



## APPROVED MINUTES

### BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS SPECIAL MEETING: **WORK SESSION** –MAY 4, 2021

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Special Session on Tuesday, May 04, 2020, 10:30 p.m.

## **VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

**FGTV YouTube Channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYH7E0jH6HxE-3KTRluH8SQ>

**Presiding:** Mr. Alex Wan, Chairman

**Other Board Members Present:**

Ms. Vernetta Keith Nuriddin, Vice Chairperson

Mr. Mark Wingate

Mr. Aaron V. Johnson

Dr. Kathleen Ruth

**Staff Attending:** Mr. Richard Barron, Director; Mr. Ralph Jones, Registration Chief; Ms. Nadine Williams, Elections Chief; Ms. Sharon Benjamin, Deputy Elections Chief; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Ms. Breana Jenkins, Administrative Coordinator I; Mr. James Reese, Production Manager; Mr. Rico Dollar, Senior Graphics Designer; Jessica Corbitt, PIO & Director of External Affairs

**Guests Attending:** None

**Chairman Wan announced that this teleconferenced meeting is authorized pursuant to §50-14-1(g) of the Official Code of Georgia because of the Public Health State of Emergency declared by Governor Kemp on March 14, 2020, and renewed through May 30, 2021, pursuant to which public meeting spaces in state and local Government have been closed due to COVID-19, and because means have been afforded for the public to have simultaneous access to this teleconference.**

### **#1– APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Chairman Wan entertained a motion to approve the agenda for the special called meeting for Work Session. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.**

### **#2– POST-ELECTIONS ASSESSMENT PLAN**

CRITICAL OPERATIONS TIMELINE		
Achieve IT #	Recommendations	Projected Completion Date
1.1	Departmental leadership structure review	April 30, 2021
1.2	Elections Central	March 30, 2022
1.3	Development and compilation of current of Standard Operating Procedures	May 31, 2021
1.4	Automated elections plan	March 31, 2021
1.5	Implementation of inventory and tracking System	June 30, 2021
1.6	Defend voter rights and accessibility without restrictions	March 31, 2021

**Mr. Barron** responded that the **DRE** is working with the **Purchasing Department** to get an Intergovernmental Agreement in place to request approval from the Board of Commissioners to purchase that inventory and tracking system. This system will allow the **DRE** the ability to keep track of chain of custody but all of the deliveries and to know where everything is at all points in that process.

**Mr. Barron** continued with **Item # 1.6**, the Legislature voted and passed **Senate Bill 202**, all Georgia Counties met virtually to discuss many aspects of **Senate Bill 202** in a forum held by SOS. The DRE anticipates more guidance in the coming months.

**Dr. Ruth** asked **Mr. Barron** to expound on the inventory system

**Ms. Williams** greeted the Board.

Inventory system consists:

- All equipment at the EPC-Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs), Access Cards, Printers, Tables, Chairs and more
- GPS System for tracking
- Real- time delivery of equipment to polling sites
- Scan items to know when the components have arrived
  - Poll Manager Equipment pick-up
  - Check- In Centers on Election night

**Ms. Williams** explained that the biggest thing is for us to track everything in real time, make sure equipment is delivered to the proper location and to keep an accurate inventory of every item. Inventory systems that were demoed were Easy Vote, Maximo (In Houses) and Wireless Data System (**WDS**). **WDS** was the preferred inventory system because it was election specific. This company currently have, contracts in Travis County, Texas and Broward County, Florida.

**Mr. Wingate** asked about tracking access cards.

**Ms. Williams** answered that leaving access cards are poll manager's error; however, yes this tracking system will have the ability to notify the users of missing inventory.

**Dr. Ruth** inquired about training of this system to the Poll Managers

**Ms. Williams** responded no, poll manager will not be trained on the system. They will follow the same procedures as usual, making sure we receive all items. The inventory systems will be managed by the EPC personnel (drivers/ couriers) and the Check-In sites.

**Chairman Wan** inquired about will the system be installed and ready to use in a timely manner

**Ms. Williams** expressed being hopeful and the **DRE** intends to have a mock election to ensure the system is working accurately.

**Chairman Wan** asked for clarity on the SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), are the SOPs being updated or are the **DRE** developing new ones to close gaps or tighten certain processes.

**Mr. Barron** responded both, the **DRE** updating some and creating new ones pursuant to Senate Bill 202. The process will be on-going because the **DRE** is waiting on guidance from the SOS before we can fully update.

**Chairman Wan** inquired about the **Board's** participation in reviewing the SOPs

**Mr. Barron** answered all this information can be provided to the **BRE**.

CATEGORY-OPERATIONAL			
POLL WORKER SYSTEMS AND ELECTIONS OPERATIONS			
Achieve IT #	Improvement Area	Description	Projected Date of Completion
2.1	Automated Project Plan Development	Annual development of detailed election cycle project plans in Achieve-It.	March, 2021  Rick Barron
2.2	Poll Worker Staffing Plan for Election Day Workers	Full implementation and use of poll working staff plan.  Discussion on use of County personnel for Election Day vs outsourcing with temporary staffing agency (hybrid approach).  Development of poll worker database for State referrals and website applications.	May, 2021  June, 2021  June, 2021  Axiver Harris, Johnny Harris
2.3	Implementation of Poll Worker University for Election Day Workers	Update on-line poll worker modules created by an outside vendor for each election position to maintain consistency of training.  Ensure training staff are well adapted to conduct training class.  Develop a scheduling plan for training.	Feb., 2022    Sept., 2021  July, 2021 Sharon Benjamin
2.3.1	Poll Worker and Election Day Technician Screening Process	Enhance screening process to ensure appropriate hiring for all election worker positions and Election Day Technicians.	June, 2021 Nadine Williams
2.4	Poll Worker AMS Entry and Pay	Automate AMS entry of poll workers and poll worker pay; research mass upload option.	Sept., 2021  Johnny Harris, Axiver Harris

**Chairman Wan** acknowledged **Vice Chair Nuriddin** arrival.

**Mr. Wingate** inquiries were not captured during most of this meeting because his microphone was off.

**Dr. Ruth** inquired about individuals that publicly critiqued Happy Faces Personnel and their assignment of staff to the **DRE**. How can the department ensure that we get the appropriate staff for elections?

**Mr. Barron** explained that Happy Faces provided the DRE with staff for all our offices:

- EPC personnel (specialist, couriers, & more)

- Voter registration processing application
- Absentee by mail.
- Voter Education and Outreach
- Early voting workers
- Election Day Technician
- Election Day Security
- Call Centers Staff (2-call center)

**Mr. Barron** explained the **DRE** had more issues with other vendors than the **DRE** did with Happy Faces but the **DRE** met with Happy Faces last week and attended virtual meeting discussions recently and they are going to alter their screening processes. I think because we put so many demands on them last year, we requested personnel that the **DRE** never needed before. In an effort to ensure we get qualified personnel Happy Faces partner with an IT agency to recruit Technicians.

**Ms. Benjamin** highlighted their meeting discussion:

- Improving recruitment process
- Hiring additional staff
- Hire a training manager
- Interview process, that's critical for the managers and assistant managers
- Improve procedure with personnel mistakes
- Driving professionalism and customer service
- Background check- improve assessment process qualified
- Orientation and training

**Ms. Benjamin** expressed the **DRE** really challenged Happy Faces last year but they came through for us every time. Lesson Learn: Better communication and providing more notice, where possible.

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about Happy Faces contract. (faint)

**Mr. Barron** responded the contracts are approved every year by the **BOC**. The **DRE** started using Happy Faces in 2016 with three other vendors and Happy Faces provided us a better group of personnel in comparison to all the others. I always understand the commitment of Happy Faces, they're always in contact with the **DRE**. We have a lot of the people that have signed up with them, especially from the warehouses, that have worked for the **DRE** more than 20 plus years. They were temporary county employees until the county transitioned from that method of recruitment.

**Mr. Johnson** inquired about the training that Happy Faces is responsible for providing personnel

**Ms. Benjamin** explained that Happy Faces hire staff for the DRE and provide them with Orientation Training only. The **DRE** will then provide additional training throughout the department based on the hired staff assignment. Happy Faces is invited to all trainings conducted by Fulton County Registration and Elections Personnel.

**Mr. Johnson** inquired about all vendors having a review period.

**Mr. Barron** answered the **BOC** have to approve that contract yearly. Happy Faces is a vendor from Georgia's statewide contract. **Mr. Barron** mentioned getting more information on the process for bidding and using statewide vendors from the Purchasing Director, Felicia Strong-Whitaker.

**Mr. Johnson** inquired about other Departments that use the vendor.

**Mr. Barron** mentioned that several Fulton County Departments utilize this staffing agency yielding good results.

**Vice Chair Nuriddin** inquired about Happy Faces providing training. Did I hear that correctly?

**Ms. Benjamin** responded no, Happy Faces provide in-house orientation training only

**Vice Chair Nuriddin** mentioned the DRE continue to discuss the Pandemic and what happened. Vice Chair noted majority of electorate voted by absentee ballot by mail and early voting for the 2020 election, that was very unique to a presidential election. So what we do know is that's not going to happen to that extent and how the law is currently written. I was wondering in this new space, how do you foresee placement services and increasing polling locations?

**Mr. Barron** responded that placement services are not used to recruit Election Day polls, the DRE use a separate database. Happy Faces provide supplemental staff for our offices, the EPC, Early Voting workers, Technicians, and Security.

**Vice Chair Nuriddin** mentioned that Happy Faces was being paid Millions of dollars and that it included all personnel including Election Day.

**Mr. Barron** explained the use of other vendors were used for placement services (Corporate Temps and Halo Innovations) but one of the cost drivers were Early voting worker were paid a COVID-19 daily stipend last year and that drove up the amount paid out.

**Mr. J. Harris** highlighted the benefits of automating the system with the help of the Strategy Office.

**Mr. Barron** express gratitude of the DRE's partnership with the County Manager Executive Team and having the resources of the county helping us like the Strategy Officer. They can write a lot of these automation processes for the DRE. They have the personnel that we don't have in our department or the expertise. County Manager and his team has been crucial going forward to make some of these processes work

**Mr. J. Harris** highlighted the process:

- Poll workers (PWs) are assigned by regions and need
  - North Fulton
  - South Fulton
  - City of Atlanta
- Coordinators will pick the precinct that needs to be filled
- Poll worker receive a screening call to process their status
- Poll workers agree on their location
- Coordinators assign PWs to the agreed location
- PWs activate in the system

**Mr. Harris** mentioned most workers are assigned to the region that they live in but the majority of the applicants live in South Fulton and City of Atlanta.

**Vice Chair Nuriddin** mentioned SOS will need to update their portal to comply with the law but will DREs' portal to be available request Absentee by Mail in November

**Mr. Jones** answered that the DRE is working with the vendor to update out portal

EARLY VOTING			
Achieve IT #	Improvement Area	Description	Implementation Range
2.5	Early Voting Staffing Plan	Development of staffing planning, recruiting and assignment.  Implement utilization of poll worker staffing plan for early voting staff.	May, 2021  Sharon Benjamin
2.3	Poll Worker University for Early Voting	Update on-line early voting poll worker modules created by an outside vendor for each early voting position to maintain consistency of training.	Feb., 2022  Sharon Benjamin
2.5.1	Create documented procedures for the Early Voting Process	Create standard operating procedures for the early voting process. Employ outside consultant for development.	1 <sup>st</sup> iteration – May 31, 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> iteration- Feb, 2022 (Consultant) Sharon Benjamin

**Chairman Wan** inquired about the drop boxes location recommendations to the Board.

**Mr. Barron** mentioned the maps and the recommendations will be at the Regular meeting, May 13<sup>th</sup>. The **DRE** will recommend several locations; however, there will be full map for the **BRE** to make a determination.

SECURITY			
	Improvement Area	Description	Implementation Range
2.6	Poll Security/Emergency Response Plan	Review and maintain poll security and recruiting plan, and emergency response plan for elections based on election type.	Sept, 2021  Nadine Williams
2.7	Absentee Ballot Security Escort	Determine the need to develop an absentee ballot escort plan for absentee ballot drop box pick up and for Election Day (define standards and process).	July, 2021  Deputy Director

ABSENTEE			
	Improvement Area	Description	Implementation Range
2.8	Documented Absentee Ballot Process	Employ outside consultant to fully document the absentee ballot process from beginning to end.	1 <sup>st</sup> iteration-May 31, 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> iteration- Feb, 2022 (Consultant) Deputy Director
2.7	Documented Signature Verification Process	Employ outside consultant to fully document the signature verification process from beginning to end.  Review technology capabilities for signature verification.	TBD- pending outcome of legislative actions  Deputy Director

**Mr. Barron** mentioned **Mr. R. Jones** can provide details on item 2.6 until the new Deputy Director is hired. **Mr. Barron** noted that with SB 202 item 2.7, no longer exist.

**Dr. Ruth** inquired on when the Deputy Director will be hired

**Mr. Barron** responded by the end of the month, second interviews will be held this Thursday.

WAREHOUSE			
	Improvement Area	Description	Implementation Range
2.8	Documented Polling Location Selection Process	Create a documented process for selecting polling locations and criteria for selection to include forms and required agreements.	April, 2021  Nadine Williams, John Ross
2.9	Equipment Inventory/Tracking System/Supply Audit	Implement inventory management system such as Maximo for election equipment tracking and audit.	June, 2021 for RFP Process  Nadine Williams
2.10	Election Check-in and Check list	Expand current standardized checklist to review for audit of returned election equipment and supplies on Election night.  Add additional check-in sites.	May, 2021  Sept., 2021  Nadine Williams

**Mr. Barron** explained that different members of the staff are responsible for completing these and some of these have been completed for example, a lot of the standing standard operating procedures, those have been compiled by **Ms. McCloud** and then sent to the County Auditor's office.

**Vice Chair Nuriddin** asked was this information accessible to the Board or do she need to compete an Open Records Request

**Mr. Barron** informed the BRE that any documents they want to see they can contact **Secretary Bodison**

**Chairman Wan** provided a couple suggestions. **Chairman Wan** asked did the DRE have central repository that, the BRE could access like a resource library.

**Mr. Barron** mentioned discussing the request with the Strategy Office to see if we could provide the BRE with access to similar to last year where you all had access to view certain documents with a log in

CATEGORY - ADMINISTRATIVE			
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT			
	Improvement Area	Description	Implementation Range
3.1	Election Budget Preparation	Develop a standardized process for election budget development and budget tracking. Ensure adequate funding is requested.	April, 2021  Brenda McCloud
3.2	Contingency Plan Development	Develop contingency plans for all registration and election operations for man-made, natural disasters and social unrest.	August, 2021  Deputy Director

**Mr. Barron** explained examples of item 3.2 in 2020 were being able to use mobile voting RVs on Election Day in November, December, January, in December instead of closing polling locations

- Two schools that had Legionnaires disease.
- Power outages after storm

The **DRE** is prohibited from using mobile voting. The SB 202 provision prohibits the use of mobile voting unless there's declared disaster by the Governor

3.3	Grant Tracking Procedures	Establish grant tracking, reporting and reconciliation process for all election grants.	April, 2021 Brenda McCloud

CATEGORY – EDUCATION AND OUTREACH			
ENHANCED VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM			
	Improvement Area	Description	Implementation Range
3.4	Develop more robust Voter Education Program	Develop an annual voter education plan that includes a calendar of events, communication and outreach information packet, schedule of meetings with local municipalities, elected officials, community and civic organizations, media outlets, etc. to conduct voter education seminars, demonstrations and training sessions, etc.	May, 2021  Deputy Director

**Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE** that the development of the voter education program. That is an item that is currently under Ms. McCloud but will be moved when the Deputy Director comes on board.

- Develop that voter education program
- Utilize buses for voter education program
- Poll worker recruitment
- Developing Permanent outreach at Schools/ College currently

**Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE** the Voter Education Coordinator, full time staff member, has been out for health reasons for a few months.

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about the Deputy Director’s direct reports in the DRE

**Mr. Barron** mentioned there may be a couple of adjustments made on Organizational flow chart provided to the Board.

Managing Divisions & Direct Reports:

- Voter Education and Outreach Division
- Absentee Division Manager
- Elections Chief
- Registrations Chief
- Administrative Manager

**Mr. Barron** mentioned that some of these components will require guidance from the Secretary of State’s Office

**Vice Chair Nuriddin** noted the **DRE** has always had a robust Voter education and outreach program. **Vice Chair** requested clarity on the reasoning the DRE has opted to wait on Voter Education and move forward with Absentee process

**Mr. Barron** reiterated the Voter Education Coordinator has been out on FMLA, for health reasons for more than three months, the DRE does not have any VEO supplemental staff. However, Mr. Jones and Ms. Ficklin is already in place.

**Vice Chair Nuriddin** requested **Mr. Barron** to speed up because a lot of deadlines that are not here yet. The DRE don't have a repository with the documents that you're referencing, can you discuss the ones that have deadlines.

**Mr. Barron** mentioned that there are two items that are off track with regards to the deadlines. Those items will be the Deputy Director first priority going forward.

3.5	Permanent Call Center (shared)	Create a permanent call center in Elections with features that can be shared across county departments when not being used for Elections. This call center should be able to handle all calls related to voter registration, elections, absentee ballot and voter outreach activities.	Completed  Deputy Director, Ralph Jones
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	Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)	Develop SOPs for all registration, election, absentee and administrative functions. Employ an outside consultant or technical writer for assistance.  Development of check and balance process for vote tabulation.	1 <sup>st</sup> iteration- May 31, 2021 2 <sup>nd</sup> iteration- Feb, 2022 (Consultant)  June, 2021 Nadine Williams, Ralph Jones, Deputy Director, Brenda McCloud
4.0	Organization/Department Restructure	Enhance and establish permanent election staffing. Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of 1 Deputy Director position</li> <li>▪ Creation of Absentee Ballot Division or Section (pending outcome of legislative action taken by the State)</li> <li>▪ Creation of internal technology team consisting of 1 to 2 additional members (shared positions with scalable duties)</li> <li>▪ Creation of Financial Systems Specialist</li> <li>▪ Creation of Voter Education and Outreach Manager</li> </ul>	April, 2021          Rick Barron
3.6.2	Cross Training Program	Develop a fully functional cross training program among the divisions for critical positions within the department to include annual timelines for job sharing.  Provide training from Dominion on all election equipment to all staff.	July, 2021  August, 2021  Deputy Director, Nadine Williams, Ralph Jones

Mr. Barron informed item # 3.6, the cross training programs, Mr. R. Jones has always had a robust cross training program within his Division. This plan for cross training going forward will be to implement throughout the Department. Although, in 2020 there was a lot of cross training out of necessity, because different people in the different Divisions were required to work in multiple roles.

CATEGORY - LEGISLATIVE			
LEGISLATIVE LOBBYING			
	Improvement Area	Description	Implementation Range
5.0	Absentee Ballot Submission Deadline	Include in the County’s lobbying package support for moving back the deadline to request an absentee ballot one week before an election.	Legislative Session 2021
	Vote Centers	Lobby for the creation of Vote Centers vs. precincts.	Legislative Session 2021
	Restrictions on Poll Watcher/Observer Regulations	Lobby to have more clearly defined restrictions and regulations for Poll Watchers and Observers.	Legislative Session 2021
	Election Worker Security	Lobby for the implementation of Election Worker Security penalties.	Legislative Session 2021
	Defending mobile voting centers, drop box and Sunday early voting	Lobby to defend/maintain these items.	Legislative Session 2021

Chairman Wan reiterated the deliverables and expectations for upcoming meeting

- Consultant RFPS
- Centralized locations for documents
- All other updates provided in the Monthly Report

**Mr. Barron** will discuss with the County Manager Executive Team on having the ability to complete this directive.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other items requiring the Board's action, **Chairman Wan entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Nuriddin seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 12:06 p.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary