



## BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS APPROVED MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING – February 10, 2022

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

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

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

**Presiding:** Cathy Woolard, Chairwoman

**Other Board Members Present:**

Ms. Dr. Kathleen Ruth, Vice Chairperson

Mr. Aaron V. Johnson

Mrs. Teresa Crawford

Mr. Mark Wingate

**Staff Attending:** Mr. Patrick Eskridge, Deputy Director; Ms. Nadine E. Williams, Elections Chief; Mr. Dominic Olomo, Information Systems Manager; Ms. Shamira Marshall, Registration Manager; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Ms. Janell Barganier, Financial Systems Manager; Mrs. Cheryl Ringer, County Attorney; Mr. Thomas Johnson; Ms. LaShandra Little; Mr. James Reese, Production Manager; Regina Waller, Senior Public Affairs Officer

**Guests Attending:** Nyia Corston, Rich Thompson, Julie Adams, Kevin Muldowney, Maria Gavdio, Lucia Frazier, Susan Ortiz Viajos, Sandra Burkhardt, Jason Frazier, Bridget Thorne, David Hill Hubert, Ann Dumas, Earl Ferguson

#### **#1– APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Vice Chair Ruth entertained a motion to adopt agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Crawford and carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.**

#### **#2– COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE**

**Nyia Corston:**

If we don't believe in the freedom of expression for people we disagree with, we don't believe in it at all. I am here to formally request that you do not amend Article 3 Section 4. As you are aware the article provides an opportunity for citizens like me to provide comment on issues that are being discussed and voted on by the board of registration and elections. Why would you remove this? What are your motives? Before voting each one of you needs to ask and answer these questions for yourselves and the people you represent. Are you trying to suppress freedom of

speech? If so, again why? As the primary elections will commence in less than 90 days there is still much work to be done. Approving the budget is at the top of the list despite an already bloated budget. Richard Barron and his department seems to believe that Fulton County to an effective election, additional funds need to be allocated. I strongly disagree. I volunteered as a poll watcher for most of my early voting and as a poll worker on election day. During my time as a poll watcher, I made several observations. First, an overabundance of workers and machines were present. During one of my four-hour shifts, only eight voters showed up to vote with nearly a dozen employees manning the polls. This was not an exception but rather the rule for most of the 19 days of early voting. It was evident that way too many employees were working with little to do. This makes no sense the preponderance of votes came during the last week and most during the last few days of early voting. You don't need to be a poll watcher to report this; the data is available. I would encourage you and those in charge of scheduling workers and machines to appropriately assign and manage the appropriate amount for optimized efficiency. This will not only reduce cost, but the number of workers needed which seems to be an ongoing issue in our elections. I am here as a concerned citizen who is interested in ensuring that elections are transparent, efficient, and fair for all voters. Do not remove my right to voice my concerns so shall it be written, so shall it be done. Thank you.

**Rich Thompson:**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Rich Thompson, a proud Fulton county voter. I wanted to bring your attention that was my hope today that have several names that I submitted for a challenge reviewed by this body, but I was informed that there was a slight little snafu somewhere; some technical difficulty that prevented those 498 names from being reviewed for your decision today. I would like to respectfully request that at some point in the very near future you designate a special meeting whereby those names could be reviewed, and some decision could be made. While I understand that there's a process that's going to happen, sometime very soon, like around the 13<sup>th</sup> of this month to do a cleanup. I respectfully request that we make sure that these names that I submitted, that have not been reviewed or at least verified, that they are reviewed and removed as a part of that cleanup. I think to do that more effectively, a special hearing would be in order, and I appreciate your consideration.

**Julie Adams:**

Hello. I come here to these meetings as a resident of Fulton County and my goal, and I believe a lot of the speaker's goals, are to have free, fair, and transparent elections. I was upset before that special meetings were not announced or we've seen several times they go online just a couple of hours before they happen which prevents the public from attending. Now to take away our ability to speak at those meetings, it's not going with that transparent. It's more like hiding behind the curtain and I think that we should be able to speak. The other thing that I want to say is this week, I have gotten calls from someone in Washington state and Washington D.C. and their quotes to me, one of them said Fulton County is the epicenter of poorly run elections and the other one said pretty much the same thing. Can't repeat everything the other person said about Fulton County when they realized that's where I lived one of them asked me "was it really true that we had a non-citizen working managing one of the most important parts of our election which is the technical systems" and I had to say yes. They jokingly asked me if we were going to hire somebody to manage absentee ballots that was a Chinese national and so I just think that a lot of consideration needs to be done for us to achieve free and fair elections and I want to say that for then if you do vote in we can't speak, we will have a big contingency here at your next special meeting like we did with the BOC over the Happy Faces issue.

**Kevin Muldowney:**

Kevin Muldowney here from Alpharetta. The community poll worker proposal that was presented in the call to the faculty, the call with the commissioners and the city mayors in Feb 4 is exactly the same model that's been used in the past. It may have sounded somewhat interesting to a newly elected mayor on the job for only a few weeks but upon closer examination, it's quite apparent it's nothing new. Fulton has an existing pool of trained and capable election workers. The county currently employs and trains just under 3000 civic minded citizens every election cycle but they only get to work on election day and only in precincts as poll worker and poll managers. Having personally gone through the Fulton County's election day training for both poll worker and poll manager, I would have to say it sounds far superior to the training experienced provided by Happy Days Temp Agency. We need to tap into this existing trained stakeholder pool and give them the opportunity to work all aspects of the election cycle that the temp workers are currently performing such as early poll workers, poll managers, compliance, absentee ballot processing, tabulating military ballot processing, LNA testing, etc. These functions are currently being staffed by temp workers from the very same temp agency that Richard Barron asserted. I don't know how they hire or how they vet them. The idea is that to have stakeholders involved that have a vested interest in getting the process done accurately and not just going up there as a temp worker was overheard saying "uh well I'm gonna mess stuff up". Another matter worth mentioning is the proposal by Ms. Woolard to suppress and cease public comments during the special meetings of the BRE don't make any changes to Article 3 Section 4 please.

**Maria Gaudio:**

I don't typically do things like this, speaking in front of people about problems and so now that I've heard that Article 3 Section 4, our little limited ability to make a comment is threatened, I definitely need to speak up. For three elections, my polling location was moved at the last minute and I learned after the first time to make sure that I check the in the morning of the election but once I got to the poll, it was moved not just mine, but many others and it's happened three elections in a row; and it really discourages a lot of people from voting. You know when Christmas is always on the 35<sup>th</sup> and Halloween's always the 31<sup>st</sup> and you look forward to the festivities of the day and a lot of people want to vote on election day. I have witnessed and then I started working as a poll volunteer and I saw people who waited in line and most of the time it's first thing in the morning lunchtime and in the evening that they could get off of work or work their schedule around and they wait in line and it's not till they get up to the front that they find out the polling location has moved. Some people get pissed off and they leave and who knows if they go to the other polling location but our hunch is especially at lunchtime or in the morning if they have to get to work, they're not even going to vote. I'm sick of that. I went to do early voting in a camper of bus whatever you call it and I was attacked by a representative from Happy Faces. I wanted to get her name, nobody would give me the name. They don't have name tags so I called the police. I got two police reports; one from Milton, one from Alpharetta because where the event happened it's right on the border. It was a mess anyway the people were rude, they were unkempt.

**Lucia Frazier:**

I'm here to talk about mostly money. The budget request has a lot of waste built into it in our elections operations so asking for 37 million sounds just ridiculous. There's a lot of ways we can save some money. In the staffing model right now includes way too many workers. There's 13 people assigned every precinct for early voting. I know we don't need that many seven of them are clerks. I know we don't need that many. Compliance officers is anew thing that was added last year, we don't need that. Either poll manager did that before they can do it again. You can also give the poll manager the opportunity to get the poll tech certificate and they can just manage that as needed. The staffing model also includes too many days for most of these positions. I see that they're listed from like advanced voting from 3/17 to 6/17 and you only need them from 5/2 to 5/25. Absentee ballot openers are shown from 3/30 to 6/7 absentee ballots don't get mailed til 4/25 so let's check and make sure that they're not on record being paid for all those days. Poll worker pay, there's talk today about increasing that which I would only agree for people that are working like all the days like a poll manager. But for all the other roles, I would say you don't need to increase it this needs to be more of a civic duty and you need to break out these jobs to one day increments especially for early voting. Right now they're listed as a five-week commitment. I can't do five-weeks but I'm happy to do two or three days a week. So you're getting 2,700 people for one day on election day so you're able to do it.

**Susan Ortez Viajos:**

I was happy to see the Fulton County website has finally been updated so residents can apply there for early voting clerk and other positions in addition to election day. I hope this will eliminate the 17-step process that was necessary for the Happy Faces application which included uploading a resume quite ridiculous for a poll worker. I'm also hoping to see improvements in the early voting poll worker training for the municipal elections. I was given a one-day notice of the training at the English street warehouse which would involve three consecutive days. Day one was to be just swearing in and being deputized. Some people thought this would be quick and didn't plan to spend the whole day there only to find out this was a regular training day except for the fact that no one's login credentials worked. We were sent to go eat lunch eventually and when we came back, we were still unable to log into ElectionNET so we were sent home. Day two we still couldn't log in and watch some training videos and we sat around for hours talking. No one seemed to care because we were being paid by the hour. Finally, on day three, the real hands-on training took place in conclusion it seems training could be condensed to one day if proper preparations were made so that everyone can log in. The early voting poll worker jobs would probably also be much easier to fill if you offered multiple locations for training like you do for election day. And now the time commitment seems to have gotten even worse; from working 19 days straight, the expectation on the website says it's a five-week commitment for early voting. What is so hard about allowing part-time work two, three, or five days a week. I think you need to look at other counties like Forsyth County to see how to run an efficient and well-organized election. Humble yourself, learn how they do it.

**Sandra Burkhardt:**

My name is Sandra Burkhardt. Ever since I saw, I live in Fulton County, ever since I saw the video taken by security cameras, I have been concerned about the elections in Fulton County. As a result, I have become involved and I thank God for the privilege. I pray a lot and I'm looking forward to things changing. However, having attended many Fulton County commissioner meetings and some of the board meetings here I continue to be disappointed. I have been involved in elections and I have seen equipment beyond whatever is reasonable. I have seen people turned away because, they were not turned away they were redirected because they were at the wrong place to vote. It distresses me greatly because over half the people that showed up at the polling place I was worked returned, excuse me were redirected. I think things can be improved but I don't think anything will improve as long as we

continue to depend on people like Richard Barron and their assessment of equipment needs instead of the needs of the people and the transparency of our elections.

