pete's availability. So my recommendation to the board is that you keep it informal.

### **Executive Session**

Ms. Emerson moved to adjourn to Executive Session, to discuss a legal matter. Ms. Mack seconded. The vote in favor was unanimous. The members of the Board of Elections & Voter Registration entered into Executive Session at 4:50 PM. Executive Session adjourned at 5:20 PM.

No decisions were made in Executive Sessions.

### **Public Questions & Comments**

No Comments

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Kennedy moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Mack. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:21 PM.

### **Next Scheduled Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Board of Elections & Voter Registration meeting is February 14, 2017, at 4:00 PM in the Richland County Council Chambers.

**Submitted By:**  
Yonita Simmons  
Outreach Coordinator