

Eddie L. Edwards III
Chairman

Nicki T. Artis
Secretary

Bridgette C. Cowan
Member

County of Wayne

Board of Elections

Jimmy E. Hull
Member

Charles Wright
Member

Anne C. Risku
Director

Wayne County Board of Elections Board Meeting August 1, 2023

Eddie L. Edwards, III, Chairman
Jimmy E. Hull, Member
Nicki T. Artis, Member
Anne Risku, Director

Charles Wright, Secretary
Bridgette C. Cowan, Member
Andrew Neal, Staff Attorney

The meeting was held at the properly noticed date and time and a quorum was present. Mr. Edwards called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

I. Approval of the August 1, 2023 Agenda

1. Mr. Artis made a motion to approve the August 1, 2023 meeting agenda. Mr. Wright seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

II. Approval of July 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes

1. Ms. Cowan made a motion to approve the July 18, 2023 meeting minutes. Mr. Wright seconded and the vote was unanimous.

III. Early Voting Schedules – October 19th Primary & November 7th General Elections

1. **Board Member Discussion:** Ms. Risku presented the Board with proposed Early Voting schedules and data from past elections. Ms. Cowan asked if there was an issue with voting at the Library on Sundays. Ms. Risku stated that the Library did not have an issue with Sunday voting. Ms. Cowan stated she would like to have at least one Sunday. Mr. Artis asked Ms. Risku if she could estimate the cost of opening on a Sunday. Ms. Risku stated cost would depend on turnout but that the Early Voting site and the Board of Elections would both be fully staffed. Ms. Cowan stated that she preferred including Sunday voting because there are some people that cannot vote on other days. She would support a plan without weekend voting but prefers to have Sunday hours included. Mr. Artis stated that even though he understood Ms. Cowan's perspective, he felt that the Board must be good stewards of public funds. He stated he would support Sunday voting in a larger election but based on the historically low voter during municipal elections he did not support adding a Sunday to the schedule. Mr. Wright stated that he was more inclined to support Ms. Cowan's position as he helps people on Sundays and often times the only time they have transportation is to and from church on Sundays. Mr. Edwards asked for clarification on the timeline. Mr. Neal stated the Board could recess or have another meeting prior to the Friday deadline. Mr. Edwards said that he understood providing access but had trepidations about having to defend the decision to the taxpayers if turnout is minimal and hoped to find a balance. Mr. Edwards asked Ms. Risku to review the statutes regarding the schedule again. Afterwards Mr. Artis asked for clarification on Ms. Cowan's proposed amendment. Ms. Cowan suggested adding a Sunday to each schedule with the hours of 12-3pm or 1-4pm on the second Sunday. Mr. Edwards stated he preferred the hours of 1-4pm.

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2. **Public Comment:** Barbara Dantonio, 152 Parks Rd, Goldsboro, NC 27534 stated that in another county in the 2014 general election she observed over 600 people vote in a 4 hour period on a Sunday and that proves that some people vote on Sundays. She also stated the Democratic Party was having two voter outreach events soon.

Mr. Wright reminded the public that this public comment section is only for commentary on the Early Voting plans, other comments should be made in the general public comment period.

3. **Board Vote:**

Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the proposed October 10, 2023 Goldsboro Primary Election Early Voting plan with the addition of Sunday Oct 1st from 1-4 p.m. Ms. Cowan seconded the motion and the motion passed 4-1. Mr. Edwards, Mr. Hull, Ms. Cowan, and Mr. Wright voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Artis opposed.

Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the proposed November 7th, 2023 Municipal and Sanitary District Election Early Voting plan with the addition of Sunday Oct 29th from 1-4 p.m. Ms. Cowan seconded the motion and the motion passed 4-1. Mr. Edwards, Mr. Hull, Ms. Cowan, and Mr. Wright voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Artis opposed.

Ms. Risku reminded the Board that since the plan was not unanimous, she will submit the majority and minority plans to the North Carolina State Board of Elections and they will determine the early voting schedule for both elections. The plan supported by the majority of the Board is not official.

IV. **Public Comment:**

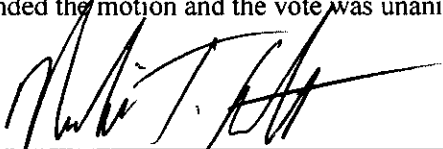
1. No one presented to speak.

V. **Board Comment:**

1. Mr. Wright announced his resignation as Secretary of the Board. Mr. Wright nominated Mr. Artis to serve as Secretary of the Board. Ms. Cowan seconded the nomination and the vote was unanimous.
2. Mr. Artis thanked the Board for their nomination and approval.
3. Mr. Edwards thanked Ms. Risku for her work in preparing for today's meeting.

VI. **Adjournment**

1. With all business having been conducted, Ms. Cowan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wright seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. The Board adjourned at 4:37 p.m.



Nicki T. Artis, Secretary