

The Macon County Election Commission met during a special called meeting on Thursday, January 22nd, to certify candidates for the April 25th Red Boiling Springs Election, disqualifying two potential candidates for mayor and one city council seat contender.

In the mayoral race, Don Staffey withdrew from the election and aspirants Mike Silvio and Ben Hendrix were disqualified, leaving incumbent Kenneth Hollis and Ray Bilbrey to vie for the position.

In the election to fill three city council seats, candidate hopeful Billy Joe Carver was disqualified from running. Six qualified candidates, Lisa McCarter, James Nutter, Rosa Marzean, Patricia Evans, Cherry Cole and Jennifer Silvio, remain in the race.

Those disqualified from appointment were unable to obtain the required 25 signatures needed for eligibility due to several petition inaccuracies discovered by members of the Macon County Election Commission.

While it was determined that some RBS residents who signed nominee petitions were not in fact registered voters, and were therefore voided from the count, others did not complete the required information needed along with their signatures and were also removed from the tally.

However, more serious petition issues arose when it was brought to the attention of commission members that four signatures, found on several petitions, belonged to RBS residents who were out of town on the date they allegedly signed the documents.

Verifying that those four individuals' names were forged by their family members, the election commission was forced, by law, to eliminate their signatures from any petitions on which they were listed.

Another crucial petition topic came about after several signatures were found to be recorded on more petitions than the number of positions open for nomination, a clear violation of the city charter.

The county commission was directed by the State Attorney General's office, by request of Coordinator of Elections Brook Thompson, to follow section 2.01 in Article 2 of the Red Boiling Springs Charter after it had been determined that the city charter is not inconsistent with state law. That section of the city charter reads as follows:

'If an elector signs more than one petition for mayor or more petitions than the number of councilmen to be elected, in the first or succeeding elections, his signature shall be invalid on the petition(s) last filed . . .'

In other words, if a signature is found on more than one petition for mayor or three for city council, it will only be counted on the petition for mayor, or the first three petitions for city council, that had been turned in first to the election commission by the nominee, and voided from all others.

While the election commission was directed to follow the city charter in regards to the April election, the question of whether or not state law, which requires 25 signatures per qualifying petition, supercedes the city charter's requirement of only ten signatures per qualifying petition (see section 2.01 of Article 2 of RBS Charter), was answered during the special called meeting.

In regards to the number of signatures required to qualify, State Assistant Coordinator of Elections Beth Henry-Robinson, was contacted by Macon County Administrator of Elections Dianne Cline and confirmed that state law does supercede the city charter, referring commissioner members to state law 2-5-101 (B), which reads:

' . . . nominating petitions shall be signed by the candidate and 25 or more registered voters, who are registered to vote to fill the office.'

After sifting through all of the petition signatures turned in by nominees, it was determined that Mike Silvio (mayoral election) had 18 qualified signatures and Ben Hendrix (mayoral election) and Billy Joe Carver (city council election) each had 23 qualifying signatures, disqualifying all three candidates from the race.

Early voting for the April 25th RBS election begins Monday, April 6th, and comes to a close on April 20th.

The last day to register to vote in the election is Thursday, March 26th.