

## BOARD OF ELECTIONS

**J. Eric Elliott**  
CHAIR

**Linda J. Sutton**  
SECRETARY

**Jerry D. Jordan**  
MEMBER



**Robert H. Coffman**  
Director of Elections

### FORSYTH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS BOARD MEETING- OCTOBER 27, 2006

Present: J. Eric Elliott, Chair  
Linda J. Sutton, Secretary  
Jerry D. Jordan, Member

Staff: Rob Coffman, Director of Elections  
Pamela Johnson, Administrative Assistant

Guest: Lori Sykes, Assistant County Attorney

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#### Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM.

#### Approval of Minutes- October 17 and October 24, 2006

The minutes for October 17 and October 24, 2006 will be approved at the next Board Meeting.

#### Discussion of Straight Party Voting

The purpose of this meeting is regarding the formal action on a petition filed by Elizabeth Motsinger, candidate for School Board at Large and her husband, John Motsinger. The Motsingers asked for a change in voter instructions for the 2006 General Election. The Motsingers recommended a change of wording in instruction "D" to straight party voters from **"candidate of a different party"** to **"candidate not of that party."**

Mr. Coffman stated that according to the District Election Technician, every county in North Carolina is using the same language on the ballot instructions and the State Board of Elections is not allowing any changes in the wording.

Ms. Sykes stated the instructions were done by the State Board of Elections and the Board does not have the authority to make any changes. Mr. Jordan stated that State law allows for a change in the wording of instructions if approved by the State Board of Elections. He stated he is disappointed that the Motsingers are not present for today's meeting. He states they have some valid points but the issue

should have been addressed in a timelier manner. Mr. Elliott agreed it was an issue of timeliness. Mr. Coffman stated that several counties tried to change instructions this fall but were told by the State Board of Elections they could not.

The Board and Staff discussed the fact that the wording was approved by the State Board of Elections on August 25, 2006 and the sample ballot was released to the public on the same date.

Mr. Jordan moved to not change the voting instructions on the 2006 General Election ballot. Ms. Sutton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Elliott stated that no clarifying verbal or written instructions on this issue should be given to voters unless a voter asks. Ms. Sutton stated she brought the ballot instruction issue to the attention of Board of Elections staff in August. She stated had she known more about the process at the time, she would have advocated for written instructions for the voting booths. She additionally stated there should not be written instructions now since voters have already voted absentee and one-stop.

Mr. Elliott stated the staff and precinct workers, however, need to know how to respond if asked about straight party voting. Mr. Coffman stated he has prepared a letter to go out with the training manuals and supplies explaining exactly what to say if a voter asks about straight party voting. The Board reviewed and discussed the letter. The Board recommended a few minor changes.

#### Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

#### Adjournment

Ms. Sutton moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jordan seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.

s:/ J. Eric Elliott, Chair

s:/ Linda J. Sutton, Secretary

s:/ Jerry D. Jordan, Member