

**PULASKI COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2009
12:15 P.M.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Kent Walker, Chairman
Ozell Snider, Commissioner
Phil Wyrick, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Melinda Allen
Bryan Poe

VISITORS: Scott Price, Amanda Dickens, Pulaski County Clerk's office

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kent Walker. A quorum was determined; all members present.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - 9/18/09 and 9/25/09

Motion to approve meeting minutes by Commissioner Wyrick; seconded by Commissioner Snider. All in favor; motion passed unanimously.

ARKANSAS COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSIONS ASSOCIATION (ACECA) MEMBERSHIP

Chairman Walker reopened discussion regarding the Pulaski County Election Commission's membership with the Arkansas County Election Commissions Association.

Commissioner Wyrick stated that he wants to vote to become a member of the ACECA but wanted to make some comments. He stated that he visited with Secretary of State Charlie Daniels on this issue. Commissioner Wyrick's thoughts are that Secretary Daniels does not have any problems with the association but said he got the distinct feeling that Secretary Daniels was not crazy about it either. Commissioner Wyrick noted that his philosophy on the association is that he "would hate to see more bureaucracy and most costs. It seems like a worthy move to deal with problems that county election commissions face. However, he said he would encourage this commission to, at least, show some restraint to incur unnecessary costs that the commission would not be able to get out of." He said he would not encourage membership of the entire staff of the election commission, only the commissioners and the director of elections.

Mrs. Allen stated from her past experience as a county clerk that handled the whole election process, she can see the need for this association. She explained that there are counties with election commissioners but they are employed in other jobs and don't have the support necessary for them to conduct their duties as election commissioners. Mrs. Allen noted, for example, that new county clerk's may step into office and decide that they are not going to conduct elections anymore and require the election commission to do what they are statutorily required to do and the election commission doesn't know what to do or where to go to get the information they need to help them conduct elections. The election commission may contact the secretary of state and the state board for help but those agencies are not on the field

conducting elections. They can give guidelines and information but they are not out in the field.

Commissioner Wyrick believes that Mrs. Allen represented the issues correctly. However, he does not want to see a commitment and a growth and creating another bureaucracy so fast. He said maybe this is exactly what needs to be done. He noted that he trusts Mrs. Allen's leadership and her good judgment and he can support that.

Chairman Walker stated that he would echo Commissioner Wyrick in that he agrees that the commission should not jump in fully until the association gets situated. He agrees that the three commissioners and the director of elections should be the initial members and that more than likely the remaining staff as well. He doesn't want the perception of Pulaski County being the "tidal wave" of majority membership and other counties have barely one or two members in the association.

Commissioner Wyrick agreed with Chairman Walker. He noted that his experience in the legislature is that the perception is Pulaski County is too powerful and too driven on its own agendas.

Mrs. Allen reiterated that the ACECA's first meeting will take place on Saturday, October 31 in the Jeffrey Hawkins Conference Room. The board will be appointed during the meeting on that day. She said she can tell the staff about the meeting but they are not going to be a part of the association. The association is planning to take a tour of the offices to observe our setup. She noted that the staff would be instrumental to the association and her recommendation would be to allow the staff to become members of the association from the beginning. She doesn't believe that the perception of the association would be from the number of members from Pulaski County but by assuring that the makeup of the board would not have a majority of members from Pulaski County. So far, the initial board is made up of members from each congressional district.

Commissioner Wyrick stated, again, that he would rather remain with his request for membership of the commission and the director of elections. However, he will support the decision of the majority.

Commissioner Snider asked if the county would pay for the membership fees and if so what line item would fund the fees. Mrs. Allen noted that the county would pay for the fees out of the line item for memberships and dues. The membership would be through the end of 2010.

Motion to approve membership of commissioners and director of elections in the ACECA by Chairman Walker; seconded by Commissioner Wyrick. All in favor; motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Allen presented the 2009 Election Law changes to the commissioners. She briefly highlighted a few of the significant changes.

POLLING PLACE CHANGES

Two polling place changes have become necessary; Crosspoint Baptist Church (Precinct 22) in North Little Rock has been dissolved and another church will be coming in to occupy the building. Mrs. Allen will be talking with Faith Baptist Church and Levy Church of Christ in hopes of securing one of these facilities as a replacement.

Amtrak Train Station (Precinct 110/113) has leased their parking space so there will be no parking available. The office received notifications from these facilities. Suggested replacements are the Little Rock School District offices and the Episcopal Collegiate School. Mrs. Allen stated that she would contact these facilities.

Scott Price, County Clerk's office, stated that Patricia Ward-Rogers contacted his office with concerns about the balloting process in the Wrightsville Mayoral Special Election. He told her that the election had already been certified and deferred her concerns to the Election Commission. Mrs. Allen said that she did talk with Mrs. Ward-Rogers and explained to her that there were four voters who did not return their voter statements with their absentee ballots in the school election and the Wrightsville election. Letters were sent to those voters as a courtesy letting them know that in future elections they **need return** the voter statement in order for their votes to count. By law, the election commission is not required to mail them notice. Mrs. Rogers was concerned that the election commission was not counting votes. After her conversation with Mrs. Ward-Rogers, she understood the process.

Mr. Price also received a call from a voter who was campaigning at City Hall and was told by someone that they were too close to the polling location. Mrs. Allen was aware of the incident but not until after the election. It turned out that it was a disgruntled citizen making the complaint and not a poll worker.

Meeting adjourned.