

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Addison Lester, Chairman
Darryl Hicks
Aaron Wright

FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Floyd L Jones, Director
April Crosby, Elections Supervisor
Brian Hill, County Registrar



140 Stonewall Avenue West
Elections Office, Suite 208
Fayetteville, GA 30214

MINUTES

February 26, 2019
5:00 p.m.

Welcome to the meeting of your Fayette County Board of Elections. Your participation is appreciated. All regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and are generally held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

Chairman to Call the Meeting to Order

Chairman Lester called the Board of Elections meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. It was noted there was some technical difficulty with the audio equipment.

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Lester moved to approve the Agenda as published with one amendment, namely, to hold an Executive Session meeting to discuss personnel matters upon concluding the Approval of the Agenda. The motion was seconded both by Mr. Hicks and Mr. Wright. The motion passed 3-0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel: Mr. Wright moved to recess into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Chairman Lester and Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

The Board recessed into Executive Session at 5:01 p.m.

Return to Official Session: Chairman Lester moved to exit Executive Session and to resume meeting in Official Session. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Official Session resumed at 5:20 p.m.

It was noted that audio capability had been restored while the Board was in Executive Session.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No one spoke during Public Comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consideration of staff's request to approve the January 22, 2019 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Wright moved to approve the January 22, 2019 Board of Elections Minutes. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

2. Public Hearing of staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as deceased.

Mr. Wright moved to approve staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as deceased. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 1," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

3. Public Hearing of staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as felons.

Mr. Wright moved to approve staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as felons. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 2," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no items for consideration on the Consent Agenda.

OLD BUSINESS:

There were no items for consideration for Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Review of the current Fayette County Board of Elections' By-Laws.

Director Jones stated that he has standing Board orders to place the Board of Elections By-Laws on each February Agenda for review. He stated that he has received no communication in any form regarding the need to amend the by-laws and there were no recommendations for any changes.

Mr. Wright reminded the Board that the by-laws reference the county's Ethics Ordinance, and he asked if there had been any changes in the Ethics Ordinance over the past year. Mr. Jones replied there had been no change.

The Board decided to keep the Board of Elections' By-Laws as is with no changes. The Board did not vote on this matter or provide any direction. A copy of this request, identified as "Attachment 3," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

5. Discussion of the various bills introduced in the Georgia General Assembly regarding elections in the State of Georgia.

Director Jones reminded the Board that he was asked to keep the Board abreast of any legislation that may be coming from the Georgia General Assembly with regard to elections. All of the various bills were provided to the Board in the Agenda Packet and printed for the Board's use at the dais. Director Jones stated that given the number of bills he had not had a chance to look into each of them.

Mr. Hicks stated the bill he was most interested in was House Bill 316 (HB316). Mr. Jones updated the Board on House Bill 316 stating it had passed the House of Representatives at approximately 3:50 p.m. earlier in the day with a vote of 101-72 and was officially being forwarded to the Senate.

Mr. Wright stated a concern he had with HB316 is that it potentially could open the door to on-line or internet voting; something he opposes. Mr. Hicks stated that "we cannot stop progress." Mr. Jones stated that he thought the public would eventually demand some form of internet or on-line voting.

Director Jones stated he had provided House Bill 433 (HB433) which was just introduced to the General Assembly from those who opposed HB316. He said the bill was still hot off the press before he brought them to the meeting and that he had not had a chance to even read the bill. He gave a copy of the bill to each Board member for their use.

General discussion followed with direction given to Mr. Jones to continue briefing the Board on these matters. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 4", follow these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

6. Discussion concerning Precincts #20 and #33 and the possibility of using Southside Church as a polling location for Precinct #33.

Director Jones stated that in 2016, there was a Methodist Church used as a polling place for Precinct #33. The church underwent renovations and, upon concluding them, decided it no longer wanted Fayette to use them for elections. This caused the Evergreen Church to hold two polling precincts with an understanding that elections would move out as soon as able.

In 2017, efforts were made to find a place to house Precinct #33, but there were no real places to vote. Staff had reached out to Southside Church and was informed that the church would be favorable to housing elections in the future. The church was unwilling to help in 2017 since it housed Landmark Christian School's Peachtree City branch. Calendar Year 2018 was essentially back-to-back elections and did not provide a good opportunity to address this matter.

Mr. Jones stated that this is a good year to address the matter, but that it is probably best to let the laws in the General Assembly get resolved. He stated that, if able, he would like to reconnect with the church to see if they are still willing to house Elections for Precinct #33. Mr. Jones added that this effort would again take place a little later in the year in order to determine how the potentially new laws would apply.

Mr. Wright stated that he visits Evergreen Church during each election and found the church to be very gracious. He asked if there had been any communication with the church about problems. Mr. Jones stated that he had not had any direct communications with the church, but he is reminded by Election Supervisor April Crosby about the arrangement with the church and for the need to keep to the arrangement. Mr. Jones further added that he went to Evergreen Church during the Governor's election and found there was little parking; something he assumed could be improved upon by splitting up the polling locations.

The Board agreed a move is warranted based on the legislative outcome. Mr. Wright suggested a letter be sent to the church on behalf of the Board thanking them for their graciousness during these times. Chairman Lester asked if this move would affect municipal elections. Mr. Jones replied it could affect the Peachtree City election since the move is internal to Peachtree City.

The Board did not provide additional direction and did not vote on the matter. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 5," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

7. Follow-up concerning the Election Director's meeting with the Brooks' Town Council.

Director Jones stated he met with the Brooks Town Council and that it was a very cordial meeting. He stated that he found some interesting information regarding the Governor's election in November 2018. He reminded the Board that all of the elections he has been a part of were smaller elections like SPLOST, municipals, primaries, and runoffs. This was the first real election with great turnout, and it was because of greater voter participation the findings made greater sense. Specifically, Mr. Jones stated that

the numbers showed that early voting was clearly the people's choice with nearly all precincts having more early voters than on Election Day itself. However, the numbers also showed that the further east and south a voter lives the less likely that voter is to take advantage of early voting. He stated that feedback from the public supported his numbers since the greatest outcry on Election Day came from the Brooks Precinct; thus causing his visit with the Town Council.

Mr. Jones suggested that the easy answer is to open a fourth early voting location in the area, but he mentioned easy is not always correct. He pointed out that smaller elections do not have the turnout or problems that were experienced during the November 2018 election. That would open the door to whether a fourth early voting site is justified for each election with minimal turnout. If the fourth site is not kept open for all elections then it could create voter confusion. Mr. Jones further reported that GIS Mapping had located no sites in the Brooks, Woolsey, and Antioch necessarily suitable for three weeks of early voting. The only places available in those locations were schools and churches. He pointed out that it is a difficult sell to try to have a church or school open their doors for three weeks at a time sometimes up to four or more times a year.. Mr. Jones concluded that he did not have a good solution in front on him and, therefore, was unsure how to proceed on this matter.

Mr. Wright stated it was good that the upcoming elections are municipal elections, allowing time for the General Assembly to finish its work of reforming elections. He added that when staff or the Board makes a decision on how to proceed that the decision could be communicated to the Brooks Town Hall keeping them aware of the situation. There was also discussion about enhancing the Town of Brooks' Facebook site to provide voting information to the local residents. Discussion followed about how to stoke up the usage of social media including the possibility of utilizing Facebook Live for Board of Elections meetings.

The Board took no action and gave no direction. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 6," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Fayette County Participates in a Pilot Program with the Secretary of State's Office: Director Jones reminded the Board that Fayette County, as well as many other counties, are working in a pilot program with the Secretary of State's Office to reduce the workload demands placed on County Registrars. He explained that a person may be a registered voter who goes to the Department of Drivers' Services to renew their license. While in renewal, the voter is asked if they would like to register to vote. Once they agree, the Department of Drivers Services sends notification to the necessary County Registrar. This creates double work with no tangible results. The pilot program is intended to reduce the workload in those instances. Mr. Jones said the last information he received about this program came about a week earlier with initial assessments showing this would be a success.

Evaluations: Director Jones stated he had given performance evaluations to April Crosby, Brian Hill, and Karen Hunter. He informed the Board that the evaluations were positive- especially given the last election and how the staff had come together to address the challenges. He mentioned that County Registrar Brian Hill attended a NAACP meeting in January to hear the association's concerns about the 2018 election. During the meeting, Mr. Hill specifically asked what issues had been raised regarding Fayette County's election, and he was told there were no problems with Fayette County. He concluded that staff had been tested and had met the test.

Fire Station #4: Director Jones reported to the Board that progress on Fire Station #4 had stalled. He reminded the Board that he had met with the Building and Ground Department and had provided very early drawing of what might be possible at the fire station. The intention was for Buildings and Grounds Director Carlos Christian to replicate the drawing in a Computer-Aided Design (CAD) system. Mr. Jones stated Mr. Christian was contacted about two weeks later and was told this matter was still being worked on. Shortly after, an announcement was made that Mr. Christian would be out for a while due to unspecified health matters. Mr. Jones reported that he contacted Building and Grounds' second-in-command and was informed that the work was essentially at a standstill since Mr. Christian is the only person in the county who knows how to work the CAD system. It was pointed out that County Administrator Steve Rapson is aware of the stalling since he gets weekly updates during Department Head meetings. Brief discussion followed about how the delay could cause future elections to occur in the Public Meeting Room or another location. Mr. Jones stated that the Fayette County Public

Library has been suggested as an early voting location, however, the Library Director is unhappy with that type of usage. The Board agreed that this matter may require the Board itself to meet with County leadership- including the Commissioners- to work out legitimate places to vote early. It was furthered agreed that the County Administrator and the Elections Director did not need to be put at each other since these matters are actual Board matters.

Jekyll Island Itinerary: Director Jones provided each Board member with his itinerary for Jekyll Island and he added that he would email the same itinerary to each of them closer to the date.

Cancel March 26, 2019 Board of Elections Meeting: Director Jones suggested that the March 26, 2019 Board of Elections meeting be cancelled since the Board and staff will be at the GEOA / VRAG Conference in Jekyll Island. He stated that given the legislative actions and other potential matters, the Board should be open to the possibility of a Special Called Meeting, if need be, in lieu of a regularly scheduled meeting in March. The Board agreed with Mr. Jones' recommendation.

ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:

No Attorney's Report was given.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS:

VRAG Day at the Georgia Capitol: Mr. Wright stated he went to the VRAG Day at the Georgia Capitol and was warmly received by the Lt. Governor, Governor, and the Secretary of State. He said all three shared his concerns about the forthcoming legislation and he was able to meet with other elected legislators. He said it was an overall good morning.

Aborted Babies Unable to Vote: Mr. Wright stated it was sad to see that the United States Senate just voted to murder thousands of citizens who otherwise would have the right to vote. He said the citizens were born with a right to vote but who were born in spite of the fact that they were intended to be aborted. He said those people will not have a chance to vote and it is unfortunate. Mr. Hicks chuckled at which Mr. Wright stated he did not think the matter was funny. Mr. Hicks stated he did not think aborting children was funny either, but he thought Mr. Wright's posturing was funny.

Precinct Consolidation: Chairman Lester reminded Mr. Jones of a phone call that took place a couple of weeks earlier. Specifically, during the Department Head meetings, the Elections Director is asked about when the county's 36 precincts will be consolidated. Director Jones informed the Board that when he was last asked about the matter, he replied that the matter was a mute issue and is seen as a "third rail" given the political nature in Georgia. He said after he made that reply, he called Chairman Lester to ensure that he had not spoken out of line. Chairman Lester agreed that Mr. Jones had accurately reported Board, and he asked the board their thoughts. All three Board members indicated they did not want to address the subject of consolidating precincts at this time and agreed this matter was currently a "third rail."

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Lester moved to adjourn the February 26, 2019 Board of Elections Meeting. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

The February 26, 2019 Board of Elections Meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Floyd L. Jones, Director

Addison Lester, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Elections of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 23rd day of April 2019. Referenced attachments are available upon request in the Board of Elections' Office.

Floyd L. Jones, Director