



APPROVED MINUTES

BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING – APRIL 11, 2019

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, April 11, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., in Assembly Hall of the The Government Center Building, 141 Pryor Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

Presiding: Ms. Mary Carole Cooney, Chairperson

Other Board Members Present: Mr. Aaron Johnson, Vice-Chairperson
Mr. Mark Wingate
Ms. Vernetta K. Nuriddin
Mr. David Burge

Staff Attending: Mr. Blake Evans, Elections Chief; Sharon Benjamin, Deputy Elections Chief; Mr. Johnny Harris, Elections Officer; Mrs. Nadine Williams, Elections Equipment Manager; Mrs. Pamela Coman, Registration Manager; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Ms. Breauna Jenkins, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Jessica Corbitt, PIO & Director of External Affairs; Ms. April Majors, Public Affairs Manager; Jasmine Campbell, Legislative Assistant

Guests Attending: Commissioner Robb L. Pitts, Chairman of BOC; Foris Webb III (City of Atlanta), David Ross (Georgia Democratic Party), Penn Payne (Georgia Democratic Party), Corey Adams (City of South Fulton), Judi BuTin (ACLU), Sally FitzGerald (League of Women Voters), Adrian Coleman, Evelyn Scott (City of Atlanta)

#1– APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was made by Ms. Nuriddin, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#2– COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

None

#3– REMOVAL OF NAMES FROM VOTER LIST DUE TO FELONY CONVICTIONS

Ms. Coman presented the February and March Felon Report to the Board that was transmitted by the State and recommended the removal of 81 names for March and April. Letters were mailed; however, no responses were received.

Chairperson Cooney inquired if all persons received notices

Ms. Coman stated yes

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to remove 81 names from the electors' rolls as listed on Exhibits A, B, C, D and E, on the April 11, 2019 Felon Report. The motion was made by Mr. Burge, seconded by Ms. Wingate and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

#4– APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting – March 14, 2019
- Special Meeting- March 19, 2019
- Special Meeting- March 22, 2019

A motion to approve all the meeting minutes from the Regular and Special Meetings in the month of March 2019 was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#5– MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR MARCH 2019

- The following Special Elections in March 2019 were reported:
 - City of Atlanta; **City Council Member, District 3**
 - City of Hapeville; **Alderman At Large**
- Recount completed for City of Atlanta, City Council-District 3; results were the same
- 10 Pilot Counties to use new voting system in November 2019 – Fulton County is a pilot participant
- A legal hold remains on the DRE voting units from the April 18, 2017 and June 20, 2017 6th Congressional Special Election and Runoff Special Election
- 23,952 voter registration applications received in March
- As of February 1st, **791,589** (725,256 active and 63,333 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- Processed DDS applications - under 9,000 remaining on the ElectioNet dashboard
- Tentative plan to use new equipment for Early voting locations in November
- Voter Registration Manager, Mrs. Pamela Coman, creating a leadership program for staff
- Monitoring budgetary expenditures for Special Election for cities of Atlanta and Hapeville

Chairperson Cooney informed the public and the **BRE** that **Mr. Barron** and **Mr. Jones' absence** was due to the election contest in Fulton County Superior Court

Mr. Wingate inquired about the inventory for the new voting units

Mr. Evans informed the **BRE** that the initial allotment total will be 200 Ballot Marking Devices, 15 Precinct Scanners, 1 Central Scanner and 30 Express polls (Poll books). **Mr. Evans** indicated that once the **DRE** receives full inventory, the **DRE** will have 3,058 Ballot Marking Devices, 287 Precinct Scanners, 1 Central Scanner and 663 Express polls (Poll books).

Mr. Evans indicated that the election in November is not a countywide election and **DRE** will be prepared to conduct both early voting and Election Day

Mr. Johnson inquired about Voter Education and Outreach plan

Mr. Evans stated **Mr. Barron** has been in communication with **Finance and the County Manager's office** to ensure the needs of the **DRE** and **BRE** are set forth in a transparent manner. **Mr. Evans** mentioned that a county similar to Fulton in size has added more permanent positions to address the need for Education and Outreach.

