

**Buckingham County Electoral Board Minutes**  
**June 16, 2023 , 2:00pm**  
**Buckingham County Agricultural Building Multipurpose Room**

**Dr. Karen Cerwinski, Chairwoman, Sandy Bank-Bertwell, Vice Chair**  
**Woody Hanes, Secretary**

The meeting of the electoral board was called to order by Dr. Cerwinski at 2:01pm.

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was presented and led by the secretary.

The adoption of the agenda was called for and Sandy Banks-Bertwell added the item: purchase of Ipads for Board members under Budget update.

Dr. Cerwinski introduced the new board member, Sandy Banks- Bertwell filling the vacated position thus completing the board. The reorganization of officers was called for per VA Code §2.3.1.3.2 by the chairwoman. It was moved by Woody Hanes to nominate Dr. Cerwinski as Chairwoman, Sandy Banks-Bertwell as Vice Chair and Woody Hanes as Secretary seconded by Dr Cerwinski and the motion passed unanimously.

The approval of the minutes of May 9, 2023 and May 12, 2023 was called for and the motion to approve was made by the secretary and seconded by the Chairwoman. The vote was unanimous.

**Motion:** by Woody Hanes and seconded by Dr. Cerwinski to go into Closed Session per Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711.(A).1 to discuss Personnel matters and Section §2.2-3711(A).6 to discuss Financial matters.

Vote : Ayes –3– Dr. Cerwinski, Woody Hanes, Sandy Banks - Bertwell. Motion carried

Absent during vote: 0

Board asked Ginger Chiesa, Interim Registrar to stay for a closed session.

**Closed Session at 2:08 pm.**

**Motion:** by Woody Hanes, seconded by Dr. Cerwinski to certify:  
Buckingham County Electoral Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in the executive meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the executive meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board.

Vote: Ayes–3– Dr. Cerwinski, Sandy Banks-Bertwell, and Woody Hanes

Absent During Vote: 0

**2:57 pm–Back in Open Session**

The Chairwoman announced that the Interim Registrar, Ginger Chiesa, was selected to fill the permanent position of General Registrar/ Director of Elections.

**Motion:** Madam Chair, I, Woody Hanes, move to accept the appointment of Ginger Chiesa as the Permanent General Registrar for the term beginning July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2027, seconded by Karen Cerwinski. Motion carried.

Ginger Chiesa accepted the position of Director of Elections/General Registrar for a four year term beginning 7/1/2023 and ending 6/30/27.

GR/Director of Elections Report:

- Report on the Officers of Elections and their training was discussed.
- Request for approval for the phone system to be upgraded and connected to the county phone system in the office. Estimated cost of \$1,500
- Request for approval to have the computers in the GR office backed up on a daily basis by the county IT department to ensure security records and files. Estimated cost of \$2,000.

**Motion:** I, Woody Hanes move that the board approve the expenditure for the phone system in the office and for the computer backup by the county., Seconded by Dr. Cerwinski. Motion carried..

The secretary gave an update on the applications for the Permanent Registrar position advertised. Dr. Cerwinski shared with the audience that these applications would be reviewed for the hiring of a Permanent Deputy Registrar to be advertised by the GR Office in the coming weeks.

Woody Hanes gave an update on the 4 precincts that were deemed unacceptable by the ADA survey at the last November Election. Observers went to each precinct to document compliance with ADA guidelines. The Board will be visiting each precinct to assess needs for changes and ensure compliance with ADA requirements

The board members, Dr. Cerwinski and W Hanes shared with the audience the need for reconciliation and moving forward with the work of the board and the office of the General Registrar. The secretary was asked to read aloud the letter addressed to the electoral board from Thomas Jordan Miles III. (Attached)

The board clarified the future board meeting dates and times. (See website)

The board clarified the Open Comment Policy that was passed on 2/07/2023. Each individual must sign in themselves to speak.

The meeting was opened to public comment with the following persons speaking:

- Frank Howe– District 4

- Maggie Snoddy– District 5
- KatherineThimnakis–District 5
- Marie Flowers– District 3
- Bob Abbott– District 6
- Sherry Ragland–District 5
- Kay Carter– District 1
- Kenda Hanuman District 5

**Motion:** I, Woody Hanes move to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr Cerwinski. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Woody Hanes, Secretary

Attached: Letter from Thomas Jordan Miles, III

**Thomas Jordan Miles III**  
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Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Members, Buckingham County Electoral Board:

I hope this letter finds you well. Due to an out-of-state commitment, I am unable to physically assemble with you all today. Thus, I send the following remarks.

I write in a manner of reconciliation in seeking to look forward, not behind us, as a community.

Now that the Electoral Board has been made whole again with the appointment of Ms. Banks-Bertwell; now that I have successfully asked a Circuit Court Judge to dismiss my suit regarding my Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests as they have been fulfilled in an effort to move past that matter; and, finally, now that the Electoral Board focuses intensely on hiring a permanent Registrar and Director of Elections to oversee the upcoming November elections; I offer the following:

In a spirit of reconciliation for the sake of democracy, I pledge to offer my full support and assistance to the members of the Electoral Board and its staff to work to gain trust of the community and our officers of elections to ensure open and free elections occur in Buckingham County.

The reasons for my FOIA requests, which were initially seemingly dismissed, but thankfully later fulfilled by Interim Registrar Ginger Chiesa, were simple: the information requested in my first request pertained to simple meeting-related documents, while the second pertained to an election integrity matter that was highly circulated.

Just as the FOIA requests I sent to the former Registrar Lindsey Taylor were not of any personal nature, my latest requests were merely seeking professional documents that pertain to public business under the eyes of the law. This was not a personal affront to any existing or past members of the Electoral Board, nor staff.

Election integrity is of the utmost importance to us all—no matter our political affiliation. I stand with you in this spirit in putting our past turbulence behind us and moving forward toward regaining trust of the public for open and free elections while following the letter of the law in Buckingham County.