

**NC ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY CLERKS
BUSINESS MEETING
2021 Annual Master Clerks Academies
Sheraton Imperial Hotel Blue Hill C – Chapel Hill, NC
and via Zoom
November 18, 2021
4:30 PM**

The North Carolina Association of County Clerks held a Business Meeting at 4:30 P.M. on Thursday, November 18, 2021, as part of the 2021 North Carolina Annual Master Clerk Academies. The meeting was held at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Blue Hill C, Chapel Hill, NC.

Officers Participating

Trisha Hogan, President – Transylvania County
Debbie Harris, Vice President – Davidson County
Lindsay K. Ray, Secretary – Chatham County
Melissa Long, Treasurer – Pender County
Donna Buff, Immediate Past President – Gaston County

Directors Participating

Lauren Linker – Cabarrus County
Phyllis Nowlen – Cleveland County
Carol Bowden – Wayne County

Call to Order

President Trish Hogan called the meeting to order and a quorum was established with members participating both in person and virtually.

Self-Introductions and Recognition of New Clerks

The Board started self-introductions followed by introductions from each table and participants on Zoom.

Clerks and Deputy Clerks participating were:

First Name	Last Name	County
Trisha	Hogan	Transylvania
Debbie	Harris	Davidson
Lindsay	Ray	Chatham
Melissa	Long	New Hanover
Donna	Buff	Gaston
Carol	Bowden	Wayne
Phyllis	Nowlen	Cleveland
Lauren	Linker	Cabarrus

Kay H.	Draughn	Burke
Denisa A.	Lauffer	Henderson
Cheryl	Mitchell	McDowell
Yvonne	Gilyard	Wake
Kayla	Whitley	Wayne
Allen	Coleman	Mecklenburg
Tory	Frink	Alamance
Kym	Crowell	New Hanover
Antoinette	Womack	Wake
Angela	Poplin	Cabarrus
Brenda	Reaves	Person
Tera	Cline	Pender
Rosalyn	Covington	Forsyth
Angela	Stacks	Gaston
Kristen	King	Franklin
Kristine	Smith	Mecklenburg
Daralyn	Spivey	Brunswick
Melissa	Capps	Harnett
Maria	Hass	Cherokee
Penny	Owens	Tyrrell
Julie J.	Bennett	Washington
Dale R.	Stiles	Catawba

Invocation

Lindsay Ray offered the invocation.

Approval of Minutes

Lindsay Ray stated the August 13, 2021, Business Meeting Minutes did need one correction:

- At the end of the minutes on page 8, the next meeting date should state November 18th at 4:30 pm at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel.

Upon motion by Kay Draughn and second by Yvonne Gilyard, the minutes of the August 13, 2021, Business Meeting were unanimously approved with noted corrections.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Melissa Long reported that Treasurer's Report was current through October 31, 2021.

Upon motion by Carol Bowden and second by Phyllis Nowlen, the November 18, 2021, Treasurers Report was unanimously approved.

Items of Business

Bylaws Amendments/Revisions

Phyllis Nowlen reviewed the Bylaw amendments and revisions presented to the membership at the August 13, 2021 Business Meeting and emailed to the membership on November 1, 2021:

- Update to Susan Banks Scholarship - Wake County Commissioners pledged \$5,000 to the Clerks Association in honor of retired clerk, Susan J. Banks, designated for the use of scholarship funds to the Clerk's Annual Conference. Funds will be limited to the Annual Conference registration fee(s) and IRS allowed mileage which is consistent with the A. Fleming Bell scholarship. A final accounting will be done and sent to Wake County once funds are depleted. Administration of the scholarship funds will be pursuant to guidelines set forth by the Clerks Association.
- Communications Committee:
- The Vice President may attend all three regional workshops in their role of Professional Development Program Committee Chair. The Vice President shall only pay to attend one regional workshop and attend the other two at no cost. The Association will incur the costs of the two remaining workshops.
- The Immediate Past President will serve as chair of the Website Sub-Committee (under Communications Committee).
- Dues for new clerks - If a new clerk joins the association and pays dues in the 4th quarter (April – June), they will not have to pay again for another fiscal year. This applies to new clerks only.

Upon motion by Melissa Long and second by Carol Bowden the proposed Bylaw amendments and revisions were approved unanimously.

Revision to Outstanding Clerk Criteria Point Sheet

Trisha Hogan reviewed discussions the executive committee has had around adding an extra point to the Clerk of the Year point sheet for participation in service projects at the clerks annual conference, the commissioners annual conference, and the clerk regionals. All service projects would be strictly voluntary. Trisha reviewed the pros and cons of adding a point for service projects raised by some other clerks:

Pros	Cons
Participation in service projects is voluntary (would not earn points, just like if a clerk did not attend a regional or other conference)	Clerks may not physically be able to participate in a service project
Service project brings awareness of our organization to other communities	Host county may have difficulty determining an appropriate service project, depending on the county
Service project benefits communities	Host county may not want to include a service project in the annual conference planning

Service projects not intended to be physically demanding or straining	Service project could take up free time that clerks are not willing to give up
Some clerks are unable to attend out of state events, like for IIMC or NaCo, and therefore do not have an opportunity to earn points	Many clerks bring family members and would want to use free time to explore and spend time together
Request to earn points outside of education because clerks with smaller budgets and more travel restrictions are unable to attend as many conferences as clerks with larger budgets; maybe consider adding a point for 2 hours of community service in a clerk's home county	Points currently earned are all related to education
Being a clerk is more than the education component; should consider other ways to gain points	
Other items on the points sheet that many clerks are not able to get credit for	
Adds another avenue for clerks to earn points outside of education and serving up through the ranks of the association; some clerks do not have the time or budget to allow them to be a director or officer and the associated travel	

Trisha stated the thought is after discussion today this matter would come before the membership in March at the annual conference for a vote. Trisha opened the proposal for discussion.

Julie Bennett feels the outstanding clerk committee should be the ones to discuss any changes to the point sheet.

Kay Draughn said the association should just get rid of points system all together and have a nomination process. Tory Frink agreed. Lindsay Ray asked Kay to clarify for the minutes whether she envisioned the clerk of the year committee making nominations or anyone could make a nomination. Kay said this process would be similar to what the county commissioners association does. They have a letter writing nomination process that can be submitted by anyone. Kay said there could still be a committee to choose the recipient of the award each year.

Melissa Capps stated the winners of the municipal clerks award could be nominated by anyone but then an anonymous committee selected based on the applications. There was an application and the points were only for the current year.

Tory said she is all for changing the system and was opposed to requiring that to be considered for the award a clerk had to have been a clerk for at least ten years. She believes something new is needed.

Carol Bowden said she has been a clerk for five years and has never turned in a point sheet because she has never understood it and now, she cannot add points earned in previous years.

Phyllis Nowlen suggested that anyone who would like to change the current point sheet and process for awarding the clerk of the year submit ideas by February 2022 to executive committee and the executive committee could bring the proposals to the membership at the annual business meeting in March. Trisha asked if would make sense to add some clerks to serve temporarily with the current clerk of the year committee to evaluate any proposals submitted.

Julie said that in 2019 the association allowed members to add points earned in prior years as a one time opportunity to get their points recorded and begin submitting the point sheet every year going forward. She said that the committee always sends the point sheet out in an email with contact information if any clerk has questions. Carol said she just wasn't sure she had ever seen that email and she very well could have overlooked it.

Trisha said she actually planned to ask the clerk of the year committee later on the agenda to create a line by line instruction document on how to complete and submit the point sheet. She also thought it would be great to have an introduction paragraph at the top of the point sheet or a cover sheet attached that explains what the purpose of the point sheet is, why it is important and why the award is such a prestigious honor.

Lindsay Ray said that while she would love to see proposals and new ideas, perhaps the association should have a more intentional and long process so that the full association really has adequate time to consider, discuss, and reflect on proposals. She stated February is not very far away and maybe this topic should be explored for a longer period. Lindsay said she doesn't think this topic is a small enough issue that it be part of the annual conference business meeting. She suggested the possibility of a special meeting or more time at a future business meeting to provide the attention a topic like this deserves.

There was discussion about directing a subcommittee to look into this topic. Trisha reminded everyone that only 30 members were attending the meeting today and that is not a good representation of the entire membership of over 100 clerks. Trisha asked Lindsay to clarify if her suggestion is to have a special meeting after this meeting, maybe in the next few weeks, to discuss this issue. Lindsay clarified that if people want to submit ideas or proposals for changes to this process to the current clerk of the year committee, or if the membership believes additional folks should be added to that committee to review this topic, that the committee could review the proposals and provide a recommendation. However, the committee's recommendation should not come to the full membership for a vote without all the proposals and all information gathered being shared with the full membership ahead of time. Perhaps a special meeting would be needed to receive a presentation on all proposals received by the committee and the entire membership could give input. The committee could take that input and then come up with a recommendation to present at a regular business meeting.

Many agreed they wouldn't want to make any changes without hearing why the folks think the current process isn't working or fair.

Kristen King agreed this should be a very intentional and thoughtful discussion and process. Everyone should consider the depth of the award and honor the intent of this prestigious award. She wants to make sure we continue to honor Howard Holly and the importance of the award.

Trisha asked if there was any interest in adding a point to the point sheet for participation in service projects and bring that change to the membership for a vote in March.

Tory Frink said she fully supports an additional point if it helps another clerk.

Kym Crowell suggested tabling the discussion as not enough clerks were present at the meeting. She does support adding an extra point for service project participation.

Trisha thanked everyone for the open and honest discussion. The Association will table this for now and anyone is welcome to submit comments or ideas in the coming months.

Lindsay Ray reminded everyone that Julie Bennet thought the clerk of the year committee should look at it this issue first. Julie agreed that past winners, who make up the committee, should have some discussion about any changes before a vote of the full membership. She said she could also look back through old minutes to see the process of how changes were made to the point sheet in the past.

Carol Bowden agreed the integrity of the award needs to be maintained and honored.

Yvonne Gilyard said it is always an option not to offer an extra point and participate in the service projects simply to pay it forward to the host communities. Debbie Harris completely agreed. The thought was to offer an incentive for clerks who can't earn points some other ways. We will have the project whether there is a point offered or not.

Yvonne Gilyard asked if anything would be done for Penny Owens and Debbie Harris to celebrate them as recipients of the Howard Holly Outstanding Clerk of the year due to the in person annual conference being switched to virtual the past two years because of the pandemic. Julie Bennett stated that the awards were presented to both Penny and Debbie during the virtual annual conference last spring. They both received their plaques and flowers in their offices with their co-workers and families present and the membership watched the ceremony virtually. Debbie emphasized that it was still a very special experience for her personally. Julie said she hopes there will be a time at the annual conference to recognize both of them and she appreciated that Yvonne and other clerks want to see that for them as well.

Julie Bennet stated she completely supports offering service projects as part of the conferences, however, maybe it would be beneficial to revisit the discussion after a few conferences to see if it takes off and then discuss adding the point based on the data collected. That would be very similar to how the Association handled adding a point for the county commissioners annual conference. Everyone agreed to revisit this topic in the future after a few conferences.

Trisha Hogan said if anyone has any proposals they are welcome to send them to her. Julie Bennett said she will work on instructions for the clerk of the year point sheet. She thinks over the years there was one at some point, maybe even in the Bylaws, and she will look into that as well.

IIMC Annual Conference Scholarship

IIMC is pushing to increase their membership. Trisha Hogan asked if there is interest in a scholarship paid by our Association to the annual IIMC conference. Camilla Pittman, Region 3

Director, emailed Trisha and said whatever region increases IIMC membership the most will earn two more scholarships for registration for the annual conference.

Tory Frink asked the new county clerks who were formally municipal clerks if the NC Association of Municipal Clerks offered any scholarships to the IIMC conference. Trisha said she was on a call with them recently and said they have scholarships but no one applies. Members said even with a scholarship for registration, the travel cost is so significant that they still would not be able to attend the conference. Yvonne said if IIMC provided a scholarship for the registration maybe our association could provide scholarship funds to cover travel. No action was taken.

IIMC Region III Director

Trisha Hogan informed the membership that there is a Region III IIMC Director position opening in 2022. The criteria for being a director is online. She encouraged anyone interested to apply. She has reached out to an Association member who is an active member of IIMC and she is considering it, but anyone is welcome to apply.

2022 Annual Conference Update

Dates - March 16-18, 2022

Location – Cabarrus County (Great Wolf Lodge, Concord, NC)

Hosts – Lauren Linker, Cabarrus County, Debbie Harris and Lynn Wilson, Davidson County

The hosts are really excited to host the first in-person conference in two years! Registration and hotel information will go out in 2022.

Lindsay Ray stated that because the School of Government does not provide IT and A/V assistance at our annual conference, a virtual and in person hybrid meeting will not be possible.

Communications Committee/Constant Contact

Melissa Long has uploaded all contact information for the entire membership into Constant Contact. Be on the lookout for some test emails from Constant Contact in the coming weeks.

Rebranding/New Logo

Trisha Hogan reviewed the status of the rebranding and logo project. The executive committee reviewed logo submissions and suggestions from the membership and are continuing to work through that process in order to bring something to the membership next year.

Announcements

- New Clerks Institute, January 20, 2022
- IIMC Region III Conference, Huntsville, AL, February 1-4, 2022

- 2022 NC Association of County Clerks Annual Conference, Cabarrus County, Great Wolf Lodge, March 16-18, 2022
- 2022 IIMC Annual Conference, Little Rock, AR, May 22-25, 2022
- 2022 Regionals: Eastern – Vickie King, Lenoir County and Carol Bowden, Wayne County; Piedmont – Ashley Sloop, Forsyth County; Western – Maria Hass, Cherokee County
- Future Annual Conference Locations: 2023 New Hanover County; 2024 Cleveland County; 2025 Chatham County


The following message from President Trisha Hogan was also attached to the Business Meeting Agenda:

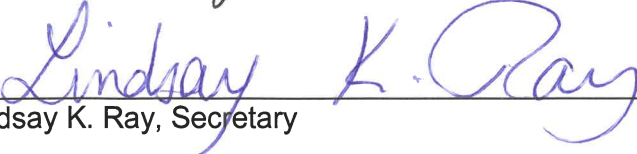
Your Executive Committee and Board of Directors are working hard for you! This is a list of items we will be addressing over the next few months, and we invite your input as well as your time to help us move our Association forward as a professional organization.

- Modernization of operations
- Clerks Handbook
- County Clerks Week
- Committees – streamlining consolidation, reporting, recognition of members
- Member benefits & perks
- Outstanding Clerk Criteria Point Sheet instructions/tutorial
- Mentor Program
- Recertification Tracking
- Google Docs
- Clerks Reference Guide
- Rebranding
- Communications Committee
- Clerks Office Hours

Adjournment

Upon motion by Phyllis Nowlen and second by Carol Bowden, the membership approved unanimously to adjourn the meeting.


Trisha Hogan, President


Lindsay K. Ray, Secretary

Date Approved: _____