**Jason Frazier:**

I turned in a handful of names last week and apparently, they didn't, there wasn't enough time to process them. Go over those challenges today so I just wanted to speak in the public comment. So I wasn't totally prepared with a speech because I thought I'd be challenging voter rolls but I wanted to bring up a couple things. I have a strong ops background and the main reason I'm here is to try to learn what the process is to clean up the voter rolls. I just got into this the other day and I quickly found and turned in 44 voters or people on the voter rolls that had deceased. One passed away as long ago as 2009 and somehow, they've missed and slipped through the cracks. I just, again not knowing the process, I just figured you know google the name, type obituary, see who shows up and so I found obituaries and lined up to make sure that was the exact same person and it's easy to find them. I mean obviously there aren't enough people looking or they could find them, and I guess financially speaking, if we require one BMD for every 250 people then the gentleman back here with almost 500 voters getting cleaned off the rolls and my 44 dead individuals, that you know two plus BMDs that could be removed. So, every, all this work to clean up voter rolls directly impacts our tax dollars in saving money. The other process that I'm trying to understand is how do we clean up some of the other issues like I just looked up the UPS store down the street from my house and there were seven, seven people listed there. I know they don't live in that little box. So a process so that way myself and others know how to contribute. I mean we're just trying to help the city, help the county, all right so that's my main objective and if they could have a special hearing to help work through those and understand the process so we can improve and help give back. That would be, that would be great.

**Bridget Thorne:**

Hello, I want to thank you for trying to involve the community more in the election process. I think it's a right step in restoring trust in our elections. Now, I think it's imperative that Fulton elections stop wasting taxpayer dollars and operate in a more efficient manner. The embattled Richard Barron is going to the media and saying that he's facing funding challenges with his 37-million-dollar budget. Okay you had 44 million that was spent in 2020. In analyzing the 25 million expenses that were handed over to the auditor, 7.3 million was spent in non-agency capital that is equipment that you shouldn't have to buy again, 6.5 million was spent on covet expenses we shouldn't have to spend that again. That is 13.8 million dollars total; a 37-million-dollar budget is overly generous by the commissioners. Stop over staffing prior to 2020, in my as a precinct manager, I would have eight workers. Now that number is about 14. Great now I have five or six workers who get paid to play basketball in the school gymnasium. It's ridiculous and it's wasteful. There is no need for line monitors when you have no lines. There is no need for a compliance officer to be placed in every early voting precinct. The manager should be responsible for reconciliation reports. We do not need compliance managers that drive from Athens to work in Alpharetta to run a reconciliation report. Friends who worked early said they were trained for three days but got about three hours worth of meaningful training, but they were being paid. There's no need for a poll tech in every precinct. Allow for qualified managers and assistant managers to get poll tech training the pay them a little bit more for this certification. There's no need for additional provisional ballot clerks, an assistant manager should be trained in this area. Most precincts only have zero to no, zero or a handful of provisional ballots cast and Ms. Woolard I wish you would have listened to the comments about your section three amendment that you're trying to pass.

<b>OLD BUSINESS</b>
---------------------

**#3- APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **Special Meeting - December 4, 2021**
- **Regular Meeting - December 9, 2021**
- **Executive Session Meeting - December 9, 2021**
- **Special Meeting - December 17, 2021**
- **Executive Session Meeting - December 17, 2021**
- **Regular Meeting - January 13, 2022**

**Mr. Wingate** asked about the meeting of January 13, 2022, for the board to receive updated SOPs, which was confirmed by Mr. Barron to be received via email, but the SOPs hadn't been received yet. Looking for clarification as to the status of the SOPs and how to access them.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to approve the Regular, Special, and Executive meeting minutes from December 4, 9, 17 & January 13, 2022 . The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Crawford and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## #4- MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR JANUARY 2022

**Mr. Eskridge** reported:

- ❖ Elections Division
  - WDS inventory and preparation
  - Logistics and Polling Location
    - 13 polling place changes
    - Redistricting still in progress
      - No anticipation for additional polling place proposals
      - Deadline 9 February given by SOS
    - 9 check in locations for May 22 elections
    - Facility reservations confirmed
    - Advanced voting locations, dates, and hours for May elections have been posted.
    - Approved absentee ballot dropbox locations have been posted.
      - Usage guidelines also posted
  - Poll worker
    - Preparation for recruitment and training being conducted
    - Updates to training documents
    - Election day worker training commenced
    - Poll managers contacted to confirm availability
    - Poll worker emails forwarded to election day polling site staff and county employees
    - Municipalities contacted to conduct recruitment fairs
      - Chattahoochee Hills – February 22 (Pending)
      - Alpharetta – March 5 (confirmed)
- ❖ Voter Registration Division
  - Voter Registration Applications
    - 5997 applications – 2022
      - Department of driver services
      - Online voter registration portal via SOS
      - Third-party party vendors
      - Mailed
      - Dropoff
  - Registered Voters
    - 845, 797 – total
      - 757,650 – active
      - 88,147 – inactive
  - Voter Residency Challenges
    - 3 challenge notices
    - 593 electors
    - NCOA Confirmation Notice
      - Mailed January 4, 2022
      - Suspense date February 13, 2022

- If no response, update via ElectionNet
- Received 544 responses
- District Updates
  - SOS suspense date February 18, 2022
  - Updates Received
    - State
    - House
    - Congressional Senate
  - Updates Pending
    - Fulton County school board
    - County commission
    - City of Atlanta school board
- ❖ Administration Division
  - Vacancies
    - Registration officer – 8
      - Interviews conducted
    - Absentee officer
      - Interviewed and filled
      - Offer sent
    - Election Systems Specialist
      - Preparing for interviews
    - Administrative Specialist
      - Preparing for interviews
    - Registration Chief
      - Shamira Marshall (promotion)
    - Administrative Manager
      - Preparing for interviews
  - Candidates Qualification Period
    - March 7 – 11, 2022
    - 9am – 5pm (12 noon on March 11)
    - Nonpartisan Offices
      - State court judge
      - Magistrate judge
      - Board of education
    - Partisan Offices
      - Board of commissioners
- ❖ Voter Education and Outreach Division
  - 2022 Voter Education Outreach Plan
  - Hosted meetings with mayors and municipalities to schedule future events
  - Brand development and footprint collaboration with external affairs
    - Website update
  - Partnerships
    - Georgia State University (bi-monthly voter education outreach events)
    - Georgia Tech
    - Clark Atlanta University
    - Oglethorpe University
    - Morehouse University
    - Atlanta Technical College
- ❖ Absentee Division
  - Continuous training
  - Earliest day to apply for absentee ballots for May general election – March 7, 2022

**Mr. Wingate** requested the total number of NCOAs mailed on January 4, 2022

**Ms. Marshall** replied 55,463

**Mr. Johnson** inquired about the February deadline to have redistricting lines drawn for the primary election and which cities are involved.

**Mr. Eskridge** replied that not all cities are on the same timeline. The deadline required by the department was set by the Secretary of State's office.

**Mr. Johnson** asked how the differing timelines would affect compliance

**Ms. Williams** replied that the cities that conducted municipal elections in the previous year have different deadlines. The lines for the remaining districts went before the general assembly and the information is available. County commissioners have proposed their lines and that's under review for approval but may change. Since the cities have no upcoming elections, their deadline is different for the SOS.

**Mr. Johnson** asked it will affect compliance in any way.

**Ms. Williams** stated at the moment no it would not. There is currently over 337 proposals in progress and the department is working on putting a packet together to present to the board.

**Mr. Johnson** asked if the primary date would be changing, moving as far back as July 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Eskridge** stated that the SOS has not communicated any changes to the primary.

**Mr. Johnson** clarified that the election would proceed on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Eskridge** replied yes.

**Ms. Woolard** commented about the bill to redraw public service commission districts and asked if the department could investigate how it may impact Fulton county. It appears county lines are being moved as opposed to individual precincts.

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about Yule Kava ballots in the event of a runoff and the process being determined by rank choice. Asked if the department has proceduralized that component.

**Ms. Bodison** stated that a procedure has not yet been established and recent talks with the Secretary of State's office regarding the procedure have been conducted but the procedure had not been formalized.

**Mr. Wingate** asked if the department was waiting on the SOS.

**Ms. Bodison** stated [for research] no but for guidance yes.

**Ms. Woolard** clarified that the department was looking into it and researching what is going on but that the Secretary of State's office will issue a rule to establish consistency.

**Ms. Bodison** replied yes.

**Dr. Ruth** stated, concerning the NCOAs received by the SOS, the department received 55, 463 and received 544 responses with a suspense date of February 13<sup>th</sup>. After which the voters will be moved to inactive status or removed from the list.

**Ms. Marshall** replied that the names from out of state will go into cancel status whereas the names in county will be placed in inactive status. The state has provided NCOA training to standardize the NCOA process, which was attended by the department.

**Ms. Woolard** announced that there may be some confusion concerning the NCOA and addressing challenges. There is a process established by the SOS and the Board and the department follows state law. The general assembly created a second avenue for removals as opposed to changing the way the SOS conducts the procedures to allow citizen challenges. The board appreciates the work that the citizen have put in to assist. The process does create an additional level of work for the staff which should be done at the SOS level. For the citizens that are interested in participating, there is a timeline that must be followed that is set within SB202. The moment the board is notified, there is an immediate process that must be followed which includes needing specially called meetings. It is requested that challengers attempt to align the request to the board calendar to avoid special called meetings. As the board calendar is set and it also gives the staff some predictability to how the workload flows and when discussing budget for next year, this can be considered as it requires additional and/or dedicated staff. These are dictated by state law, so the timeline isn't fluid. Also, the civic engagement is much appreciated. It would be great if the general public wanted to speak with the general assembly about why the process isn't streamlined.

**Mr. Johnson** asked approximately how many voters were in county and out of state from the NCOAs received by the SOS. Also stated that while the citizen effort is appreciated, it creates double work for the staff.

**Ms. Marshall** stated that she will update Mr. Johnson with the numbers.

**Dr. Ruth** commented that Mr. Johnson made a great point concerning the SOS. The SOS uses the ERIC system which has about 30 states integrated where they double check data to determine whether they're out of state. Some states have not adopted this, such as North Carolina. It would be curious to see how many names from the challenge did not make the SOS list, it is a question to investigate later.

**Ms. Marshall** stated that she would gather the data.

**Mr. Wingate** asked for correction in the information of whether the county or state are using the ERIC system.

**Mr. Eskridge** stated that he would have to consult with the SOS.

**Dr. Ruth** stated that the Secretary of State uses ERIC. Fulton County doesn't use ERIC but the state does.

**Mr. Wingate** asked what the county was doing with it.

**Dr. Ruth** replied that the SOS is using it in addition to the NCOAs to give the complete list to the counties.

**Mr. Wingate** asked in what fashion.

**Dr. Ruth** replied that the ERIC system help them to understand and helps them to know whether a person has moved out of state and they check that against the NCOA.

**Mr. Johnson** stated that it checks if a voter is registered in another state. The system is supposed to update to show that a voter has registered in a new county or state.

**Mr. Wingate** asked if the SOS is utilizing the system, are they receiving the information and what are they doing with the information.

**Mr. Johnson** replied that in theory, they are removing names, but the SOS does not do this on a monthly basis. No government entity can conduct this process monthly; a timetable is set to conduct the cleanup. Ms. Woolard was stating that a citizen has the right to conduct the searches monthly which then requires the staff to do it monthly.

**Mr. Wingate** asked if the SOS office is receiving the records from the ERIC system, what happens. Does the county receive a file from the SOS that updates the county record.

**Mr. Eskridge** stated that the department would inquire for additional detail from the SOS on how they are utilizing the system.

**Mr. Wingate** stated that is why the question was posed because the board hasn't received a report of any kind from the ERIC system.

**Dr. Ruth** stated that the NCOA is the data that is received from the state as it is checked against the ERIC system. The ERIC system is a database. Once Fulton County receives the list from the SOS, the list has already been vetted with the most accurate information. Not all states are connected to the ERIC system.

**Ms. Marshall** stated that department mailed out 55,653 NCOAs where 14,513 were out of county, 18, 290 were out of state, and 22, 850 were in county. The department is looking at the voter residency challenge for out of state voters. The challengers were informed that at least 100 of the names listed were on the 40-day clock to be canceled, but the challengers wanted them to be included in the challenge anyway. Therefore, the necessary research was conducted.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that this is an example of bad policy because the process is duplicated. When the challenge law passed, it was because citizens were dissatisfied with the process and time requirements in place to remove voters. It impacts the department tremendously because there is a greater care to attention to detail to not incorrectly remove voters. This creates additional work as well as additional costs due to mailing notifications. The process is not efficient and adds to the risk of creating and identifying errors. The appropriate place to address concerns with the process is to the General Assembly.

**Mr. Wingate** stated that the challenge shows that are many of the names are already in canceled status. Without knowing a timetable of how the SOS is providing the files, the ability to put the timeline in calendar format would assist the challengers in refining their processes. In order to streamline the process.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that the previous meeting, frustration was expressed on the SOS' process and like of predictability.

**Mr. Wingate** agree and stated that there is little understanding of how the system is utilized. As the last information that was received referenced an interface to replace eNet. In the future

the department will need to start providing detail. It appears to operate as a check and balance system but it is not know what is checked and balanced until the file is received, mailings are sent, and responses are received. The department needs to know how the system operates.

**Mr. Eskridge** stated as the state rolls out the new voter registration application, Garvis, the department has weekly meetings with them and will include a request for information concerning how ERIC is planning to be utilized with the new system and an update will be provided.

**Dr. Ruth** issued a reminder of the 90 day clock concerning removal of voters from the rolls prior to a federal election which includes the primary.

**Ms. Woolard** asked was the deadline February 10, 2022

**Mr. Eskridge** replied that the deadline had not approached and that a special meeting would be called to hear the voter residency challenges that did not make the current meeting.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to approve the Monthly Operations Report. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## NEW BUSINESS

### #5-APPROVAL OF POLLING LOCATIONS

**Ms. Williams** stated that the department is requestion approval of 13 polling place changes. All relocations have been surveyed for ADA compliance and have been advertised in the Legal Organ with the reasons for the change noted upon approval. All voters affected will be notified biz postal mail.

1. Proposal: 122
  - a. Precinct: 02L2 and 03I
  - b. Relocation from: Georgia Tech First Center
  - c. Relocation to: North Avenue Presbyterian
  - d. Reason: First center unavailable due to schedule conflicts
  - e. Notes: At the time of advertising the location was available, but the status has since changed. Awaiting update.
2. Proposal: 222
  - a. Precinct: 03C
  - b. Relocation from: Radcliffe Presbyterian Church
  - c. Relocation to: 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church
  - d. Reason:
  - e. Notes:
3. Proposal: 322
  - a. Precinct:06R
  - b. Relocation from: First Presbyterian Church
  - c. Relocation to: Peachtree Christian Church
  - d. Reason:
  - e. Notes:

4. Proposal: 422
  - a. Precinct: 08G
  - b. Relocation from: Atlanta History Center
  - c. Relocation to: Peachtree Presbyterian Church
5. Proposal: 522
  - a. Precinct: 11R
  - b. Relocation from: Mount Carmel Baptist Church
  - c. Relocation to: Junction 2800
6. Proposal: 622
  - a. Precinct: RW01
  - b. Relocation from: Crab Apple Middle School
  - c. Relocation to: Crab Apple Middle School
  - d. Reason: Crab Apple Middle School – New Facility
7. Proposal: 722
  - a. Precinct: RW02
  - b. Relocation from: Independence High School
  - c. Relocation to: Temple Bethtovah
8. Proposal: 822
  - a. Precinct: SS05 and SS18AMB
  - b. Relocation from: Abernathy Arts Center
  - c. Relocation to: Standing Springs Christian Church
9. Proposal: 922
  - a. Precinct: SS07ABC
  - b. Relocation from: Heritage Hall – Sandy Springs
  - c. Relocation to: Lake Forest Elementary School
10. Proposal: 1022
  - a. Precinct: SS29A
  - b. Relocation from: First Baptist Church of Sandy Springs – Cumberland Academy
  - c. Relocation to: Sandy Springs United Methodist Church Activity Center
11. Proposal: 1122
  - a. Precinct: 07M
  - b. Relocation from: Buckhead Theater
  - c. Relocation to: Peachtree Road United Methodist Church
12. Proposal: 1222
  - a. Precinct: UC02C
  - b. Relocation from: The Gathering Place
  - c. Relocation to: C.H. Gallant Elementary School
13. Proposal 1322
  - a. Precinct: 08A
  - b. Relocation from: Warren T. Jackson Elementary School
  - c. Relocation to: Sutton Middle Sixth Grade Campus

**Ms. Woolard** reiterated that the reasons for the changes were to be ADA compliant.

**Ms. Williams** stated that the changes were either ADA compliance or scheduling conflicts.

**Mr. Johnson** asked if proposal 1222 was a permanent change.

**Ms. Williams** replied yes at the request of Union City.

**Mr. Johnson** asked what the issue with Mount Carmel was.

**Ms. Williams** stated that the location opted out so the location was moved to Junction 2800.

**Ms. Crawford** stated that it seems to be a lot of changes right before an election. Questioned the reason for the locations opting out.

**Ms. Williams** replied that it could be because most of the locations were revenue generating operations. Now that they are back up and running, they have decided to return to normal business operations.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to approve the polling location changes. The motion was made by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## **#6-APPROVAL OF BY LAW AMENDMENT**

**Ms. Woolard** reiterated that the amendment would allow public comment at regular scheduled meetings but not at special called meetings or election related meetings so that business conducted during those meetings can be focused; and to make language clear and concise.

**Ms. Crawford** commented that the amendment speaks to the citizens that are concerned about losing their chance to speak at special meetings. At the end of the amendment, it states that public comment could be granted if a majority of the board members vote for it. The process is to streamline the meetings.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to approve the amendment. The motion was made by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a vote of 3-1-1.**

**Dr. Ruth** requested a discussion concerning the amendment.

**Mr. Johnson rescinded his second.**

**Ms. Crawford rescinded her motion.**

**Dr. Ruth** stated that a lot of the speakers spoke today in reference to the amendment and requested an amendment to the language to state that public comment would be allowed during regular and special meetings, not during election related meetings except when a majority would allow.

**Mr. Wingate** stated that he agreed with Dr. Ruth and is also concerned with the disallowing on public comment during special meetings. As election related meetings are already purposed and public comment isn't expected.

**Mr. Johnson** stated that the special meetings and election meetings are relatively the same, the meeting is called for a specific purpose. Regular meetings are broad and topics range. The amendment states that every meeting has the opportunity for public comment, it's just not advertised for special and election related meetings. There has never been a time where the

board has denied public comment except for when the speakers go beyond the allotted time or they did not follow the proper procedures to speak.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that there was a discussion concerning this issue with the addition of special meetings and election meetings at the request of some of the members. As the chairwoman to the board, attendance is mandatory as the facilitator with no time constraints. Concerning the special meetings, there are time constraints with very little notice. Prolonging those meetings with public comments runs the risk of losing quorums. The compromise is to continue public comment at regular meetings as advertised and provide an option, by majority vote, for public comment during special meetings.

**Dr. Ruth** asked if the special meeting public comment session would be specific to the topic of the special meetings.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that the constraints could be to only allow comments on the subject concerning the special meeting, or a certain number of speakers so as not to lose quorum because a quorum must be met in order to make and move motions. This process is done within other election bodies.

**Dr. Ruth** suggested to allow public comment in the special meeting with restrictions.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that the option exists in the language as it is written, the board will just need to vote on it.

**Mr. Wingate** stated that the proposed language should also include the suggested restrictions by Dr. Ruth.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that it specific references special meetings because historically, there haven't been public comments during election night.

**Mr. Wingate** stated that there have been just not during Ms. Woolard's tenure.

**Mr. Johnson** asked Mr. Wingate if the changes to be made were to specifically state the meetings.

**Mr. Wingate** stated that was correct.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that the next process would be to make a move with amendments to the existing language or make a motion to leave as is.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to approve the amendment. The motion was made by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a vote of 3-2.**

## **#7-POLL WORKER PAY**

**Mr. Eskridge** stated that the department has taken the proper steps to increase the poll worker pay, it's required to work with the HR department and the County Managers team. Prior to that, a feasibility analysis was conducted to determine the cost implications to conduct the May and June elections. Current implications are around 700 thousand, the next step is to have an internal management meeting to go over the numbers again for the May

election. Before then proceeding to request it from the county managers team.

**Ms. Woolard** asked if the department was asking the board to act or is this an information update.

**Mr. Eskridge** stated that the department was just informing the board. Final approval comes from the county managers team.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that this prompt is because the department ran a comparison of what Fulton County pays relative to other counties. Requested more information on what brought the department to this point.

**Mr. Eskridge** stated that the department looked at the budget from the previous year to increase the pay. This required the department to do a survey amongst surrounding counties to compare what they currently pay their poll workers. Based on what the department received, there was an opportunity to increase the pay. The next step is to work with the HR and the county managers team. The department has decided to move forward based on recent discussions, specifically the Mayor's meeting. Other unexpected cost increase includes the costs from redistricting and the costs from diversifying the agencies for temp workers.

**Ms. Woolard** asked what is the county that would be most like Fulton County, Dekalb or Gwinnett.

**Mr. Eskridge** stated that Gwinnett would be the second largest, but the county is still around 500 thousand.

**Ms. Woolard** then stated that Dekalb is 552, with more precincts. Dekalb's manager's pay is 360 whereas Fulton County's is 275. The assistant manager Dekalb pays 300 whereas Fulton pays 200. Fulton county is off when comparable to other counties but not so off because the county pays more than Gwinnett. Suggested that when bringing the final data forward, that Mr. Eskridge pull out the similar numbers for comparison and total the averages to make it easier for the board of commissioners, as summaries would make a stronger case.

## #8-LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**Ms. Corbitt** stated that the legislative sessions have been very interesting.

1. Redistricting
  - a. Congressional, state, house, and senate have passed.
  - b. School Boards both APS and Fulton schools have crossed over to the senate.
2. Senate Bill 437 crossed over
  - a. Also, a House Bill
  - b. In governmental affairs
3. House Bill 886
  - a. Security tracking for paper ballots
  - b. Chain of custody
  - c. Personnel related issues
4. Election Dates
  - a. 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in March of even numbered years a permanent special election day.

- b. Except in an instance when a presidential preference primary is held on a different date.
  - c. Date would be designated for TSPLOST referenda
- 5. House Bill 933
  - a. Inspect election related documents
  - b. Primarily affects the clerk of the superior court
  - c. Looping elections in for information oversight
- 6. Competing Bills
  - a. Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes
    - i. One to eliminate ballot drop boxes
    - ii. To address the prohibition or the reduction in absentee ballot drop boxes
- 7. House Bill 1085
  - a. Ranked choice municipal elections

**Ms. Woolard** asked Ms. Williams concerning House Bill 886, managing costs, increasing efficiencies, the concern is “does the legislation increase cost or increase efficiency?”. Tracking security paper says that every single sheet must be accounted for. The sheets are blank pieces of paper, not ballots. The word ‘handled’ throughout out the bill is very liberal. Without a definition, every time anything is handled it must have someone to sign off on it, count it, or accommodate it. What would the cost be in terms of containers, additional personnel storage, requested a summary of what the system would look like.

**Ms. Williams** stated that there would be an increase in staffing and there is a requirement to setup a cage, similar to an evidence room for the paper to be stored, sealed, and checked out for each of the systems specialist teams. There are 5 systems specialist teams of 20 people. There’s a lot of people that would have to check in and out for the paperwork to be put into more carriers. The biggest concern would be when the paper comes back. There’d have to be that tracks the intake as well. The system itself tracks how many people used how many people used it because it tracks how many ballots were used. For the department to the labor of counting every sheet of paper that comes back into the system would cause more staff and a cost increase. A new system would need to be developed in a new structure in the warehouse just to count every single piece of paper. It would be a lot of work.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that it would be the equivalent of attempting to count a ream of paper and coming up with the same number twice. The papers are still locked up and get counted out, the bill would be introducing an additional step.

**Ms. Williams** stated that the paper is sealed in the cage, the go out sealed in the carriers, they come back sealed in the carrier, so it’s completely sealed. For the department to physically count them would be extensive.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that machinery could be needed.

**Ms. Williams** stated if the SOS would allow for a paper counter the approval would have to come from the SOS to use a mechanical machine to count the paper sheet by sheet. Compared to a human person doing it times 100 people that are currently on staff doing it correctly.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that the bill wouldn’t give extra security because the introduction of ballots that weren’t checked in as people checked in to vote, it would be known that there is a

miscount, and the department could go back and investigate what happened. There are a lot of checks and balances along the way. The concern is legislation being introduced by people who don't work in elections attempt to fix a problem that's not specifically identified. The secondary concern is that the costs relative to some of the legislation that has been passed in recent years pass-through to local property tax owners. It does not come out of state taxes or federal funds.

**Ms. Corbitt** stated that the external affairs team works closely with ACCG and they understand that across Georgia, most counties do not have the same issues as Fulton County simply because of the number of precincts Fulton has. The large metro counties do have the same issues as Fulton County.

**Ms. Woolard** asked if the question could be posed as cost vs process improvement and if there isn't a yes to both, people should understand the pass-throughs are tremendous.

**Ms. Corbitt** agreed stated this being an election year means the bills are very partisan. The team is aware of it and the position is to ensure that the team is able to administer the elections efficiently, effectively, and ensure every Fulton County resident can exercise their right to vote.

**Dr. Ruth** asked Ms. Corbitt to explain the ACCG acronym.

**Ms. Corbitt** replied the ACCG is the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia.

## **#9-CALL FOR ELECTION**

**Ms. Ringer** requested the item be removed from the agenda. The item needed to be presented to the board of commissioner first.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to table the call for election. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Crawford, and carried by a vote of 5-0.**

## **#10-SECRETARY OF STATE UPGRADE**

**Ms. Marshall** stated that the new system called GARVIS, Georgia Registered Voter Information System, will replace eNet and is expected to go live as early as March 14<sup>th</sup>. In-depth training is forthcoming. The system is intended to be modernized and user friendly. The SOS is planning a special Fulton train the trainer session at the warehouse/EPC the week of February 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>. Be aware of the dates and times to attend. Fulton staff has been invited to 10 of the in-person trainings that will be conducted between February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 4<sup>th</sup>. The SOS and the department have been meeting to assist in creating training documents and new SOPs that will be provided to the counties. There will be a mock election in Fulton and other counties after qualifying is concluded.

Ms. Crawford asked for information on how to access the SOPs and firefly.

## **#11-GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION BALLOT APPROVAL**

**Ms. McCloud** stated that the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission is requesting assistance with holding a soil and water conservation district supervisory election to be placed on the general election ballot on November 8, 2022. The district supervisors serve as an unpaid state official who represent their counties in support of soil and water conservation activities. They will qualify at the qualifying period in March but in lieu of paying a qualifying fee, they will be required to get 25 qualified electors of the county to be nominated as a candidate. It will be a vote for two, they will be nominating two candidates.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to approve the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission ballot. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ruth, and carried by a vote of 5-0.**

## **#12-VOTER RESIDENCY CHALLENGE HEARING**

**Ms. Marshall** called Mr. Earl Ferguson to come forward with 58 voter challenges.

**Mr. Ferguson** stated he submitted 58 names to be challenged for removal under the section 228 of the Georgia Law. Stated that the list was submitted to the secretary of state prior to submitting to the county as requested by the board during the December BRE meeting but did not receive a response in a timely manner. It was helpful, 2/3 of the list were either already on standby and the other 1/3 was the process is finished but they weren't told they were regular voters. It is helpful to send the challenge list to the SOS before it is brought to the BRE for comparison.

**Ms. Woolard** agreed and asked him to address it to the members of the general assembly. It would be helpful if it started at the secretary of state's office for resolution then anything left over would be for the county to rectify. The county has a 10-day window to complete challenge requests so it's very time consuming.

**Mr. Ferguson** suggested the challengers set up a date for submission without submitting to give the staff time to run through the names without having the 10-day time crunch.

**Ms. Woolard** stated that she has suggested the changes to the SOS but has not seen legislation to that effect as of yet. The only fix is to present the issue to the general assembly.

**Ms. Marshall** recommended removal of the 58 names from the voter rolls.

**Mr. Ferguson** stated there was one reservation, a voter who submitted a PO BOX NCOA then registered in a different town, the voter is highlighted.

**Ms. Crawford** acknowledged that the voter is Mr. Tussy.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to remove the 58 electors challenged from the voter rolls. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ruth, and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

**Ms. Marshall** called Ms. Ann Delmas to come forward with 18 voter challenges.

**Mr. Delmas** thanked Ms. Marshall for her assistance with the voter challenge process.

**Ms. Marshall** recommended removal of 18 voters from the voter rolls.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to remove the 18 electors challenged from the voter rolls. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Crawford, and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

**Ms. Marshall** called Mr. David Hill Hubert to come forward with 423 voter challenges.

**Ms. Marshall** stated that Mr. Hubert submitted almost 500 names, 52 are already in canceled status, 109 are duplicates from the January challenge which were also in canceled status. The new number of challenges is 262.

**Ms. Marshall** recommended removal of 262 voters from the voter rolls.

**Ms. Crawford** stated that some of the first names were missing from the spreadsheet.

**Ms. Robinson** stated that they may have been removed during consolidation.

**Ms. Crawford** stated that she just wanted to ensure all the information was present.

**Ms. Marshall** stated that first names were provided to conduct research.

**Mr. Wingate** asked for clarification for Ms. Dumas' challenge where five of the 18 voters challenged were already in canceled status as shown in Mr. Hubert's 52 voters, but they were not included to be removed from the challenge.

**Ms. Marshall** stated that as the chair stated, there's a lot of detail work compiling the information. Ms. Dumas's removal should be 13 as there is no reason to challenge the five that are already in cancel status.

**Ms. Woolard** asked Ms. Ringer if the vote needed to be corrected.

**Ms. Ringer** stated yes, a motion to reconsider the vote.

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to reconsider the vote to remove 18 electors challenged from the voter rolls. The motion was made by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Dr. Ruth, and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to remove the 13 electors challenged from the voter rolls. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Dr. Ruth, and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to remove the 262 electors challenged from the voter rolls. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Crawford, and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

**Mr. Hubert** requested to receive a copy of the voters to be removed so that he does not submit duplicates again.

**Ms. Marshall** stated that she would email him after the BRE meeting.

**Ms. Crawford** reiterated that a request to the general assembly to revise the process would assist the board during the voter residency challenges.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### NO EXECUTIVE SESSION

## ADJOURNMENT

**Chairwoman Woolard entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wingate moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Ruth seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 12:05 p.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Jessica M. Robinson, Board Secretary