

Elections board weighs fall early voting options

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The Forsyth County Board of Elections (BOE) is closer to early voting plans for the General Election after its meetings on Monday and Tuesday.

Board members Fleming El-Amin, Stuart Russell and Chair Ken Raymond all came up with their own 15-site early voting plans. They discussed the sties, determining that some, like Winston Lake YMCA, wouldn't work because of scheduling conflicts with activities there. A site at St. Paul United Methodist Church is being considered as an alternative for that area.

Another site that was discussed is Industries for the Blind (IFB). It was on both El-Amin and Russell's lists. Raymond had concerns about issues that BOE staff found with parking and finding a proper place for campaigners to electioneer.

"It's a unique population with physical challenges we should be sensitive to," said El-Amin. "I have a lot of respect for the work they do there."

Anastasia Powell, IFB Adult program coordinator, is spearheading the effort for

the site. "It'll make voting accessible to people who are blind and visually impaired," she said.

Powell said people who are blind and visually impaired like her can't drive and have to rely on public transportation or family and friends to get someplace. Having an early voting site at IFB would eliminate issues with transportation that make voting challenging. IFB has about 300 employees who are blind or visually impaired and serves many others with its services for that community.

Early voting machines have a mode for blind and visually impaired voters. It has a computerized voice that they hear through ear buds, guiding them through the process and instructing them on which button to press for their choices. On Election Day, the machines are available at every precinct. Blind and visually impaired voters can also have a poll worker help them with voting. IFB is offering its training and development multipurpose room for an early voting space, located at the entrance to the IFB Optical Center. Powell said IFB will hold some of its normal activities in a different space and arrange for different parking for IFB costumers to accommodate voters.

During the public comment session on Tuesday, two Wake Forest University students, Zachary Bynum and David Ajamy II, asked the board to remember college students during early voting. Ajamy said



El-Amin



Photos by Todd Luck

Anastasia Powell is among those who would like this site at Industries for the Blind to be used for early voting.

that there was a polling station next to campus but other colleges like Winston-Salem State University aren't as lucky.

The Anderson Center at WSSU was an early voting site from 2000-2012 but hasn't been one since. The board approved an early voting site plan for the March primary by a 2-1 vote without it. El-Amin appealed to the N.C. BOE with a plan that included the Anderson Center and Sunday voting and was denied. He's said that he's willing to appeal again if Anderson is not included.

During the appeal to the state board in February, WSSU Student Government President Kyle Brown talked about how freshmen aren't allowed to park on campus. It's more than a 30-minute walk to get to the closest early voting site at the downtown BOE office. He said he gave nearly 100 students a ride to the poles himself in 2014.

WSSU freshmen not having access to

their own vehicles is unique among the city's large colleges with student residents. Salem College and UNCSA both allow freshmen to park on campus. Wake Forest University has an off-campus freshmen lot that students are shuttled to and from.

Sites that all the board members agree on are the BOE office and Kernersville Senior Center/Library along with the Clemmons, Southside, Walkertown, Lewisville and Rural Hall Libraries. Other sites being considered include St. Peter's World Outreach Center, Malloy/Jordan East Winston Heritage Center, Forsyth Tech's Bolton Street campus and Tobaccolville Community Center along with Sedge Garden, Miller Park, Old Town, South Fork, Sprague Street, Polo Park, Brown Douglas and Sims recreation centers.

The next BOE meeting is Tuesday, June 14 at 10 a.m.



Models pose for a picture with designer Rayonna Johnson following the 21Ray's fashion show held at Quality Education Academy on Thursday, June 6.

Clothing

from page A1

ative," said Turner. "Our focus here at QEA is business entrepreneurship. After seeing how talented she was and the attention the pieces were getting from her classmates and even some teachers, I knew she could turn this hobby into something more."

Although she had already made a name for herself in the halls of QEA, leading up to the fashion show Johnson admitted she still didn't have confidence in herself, but

with the support of Turner and her mother Rhonda Flemming, she started to believe in herself.