Ms. Corbitt informed the **BRE** that the county manager requested an upcoming meeting with the **DRE** to discuss the needs of the department and how we (**DRE, BRE, and Fulton County Government**) can best serve their citizens.

Mr. Johnson inquired about an issue with using both voting systems in November, specifically the use of the new equipment for early voting and the old election equipment on Election Day

Mr. Evans suggested that it would be more of a challenge to use both systems simultaneously

Mr. Johnson inquired about the **RFP** and the possibilities of implementing a tentative plan and once the **DRE** has more information to allow the plan to evolve.

Mr. Evans stated that the **RFP** has not been distributed; however, knowing the type of system the state will be using regardless of the vendor's identity is enough information to create an education and outreach plan

Ms. Nuriddin encouraged the **DRE** to be mindful of the processes for the new system, and expressed her concerns for voters that are not well versed in using a Ballot Marking Device (BMD) voting system. **Mr. Nuriddin** suggested that the **DRE** provide demonstrations to the citizens at early voting locations to ensure voters are correctly scanning their ballots. **Ms. Nuriddin** inquired about the number of early voting locations versus the number of municipalities

Mr. Evans informed the **BRE** that the only issues he can surmise is when the voter scan their ballots on the scanner. This may cause a delay, if voters are not correctly scanning

Chairperson Cooney acknowledged the presence of **Chairman Robb L. Pitts** of the **Board of Commissioners** at the meeting.

Mr. Wingate requested clarity on the voter registration statistics

Mrs. Coman informed **Mr. Wingate** that she would provide a better explanation of the numbers once she met with the Registration Chief

Chairperson Cooney inquired about the updates to the provisional ballot

Mrs. Coman indicated that this added information will allow the Voter Registration Division to process the provisional ballots faster

Chairperson Cooney referred the **BRE** to the last page of the monthly report that indicated the municipalities that are currently having elections in November

#6-FOLLOW UP REPORT ON MAILING PROCESSES– PAMELA COMAN

Ms. Coman informed the **BRE** that the Secretary of State's office used the contact provided from meeting with the United States Postal Service's designer to redesign the precinct cards. **SOS** has since received the sample and requested the feedback on the sample provided. **Ms. Coman** informed the **BRE** that the **DRE** now has a tracking system and plans to begin training staff to use this aspect of the new process. **DRE** intends to use the TRACK MY MAIL system during the November election.

NEW BUSINESS

#7- REPORT ON HB 316 & HB 656 – JESSICA CORBITT

HB 316

- Section 5- Voter can vote Absentee by mail or in person (Early Voting), as long as the voter turns 18 years of age on or before Election day
- Section 27- Voters being removed from the Voter's list, now 5 years instead of 3 years
- Section 27- Absentee ballot can be mailed to the jail, if requested by non-convicted persons
- Section 28- Early Voting expands allowable voting locations; no longer restricted to governmental locations
- Section 27~32- No Absentee ballot can be rejected; if signature is missing or the ballot has mismatched signature ballot becomes a provisional ballot
- Section 31- Absentee Ballot can be returned by the voter, family member, voter's caregiver
- Section 41- Margin for Recounts are .5%, no longer 1%
- Section 42- Audits (new code section OCGA 21-2-498)

HB 656

- Returning authority to select a Chairperson for the Board of Registration and Elections back to Fulton County Board of Commissioners (Appointing Authorities)

Mr. Wingate asked if the governor signed HB 656

Ms. Corbitt stated not at this time

Mr. Burge inquired about early voting locations and the expansion of allowable locations

Ms. Campbell expressed that Advance Voting, Absentee In-Person, and Early Voting are all one and the same

#8-IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR NEW VOTING SYSTEM-BLAKE EVANS

Mr. Evans mentioned this plan is tentative due to limitations on the information being provided to all counties with regards to a vendor. The plan is to contact neighboring jurisdictions that are currently using ballot marking devices to get insight on their processes and procedures, in order to determine what will work best for the **DRE**. **Mr. Evans** mentioned when the **DRE** is notified of a vendor, the **DRE** intends to contact the vendor regarding training material and face to face training. **Mr. Evans** informed the **BRE** that **SOS** intends to do the acceptance testing with regards to the new voting system.

#9-POLL WORKER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND EVALUATION – JOHNNY HARRIS

Mr. Harris provided the **BRE** with insight on upcoming changes

- **DRE** will maintain current recruitment, however, may make changes to staff precincts
- Extend face to face training and reduce online training
- Managers and Assistant managers trained by Elections Chief and Elections Officer, all other poll workers will be trained by professional trainers

- Eliminating under qualified staff
- Evaluating staff
- Ensuring Poll managers are following proper provisional ballot processes

#10- APPROVAL OF PRECINCT PROPOSALS: 10/19, 11/19, 12/19, 13/19 AND 16/19 IN NOVEMBER-NADINE WILLIAMS

Ms. Williams explained the proposed precinct changes: **10/19** was a temporary change due to **Tenth Street High Rise** being renovated; therefore, temporarily moved to **All Saints Episcopal Church** which will become a permanent change due to limited parking at **Tenth Street High Rise**. **11/19** was temporarily moved to **Liberty Baptist Church** due to renovations, renovations are complete and will resume at their permanent polling location of **Wheat Street Tower Apartments**. **12/19** was at **Public Towns Elementary School**; APS plans to permanently close the school, proposed permanent change to **Collier Park Recreation Center**. **13/19** was temporarily moved to **Alpharetta Library** due to renovations, renovations are complete and will resume at their permanent polling location of **Manning Oaks Elementary School**. **16/19** requested permanent move from **Clifftondale Community House** to **Langston Hughes High School** due to logistical factors (increase in registered voters and limited parking for faculty, staff, and voters)

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve 10/19, 11/19, 12/19, 13/19, & 16/19 precinct proposals. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

#9- ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS ELECTION - ATLANTA BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 2- BLAKE EVANS

Mr. Evans reported to the **BRE** regarding the City of Atlanta seeking guidance on the dates for the proposed election for Atlanta Board of Education, District 2. The **DRE** reviewed the information received from the City of Atlanta and noted several logistical reasons such as the strict timeline, approval of contract delays, payment delays, ElectioNet Audits, extremely low voter participation and more. Due to the concerns outlined, the **DRE** is requesting the **BRE** forward a letter to the Atlanta City Council to encourage members to call an election in September 2019 instead of June 2019.

Ms. Nuriddin requested clarity on the Election date that the City of Atlanta is requesting

Mr. Evans deferred to **Mr. Foris Webb, III**, City of Atlanta Municipal Clerk, regarding the desires of the City of Atlanta

Mr. Webb communicated to the **BRE** the directives given to create a timeline for a June Election. **Mr. Webb** completed the task and noted to the appointing authorities some of the same issues outlined in the **DRE's** concerns. The Board of Education's (**BOE**) concern was the length of time District 2 will be without representation. An informal request was made on March 19, 2019 to have an Election in June. **Mr. Webb** stated that the **BOE** will be adopting their budget in the month of April, **BOE** Council will be in Recess beginning in July and the children will be on summer vacation. **Mr. Webb** advised the **BRE** that the **BOE**, District 2 is comprised of City Council Districts 3 & 4 and with the most recent low voter participation of

less than 7% of over 22,000 voters, he does not wish to add a summer election that will yield similar results.

Chairperson Cooney asked **Mr. Webb** has there been an official request to execute an election in June from the Board of Education

Mr. Webb stated no

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to send a formal recommendation to Atlanta City Council requesting the election move forward in September 2019. The motion was made by Ms. Nuriddin, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

#12- EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board did not convene into Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT

With no other items requiring the Board's action, **Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wingate seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 11:26 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary