

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Darryl Hicks, Chairman
Addison Lester
Aaron Wright

FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Floyd L Jones, Director
April Crosby, Elections Supervisor
Agnes Bridges, County Registrar



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

MINUTES

June 19, 2020
2:00 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 June 19, 2020 Board of Elections meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Lester moved to approve the Agenda. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Jimmy Praugh: Mr. Praugh, who serves as a poll worker, stated that there needs to be a greater public awareness of how to vote by absentee by mail. He said he was concerned about the complications of the machines. He also stated he had worked a double election in 2018 and if there is another double election then he will not work again as a poll worker. Mr. Praugh suggested allowing the poll workers to go to the AIP locations and get a better sense of how to run a precinct.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consideration of staff's request to approve the April 28, 2020 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes.

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

CERTIFICATION:

2. Certification of the March 23, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary Election and June 9, 2020 General Primary, Nonpartisan Election and Special Election results.

County Registrar Agnes Bridges presented the Board with staff's findings. Mrs. Bridges stated there were 144 rejected ballots due to missing or questionable signatures. She stated that three voters stated they changed their mind and completed an affidavit stating they did not want to vote by mail; subsequently, they were allowed to vote in person. However, it was later discovered that the three voters' ballots had already been received at the Elections Office and been accepted into ElectionsNet (ENET) prior to the voters voting in person. This was a situation that was discovered only recently and was still under investigation. Discussion followed.

Mrs. Bridges stated there was another ballot surrendered to a poll worker that had a letter attached to it stating that the voter had checked with the Democratic National Party and a voter assistance hotline and through those sources were told they could drop off their paper ballots could be dropped off at the polling location. She asked if the ballot should be accepted. Discussion followed. The Board decided to reject the ballot.

Mrs. Bridges stated there was a ballot where a son-in-law signed on behalf of the mother-in-law since the mother-in-law was physically unable to vote. Mrs. Bridges attested she witnessed the son-in-law assist the mother-in-law make a mark indicating that the ballot was the mother-in-law's ballot. Mrs. Bridges added that she checked all identification and confirmed the voter's identification. Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough gave legal guidance on this matter. The Board agreed to accept the ballot.

Mrs. Bridges stated that thirteen mailed ballots were received at Fayette Elections after 7:00 p.m. on Election Day. She stated that the ballots were turned in to Precinct #3 but they never should have been accepted by the precinct. She stated that the mailed ballots were otherwise in order. Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough stated that the voters may have thought they were appropriate in handing their ballots over to the polling location, however, the poll workers should not have taken the ballots. He suggested that the ballots should nonetheless be counted since the case could be made that the poll workers acted on behalf of the county in taking the ballots. The Board agreed to accept the thirteen mailed in ballots and to count the votes.

Mrs. Bridges presented 45 provisional ballots for the Board's consideration. Thirty were rejected by the Board since the voter was not registered in Fayette- many were registered voters in other counties. The Board accepted 15 ballots since the voter was a registered Fayette County voter who showed at the wrong precinct.

Mrs. Bridges and her staff left the meeting at 2:51 p.m. to scan in the accepted ballots as decided by the Board and to complete the complete the Election. Election results were returned to the Board at 5:21 p.m. for certifying.

Mr. Wright moved to certify the June 9, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary, General Primary, and Nonpartisan Election. Mr. Lester seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

3. Public Hearing of staff's recommendation to remove registered voters from Elections Net (ENET) who are deceased.

No one spoke during Public Hearing.

Mr. Wright moved to accept staff's recommendation as presented. Mr. Lester 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.

4. Public Hearing of staff's recommendation to remove registered voters from Elections Net (ENET) who are felons.

No one spoke during Public Hearing.

Mr. Wright moved to accept staff's recommendation as presented. Mr. Lester 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 was no Consent Agenda.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS:

5. Discussion concerning municipal Elections to be held in conjunction with the November 3, 2020 General Election.

Director Jones spoke about a request from both the Town of Tyrone and the Town of Brooks who are seeking municipal Election on November 3, 2020. He explained that there were considerable factors involved with holding municipal Elections in conjunction with the General Election. Those factors were: 1) lack of voting equipment and associated costs for obtaining additional equipment, 2) staffing and logistics, 3) law that requires numbers of voting machines to be placed in a precinct- and how that law could effectively double the amounts of machines at the precincts, 4) limited space for Advanced in Person (Early Voting) polling locations. Potential solutions to the problems were: a) continue *status quo* as in previous years, b) consider using county precincts for the municipal elections instead of using city precincts, c) having the municipalities conduct their own elections independent of the county Elections Office. Each option and obstacle was discussed thoroughly. The Board directed staff to continue looking at the possibilities and to return its findings as soon as possible. The Board did not 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 concerning the June 9, 2020 Elections.

Director Jones said he had received questions about whether or not there were issues with the June 9, 2020 Election. He said there were some issues considering there was new equipment, new workers, new procedures, and new challenges that had not been faced before. However, he added that when the Election is considered in its totality- and especially when considered based on other counties- the Fayette Election was a very good success. He credited staff, the Board, many county departments, and the political parties and judicial system for working together to make this Election a great success. He dispelled rumors that some polling locations did not open until 8 a.m. and another rumor that a member of the Technical Team had resigned on Election Day. He credited the Dominion Technician stating that the Election could not have proceeded without that person in place. He also credited the new Tech Team who augmented the ranks and tirelessly worked to make the Election a success. He spoke about plans that are starting to be discussed among the staff and state levels about enhancing the poll worker training and to create a "boot camp" for poll workers.

Chairman Hicks praised staff saying they did a fantastic job under extreme circumstances. He pointed out that County Administrator Steve Rapson had also shown his appreciation by buying Elections lunches, that the County Commission commended staff, and that Commissioner-elect Lee Hearn had thanked staff for a job well done.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

There was no Director's Report.

ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:

Audrey Holliday: Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough gave an update on the status of Audrey Holliday's appeal.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS:

Addison Lester: Mr. Lester asked if the state was going to provide additional training. Director Jones replied that additional training was in discussion both at the state and local levels. There were also discussions about reforming some of the requirements including the confusing forms to be filled out for the Election.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board recessed at 4:10 p.m. and returned to Official Session at 5:21 p.m.

Mr. Lester moved to adjourn the June 19, 2020 Board of Elections Meeting. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

The June 19, 2020 Board of Elections Meeting adjourned at 5:22 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 13th day of July 2020. Referenced attachments are available upon request in the Board of Elections' Office.

Floyd L. Jones, Director