



APPROVED MINUTES

BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING – February 14, 2019

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, February 14, 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. Richard Barron, Director; Mr. Ralph Jones, Registration Chief; Mrs. Sharon Benjamin, Deputy Elections Chief; Mr. Johnny Harris, Elections Officer; Mrs. Pamela Coman, Registration Manager; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Ms. Breauana Jenkins, Administrative Specialist; Mr. David Lowman, Staff Attorney; Ms. Jessica Corbitt, PIO & Director of External Affairs; Ms. April Majors, Public Affairs Manager

Guests Attending: Foris Webb III (City of Atlanta), Edward Leidelmeijer (Commissioner Hausmann), David Ross (Georgia Democratic Party), Penn Payne (Georgia Democratic Party), Tamara Stevens (No Safe Seats), Jennifer Schmidt (No Safe Seats), Shea Roberts, Elba Gale, Annette Gorelick, Katrina Griessman Dinkle Jobie Crawford, George Balbona, , Kristopher Young, Isabel Hidalgo, Rosalind Zee (Dine with Dems), Aileen Nakamura (No Safe Seats), Brian Peters, Sally Tribble, Hope Mays, Stacey Hopkins, Bryan Bankouich

#1– APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to amend the agenda to add Legislative Updates item # 5B. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wingate and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

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

#2– COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

Isabel Hidalgo- appalled by under vote for Lieutenant Governor's race, African American voters, and advocating for paper ballots

Tamara Stevens- informed the BRE of her lack of knowledge regarding how to run an Election; however, she believes that Fulton County and the State of Georgia is doing a poor job and requested resignation of the Elections Director

Jobie Crawford- frustrated with her voting experience on November 6, 2018 at Booker T. Washington polling precinct; poor service, the lack of supplies at this location, and advocated for the resignation of the Elections Director

Katrina Griessman- inquired about Mr. Barron's vacation leave, work related training, late reporting of elections results, Voter Registration Divisions backlog of applications, and advocated for the resignation of the Elections Director

Jennifer Schmidt- advocated for the resignation of the Elections Director, Paper Ballots, and securing Fulton County citizen's votes

Rosalind Zee- requested audits of the Election process, reports to be publicized and demanding perfection from the **DRE** to the citizens of Fulton County

Aileen Nakamura- reiterated her comments from last month's meeting regarding incompetent poll workers, lack of poll worker training and her daughter's issues with absentee ballots during Runoff elections, and advocated for the resignation of the Elections Director

Elba Gale- frustrated with the Absentee Ballot processes and procedures, and advocated for the resignation of the Elections Director

Annette Gorelick- informed the **BRE** of her frustrations regarding the November 2018 General Special Elections and highlighted the Department's mistakes

Shea Roberts- advocated for paper ballots and the resignation of the Elections Director

Kristopher Young- appalled at Georgia's election security advocated more transparency, and advocated for paper ballots

Sally Tribble- frustrated with the EXACT MATCH process, which she believes disenfranchises Hispanic and African American voters, and advocated for the resignation of the Elections Director

George Balbona- quoted **Mr. Barron** in previous **BRE** meetings regarding the Secretary of State's website, **Mr. Burge** from previous **BRE** meetings and email correspondence, and advocated for the resignation of the Elections Director

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

Ms. Coman presented the February Felon Report to the Board that was transmitted by the State and recommended the removal of 19 names. Letters were mailed; however, no responses were received

Mr. Johnson inquired about the small number of removals this month in comparison to previous months

Mr. Jones stated that this listing is compiled of detained felons only, and previous reports were both detained and released felons

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to remove 19 names from the electors' rolls as listed on Exhibits A, B, C, D and E, on the February 14, 2019 Felon Report. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

#4– APPROVAL OF MINUTES

➤ **Regular Meeting – January 10, 2019**

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

➤ **Executive Session – January 10, 2019**

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Executive Session Meeting in the month of January 2019 was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#5– MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR January 2019

- **Mr. Dwight Brower** retired on January 8, 2019 as the Elections Chief of the Elections Division
- **Mr. Joseph Blake Evans** announced as the New Elections Chief of the Elections Division, beginning March 2019
- Poll worker training begins February 21, 2019
- 23,056 voter registration applications received in January
- As of January 1st, **765,770** (697,517 active and 68,253 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- Processed 181 temporary voter ID cards (TVIC)
- Hiring process has begun for the three Registration Officer positions in the Voter Registration Division
- 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
- Municipalities for the Special Election in March 2019
 - City of Atlanta; **City Council Member, District 3**
 - City of Hapeville; **Alderman At Large**
- 10 Pilot Counties to use new voting system in November 2019 – Fulton County possible pilot participant

Chairperson Cooney inquired about the new Elections Chief being in charge of poll worker training

Mr. Barron stated yes

Mr. Wingate inquired about the location and expansion of poll worker training

Mr. Barron stated that he spoke to the incoming Elections Chief with regards to revamping the poll worker training, and methods to secure higher quality poll workers with technical skills.

Mr. Burge inquired about the State Elections Director retaining his position and the discontinuation of current voter equipment

Mr. Barron stated that based on information that he has received, once a vendor has been chosen that vendor has to be prepared to roll out the new voting units quickly. The estimated date to discontinue use of the old voting system will be no later than the possible Special Election in September 2019

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the **DRE** implementing any procedural changes for poll worker training to remedy some of the complaints received especially surrounding provisional ballots.

Mr. Barron explained that resolutions to some of the complaints **DRE** received would require legislation changing some laws. The county is prohibited from using private locations as Early Voting locations. If

this law was changed, it would have a tremendous impact on the voting participation in certain areas, which would resolve a large number of complaints. **DRE** intends to increase **Voter Education & Outreach** presence throughout the County.

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about poll workers being encouraged or trained to deny voters from receiving provisional ballots

Mr. Barron explained to the **BRE** that poll managers are encouraged to direct voters to vote in their correct precinct until 5pm to ensure their entire ballot is counted. Poll managers are not allowed to deny a voter a provisional ballot by law.

Ms. Nuriddin requested measurable oversight to remedy the complaints from voters regarding poll managers denying voters provisional ballots

Ms. Nuriddin suggested the **DRE** take advantage of technology by requiring each polling precinct to submit a picture of polling tape posted once polls close

Mr. Barron stated that **Ms. Nuriddin's** suggestion was a great idea and informed the **BRE** on his plan to disseminate precinct auditors to ensure that polling locations are adhering to all policies and procedures

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the cost of the new voting equipment

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** that based on the information communicated; the State of Georgia intends to fully fund the replacement of the voting equipment

Mr. Johnson inquired about the funds that were in the proposed budget then removed from the budget to allocate funds to assist the **DRE** with purchasing voting equipment, if needed

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** that funds would be to provide supplemental assistance with purchasing items once all equipment has been allocated by the State. **Mr. Barron** stated that during the **BOC** Recess Meeting there was an indication that if funds are needed, the **County** will reconvene to allocate necessary funds

Mr. Johnson inquired about the length of time that the polling tape has to be posted

Mr. Barron stated that the **DRE** cannot guarantee visibility of polling tape due to facility closures and/or tape being removed by other groups

Mr. Johnson addressed the issues regarding ensuring that the citizens of this County receive quality service

Mr. Barron stated his agreement with the complaints voiced on the length of time that it takes for absentee ballots to arrive to the voter's destination, especially when there is a Runoff election. **Mr. Barron** reiterated to the **BRE** the obstacles that are usually imposed during a Runoff election; making it increasingly difficult to ensure voters receive their ballots timely especially after a recount, recertification of an election, and holidays

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about strategies the **DRE** implemented to combat the increasingly lengthy time voters incurred while waiting on Absentee Ballots during Runoff Elections

Mr. Barron stated changing laws would be the best recourse

Mr. Burge encouraged the **DRE** to take advantage of upcoming changes and addressing the concerns of the voters

Mr. Barron encouraged citizens of the County to apply to become poll workers

#5B– LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** that the SAFE Commission has recommended a voting unit that has a ballot marking device. Mr. Barron asked if the **BRE** will endorse this new system.

Chairperson Cooney inquired about the information **Mr. Barron** was requesting from the **BRE**

Ms. Nuriddin informed the **BRE** that **SOS** has been requesting insight or opinions from all personnel concerning which type of voting system the State should adopt for months

Ms. Corbitt informed the **BRE** that legislation will be introduced based on the S.A.F.E Commission's recommendation, information relevant to what the legislation will vote on and the anticipated date is March 7, 2019. She also informed the **BRE** that there is a Lobbying team available if the **BRE** has an issue they want to address

Fulton County Legislative Delegation:

- Clarifying in the law the terminology for advance voting instead of absentee in person
- Voting Centers- HB 117 Representative Bruce voting at any location within the county

Mr. Burge indicated that this new voting system will require a substantial amount of funds, time, and training in order for the **DRE** to successfully implement, and inquired if the State is prepared for the task

Ms. Corbitt reviewed the **S.A.F.E** Commission's recommendation as it pertains to the training of all Elections personnel, including poll workers and supplemental staff.

Mr. Wingate inquired regarding whether this recommendation is a 2019 Budget demand or 2020 Budget Plan

Ms. Corbitt stated that due to training and possible pilot programming, it will be a 2019 Budget demand and Chief Financial Officer Whitmore and County Manager Anderson discussed in the January 23, 2019, Recess meeting, methods in which they plan to fund the Election Department, if there is a need.

NEW BUSINESS

#6- APPROVAL OF PRECINCT PROPOSALS 01/19, 02/19, 03/19, AND 04/19 IN NOVEMBER

Mr. Barron explained the proposals to indicate three designation changes in the City of South Fulton and one renaming change.

- **01/19 SC01D; precinct designation changed to FC01**
- **02/19 SC14A; precinct designation changed to FC02**
- **03/19 SC16B; precinct designation changed to FC03**

- **04/19 12S; Name of polling location was changed from Southeast Atlanta Library and renamed Louise Watley Library at Southeast Atlanta**

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve all four precinct proposals. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Burge and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#12- EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to close regular session and convene into executive session to discuss pending litigation and the conclusion of the Annual Evaluation of the Elections Director. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

After executive session, **Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to resume into regular session. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Burge and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

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. Burge seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 12:29 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary