

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Darryl Hicks, Chairman
Addison Lester
Aaron Wright

FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Floyd L Jones, Director
April Crosby, Elections Supervisor
Vacant, County Registrar



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

MINUTES

April 28, 2020
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 Hicks called the April 28, 2020 Board of Elections Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Wright was not present when the meeting was called to order.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Lester moved to approve the Agenda. Chairman Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0 with Mr. Wright absent from the vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No one spoke during Public Comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consideration of staff's request to approve the March 27, 2020 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes.

It was noted that the March 27, 2020 Minutes had a header that read February 27, 2020 and there was an internal reference indicating the meeting was held on February 27, 2020. It was agreed that the Minutes needed to be corrected to properly show the actual date of the meeting- namely March 27, 2020.

Mr. Lester moved to approve the March 27, 2020 Board of Elections Minutes with the noted changes. Chairman Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0 with Mr. Wright not present for the vote.

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.

No one spoke during the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lester 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. Chairman Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0 with Mr. Wright not present for the vote.

CONSENT AGENDA:

3. Approval of staff's recommendation to revise the current 2020 Meeting Schedule by cancelling the May 22, 2020 Board of Elections Meeting and replacing it with a June 12, 2020 Board of Elections Meeting.

Mr. Lester moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Wright 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.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Consideration of staff's recommendation to temporarily move Precinct #18-Oakd Grove precinct's polling place from Oak Grove Elementary School and to co-house the polling place at the Precinct #22 Braelinn polling place- Braelinn Elementary School.

Director Jones briefed the Board on the temporary loss of Oak Grove Elementary School, the lack of any other voting location in the precinct, and the problems surrounding setting up a temporary structure to hold an Election. He recommended that the polling location be temporarily moved from Oak Grove Elementary School to Braelinn Elementary School for the June 9, 2020 Election.

Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough briefed the Board on the legal concerns with moving the polling location since the law appears to not allow for the polling place to be moved outside of the precinct within 90 days of an Election. He recommended setting up a temporary structure within the Oak Grove precinct in order to conduct the June 9, 2020 Election.

The Board questioned and deliberated about the two options and how to best proceed. Discussion occurred.

Mr. Wright moved to accept staff's recommendation to relocate the polling place from Oak Grove Elementary School to Braelinn Elementary School for the single date of the June 9, 2020 Election. Mr. Lester seconded the motion. Board discussion followed.

Mr. Wright amended his motion to accept staff's recommendation to temporarily relocate the polling place from Oak Grove Elementary School to Braelinn Elementary School for the June 9, 2020 Election, for staff to look into and execute a mailer in Precinct #18 notifying the voters in the precinct in accordance to and beyond the law, and for the Board members to notify the candidates themselves of the change of polling location. Mr. Lester seconded the amended motion. Discussion followed. The motion passed 3-0.

Chairman Hicks stressed that the motion was made and accepted by the Board with a clear understanding that it is between a rock and a hard place. It was further stated that the decision was made in an effort to mitigate risk. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 2," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

5. Discussion of State Elections Board Rule 183-1-14-0.6-.14 Secure Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes.

Director Jones briefed the Board on the State Elections Board Rule. He stated he thought it would be a good idea, but since drop boxes cannot be used after June 9, 2020 under the current rules, he recommended against not using the drop boxes. Discussion followed. The Board agreed not to use drop boxes as permitted by the State Elections Board. The Board did not take a formal vote on this matter. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 3," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

6. Discussion of the Election Office's proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Budget.

Director Jones briefed the Board on the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget. Discussion followed. The Board asked for a comparative budget from previous fiscal years be provided for reference. The Board did not take a formal vote on this matter. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 4," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

7. Discussion of the June 9, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary, General Primary, Nonpartisan, and Special Elections.

Director Jones briefly discussed the June 9, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary, General Primary, Nonpartisan and Special Elections. This was informational only and the Board did not take action on this matter.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Municipal Elections: Director Jones stated that the Town of Brooks would be seeking a Special Election to fill a vacancy on its Town Council. He mentioned that under law, it would require approximately 28 voting machines to be placed at Brooks United Methodist Church to accommodate the Election. He added that had this request come from a municipality like Peachtree City- under the current laws and situation- the county would not be able to hold the Election. Discussion followed on how to address municipal elections in the future. No decision or formal action was taken.

Personal Protective Equipment: Director Jones stated he has ordered gloves, masks, finger cots for the voters, and other personal protective equipment. He said some of the equipment is hard to find or out of stock. The reason it is important is because the votes and poll workers are looking for protection from COVID-19 at the polling locations.

Peachtree City Library: Director Jones stated that poll worker loss is a reality with this Election. He stated that earlier today it appeared the Peachtree City Library was in jeopardy of closing due to a loss of workers on Election Day. He explained that other poll workers were able to be utilized so the Library appears to be available for Election Day.

Envelopes vs. Paper- Voter Confusion: Director Jones stated that there is voter confusion since an inner envelope has not been sent with the ballots to the voters. He explained that staff is informing the voters to simply fold their ballots and place it in the folded white paper that has been provided to them.. He added that there is some discussion that the Secretary of State's Office may issue a press release on the matter.

Dominion Technician: Director Jones stated that the Dominion Technician had returned to Fayette County and is working on the initial steps for Logic and Accuracy. He was appreciative for having the technician since staff does not have the needed time to conduct Logic and Accuracy on its own during this Election.

Opening Absentee by Mail Ballots: Director Jones reported that the Secretary of State's Office is considering how to allow counties to open and scan ballots prior to Election Day- so long as they are not tabulated until Election Day. He explained that current law prevents opening the ballot envelopes until 7:00 a.m. on Election Day. Under current law and current conditions, Election results would take days to tabulate. That is the reason for the consideration.

Ballots are Returning: Director Jones stated that the ballots are starting to return to the county. He explained that the signatures on the ballot envelopes need to be checked and that all returns need to be signed by either him, the County Registrar, or the Chief Deputy Registrar before being processed into ENet as accepted.

Social Distancing: Director Jones reported there is no guidance from the state on how to maintain social distancing at the polling locations, especially in consideration of the numbers of machines in close spaces- how to maintain distances.

New Chief Deputy Registrar: Director Jones reported that Mr. Karrington Dean has accepted the offer as Fayette County's Chief Deputy Registrar. He explained that none of the candidates had County Registrar experience but that all three candidates brought their own strength that made them very considerable. He explained that Mr. Dean was chosen since he brings technical skills that can be used in a Logic and Accuracy role as need be.

Marcy Westmoreland Sakrison: Director Jones stated that earlier in the day he received a phone call stating Coweta County had left the letter "d" off the name Marcy Westmoreland Sakrison on their ballots. He said had caught that error for Fayette County during the ballot review process and had the state correct it. He said he looked back at the ballot while on the phone and found that while the "d" had been restored for the Westmoreland name, the middle "e" had been removed. He said he has contacted the state to find a way to correct the misspelling.

Out of Office: Director Jones reported that he would be out of the office some or all of April 29, 2020 to take care of his wife who would be in outpatient surgery.

ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:

Audrey Holliday Decision: Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough reported that the judge upheld the Board's decision to remove Audrey Holliday's name from the ballot. He further reported that Ms. Holliday has attempted to appeal the judge's decision.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS:

Wright: Mr. Wright thanked staff for the reports on staff's hours and for keeping the Board aware of the work situation during this time. All Board members agreed in appreciation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Wright moved to adjourn the April 28, 2020 Board of Elections Meeting. Mr. Lester seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

The April 28, 2020 Board of Elections Meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Floyd L. Jones, Director

Darryl Hicks, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Elections of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 19th day of June 2020. Referenced attachments are available upon request in the Board of Elections' Office.

Floyd L. Jones, Director