"I just kept telling her that everything would work out and to continue following her dreams," said Flemming. "I knew she had the talent to make it happen; she just needed that extra push."

For more than three months, Johnson sewed dresses, skirts, pants, t-shirts and many more items for her friends to wear during her debut fashion show. During the event held inside the gymnasium, nearly 50 people came to get a sneak peek at what 21Ray's has to offer.



Photo by Terin Stinson

Rayonna Johnson addresses the crowd following her first fashion show held at Quality Education Academy on Thursday June 6.

Aside from the unique designs and patterns, something else that makes Johnson's line stand out is that many of the pieces can be worn multiple ways. When asked what fashion designers she is inspired by, Johnson said she doesn't look at other fashion designers.

"I don't really look at fashion designers, I just look at pieces that I like," she continued. "I do know there aren't many black fashion designers and I want to change that narrative."

With high school in her rearview, this fall Johnson will take her talents to The Art Institute of Charlotte where she will major

in fashion and design. Before wrapping up her interview with *The Chronicle*, Johnson had words of encouragement for those who may be having second thoughts about pursuing their dreams.

"Never give up," she said. "Whatever you want to do, do it. Even when it seems like it's impossible, keep trying and keep pushing."

For more information on 21 Ray's or to make a purchase, contact Rayonna Johnson by email at raydoublej@gmail.com.

Primary

from page A1

volunteers and the extra time to get his name out for his victory.

Highsmith credited the low turnout for the vastly different results in this primary, which she felt was "undemocratic." She said she plans to continue to advocate for the South Ward and didn't rule out running again. She said she was disappointed that all the supporters who worked so hard on her campaign didn't get a better result.

"My main regret is all these people had such high hopes for getting me in office," she said. "They haven't seen the last of us yet."

In the 5th District primary for the U.S. House of Representatives, Rep. Virginia Foxx of Banner Elk beat Pattie Curran, an Army veteran and activist from Kernersville. Foxx has represented the heavily Republican district since 2004.

Foxx will face

"My main regret is all these people had such high hopes for getting me in office."

-Carolyn Highsmith

Democrat Josh Brannon once again. The software developer from Wautaga County defeated Jim Roberts and Charlie Wallin, garnering 47.65 percent of the vote.

"Wherever I've gone, I've found that people, no matter which side of the aisle they're on, they really like the message of taking back our democracy from billionaires," said Brannon. "If I can get them to look past the 'D' or the 'R' on the ballot, I believe that we'll have some change."

Brannon, who lost to Foxx in 2014 by 22 percent, knows that the district is historically a longshot for Democrats, but he believes it's an election year that anything can happen in. Brannon, who shares many positions with

Democratic Presidential Candidate Bernie Sanders, believes he's part of a movement that'll bring a wave of progressive congressional candidates to champion things like universal healthcare and getting big money out of politics.

In the N.C. Supreme Court race, Robert Edmunds of Greensboro, who has served on the state high court since 2001, and Superior Court Judge Michael R. Morgan of Raleigh will face off in November. Edmunds got 48 percent of the vote, while Morgan got 34.32 percent, beating attorneys Daniel Robertson of Advance and Sabra Jean Faires of Wake County in the non-partisan primary.

Only 505,687 ballots were cast statewide in the

Other 5th District Candidates



Fox



Curran



Roberts



Wallin

Have an Opinion?
Let us Know letters@wschronicle.com

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

2016 DOWNTOWN SUMMER MUSIC SERIES

DOWNTOWN JAZZ | FROM 6-9 PM AT CORPENING PLAZA
FRIDAY JUNE 10 BRIAN SIMPSON & ELAN TROTMAN | OPENING PERFORMER - REGGIE BUIE
SUMMER ON LIBERTY | FROM 7-10 PM AT 6TH & LIBERTY
SATURDAY JUNE 18 SUITCASE (POP ROCK)

PRODUCED BY THE DOWNTOWN WINSTON SALEM PARTNERSHIP | DOWNTOWNWS.COM