

**Title:** Appropriate \$1,300,000 of Fund Balance for Extended Early Voting Hours in Wake County

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners appropriates \$1,300,000 of fund balance for the costs associated with the extension of the number of early voting hours in Wake County.**

**Item Summary:**

The Board of Elections is responsible for conducting all elections held in Wake County. The Board administers State election laws. Principal functions include establishing election precincts and voting sites; appointing and training precinct officials; preparing and distributing ballots and voting equipment; canvassing and certifying the ballots cast in elections; and investigating any voting irregularities. It maintains voter registration and participation records and provides public information on voters and elections.

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit overruled portions of the Voter Information and Verification Act of 2013. Under the ruling, local boards of election have to provide for 17 days of early voting, October 20 to November 5, and were required to provide voting plans to the State Board of Elections. The final plan included election hours from October 20 to November 5, with nine sites open for the first seven days (October 20 to 26) and then expanded to 20 sites open for the for the remaining ten days.

The request for funding addresses the cost of updated early voting estimates, an increase of approximately \$1 million, as compared to the adopted budget of \$1,808,000 which was based around ten days of early voting. The appropriation will support the final complement of site poll workers, technical temporary support workers required to administer 17 days of early voting; approximately \$870,000. Approximately \$135,000 will cover revised estimates around voting stickers, voter equipment contracted services, supplies, among other smaller items.

The Board of Elections budget will increase by \$230,000 for temporary staff who perform pre- and post- election support. The 7 day voting extension shortened the amount of time available compared to initial plans to process the 20,000+ voter registration forms received during the registration deadline week, requiring staff to work more hours. The change in early voting hours resulted in some confusion and staff time was dedicated to responding to emails, phone calls and foot traffic.

Funding is included for the recounts of statewide contests, thus 202 Election Day polling places, 20 early voting sites, absentee by mail, and provisional ballots; over 530,000 ballots. Board of Elections will need to retain a large number of temporary staff whose positions would have otherwise been terminated within the next few days.

The County will appropriate fund balance.

**Attachments:**

1. Budget Memo