



## APPROVED MINUTES

### BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING – OCTOBER 8, 2020

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

## **VIRTUAL MEETING**

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

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

**Presiding:** Ms. Mary Carole Cooney, Chairperson

**Other Board Members Present:**

Ms. Vernetta Keith Nuriddin, Vice Chairperson  
Mr. Mark Wingate  
Mr. Aaron V. Johnson  
Dr. Kathleen Ruth

**Staff Attending:** Mr. Richard Barron, Director; Mr. Ralph Jones, Registration Chief; Mr. Dwight Brower, Interim Elections Chief; Ms. Sharon Benjamin, Deputy Elections Chief; Ms. Nadine Williams, Elections Equipment Manager; Mrs. Pamela Coman, Registration Manager; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Mrs. Cheryl Ringer, County Attorney; Mr. David Lowman, County Attorney; Mr. James Reese, Production Manager; Mr. Rico Dollar, Senior Graphics Designer, Jessica Corbitt, PIO; Regina Waller, Senior Public Affairs Officer

**Guest Attending:** David Ross (Democratic Party of Georgia), Rhonda Martin (Coalition of Good Governance),

Chairperson Cooney announced that this teleconferenced meeting is authorized pursuant to §50-14-1(g) of the Official Code of Georgia because of the Public Health State of Emergency declared by Governor Kemp on March 14, 2020, and renewed most recently on September 30, 2020, pursuant to which public meeting spaces in state and local Government have been closed due to COVID-19, and because means have been afforded for the public to have simultaneous access to this teleconference.

#### **#1– APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

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

**Rhonda Martin** (Coalition for Good Governance) informed the public that the Election Day Poll that she visited performed well and appeared to be well trained. **Ms. Martin** expressed that her issue was the poll manager impeding on her ability to properly perform her role effectively as a Poll Watcher.

**Lori Shellenberger** (Brennan Center of Justice) thanked the **BRE & DRE** for their service. **Ms. Shellenberger** outlined a number of changes the county has implemented for the upcoming election to make the election more effective and efficient for registered voters. Although, this is an improvement, **Ms. Shellenberger** expressed concerns with the increased number of emergency/ provisional ballots being considered as adequate by the county's standard but inadequate by the Brennan Center of Justice.

## OLD BUSINESS

### #3- APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Special Meeting- September 4, 2020**
- **Regular Meeting- September 14, 2020**
- **Executive Session Meeting- September 14, 2020**
- **Special Meeting- September 29, 2020**
- **Executive Session Meeting- September 29, 2020**

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Regular, Special and Executive Session Meetings on September 4th, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

### #4- MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2020:

- Preparation for September 29<sup>th</sup>, Special Election for 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District
- Early Voting (EV) began September 8<sup>th</sup> – September 25<sup>th</sup>
- **94** polling locations for September 29<sup>th</sup> Election
- Senate District 39 will be in the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, General/ Special Election as a Democratic Primary:
  - 54 Polling locations with 87 precincts involved
  - Absentee By Mail (ABM) voters will receive ballots with the race included.
  - In-person voter will need to decide to receive a ballot with or without the race
    - **DO NOT ASK PARTY AFFILIATION**
- Election Day Allocations for General/ Special Election delivered to SOS, for logistic review
- All Training was in-person
- Bandwidth resolution- Ongoing
- Risk Limiting Audit Training
- November 9<sup>th</sup> Early Voting will begin for the December 1<sup>st</sup> Runoff
- A legal hold remains on the **DRE** voting units from the April 18, 2017 and June 20, 2017 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional Special Election and Runoff Special Election (**Relocated to offsite facility**)
- Additional Polling **locations** to decrease the amount of voters assigned
- Total voter registration applications received in 2020: **238,227**
- **39,572** voter registration applications received in September
- As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, **838,626** (796,890 active and 41,636 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- Total New Applications: **97,191**
- Felon Hearings: **0**

- Felon Letters Mailed: **432**
- 2- Active Call Centers with more than 50 additional staff
- Runbeck will mail Absentee By Mail, initial mail out beginning September 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Mail out by vendor will conclude on October 16<sup>th</sup>
- Absentee By Mail Process ( opening and scanning) will begin at State Farm Arena on October 19<sup>th</sup>
- Tracking Mechanism Created by Secretary of State's (SOS) office for processed ABM applications:
  - Applications processed by October 15<sup>th</sup> can be tracked: <https://georgia.ballottrax.net/voter/>
- VEO Team scheduling Demonstration via Zoom and In-person, following CDC Guidelines
- Four Funded Positions:
  - Deputy Director
  - Elections Officer
  - Elections System Assistant Supervisor
  - VEO Coordinator
- Safe and Secure Voting
- Steering Committee (Committee Members):
  - Richard Barron, Director of DRE
  - Mary Carole Cooney, Chairperson of BRE
  - Robb L. Pitts, Chairman of BOC
  - Marvin Arrington, Vice Chairman of BOC
  - Patrise Perkins-Hooker, County Attorney
  - Dick Anderson, County Manager
  - Anna Roach, Deputy Chief
  - Sharon Whitmore, Deputy Chief Financial Officer

**Mr. Barron** explained the committee will meet weekly, meetings beginning this week starting with Risk Assessment ensuring a safe and secure election. The committee will be briefed by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). **Mr. Barron** explained contractually the **DRE** is obligated to provide security for certain mandated polling location; however, the **DRE** intends to provide security for all polling locations this election.

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about the application to ballot status; is the issue date the mail out date

**Mr. Barron** responded by updating the **BRE** on his application, to ballot mailed, to ballot received cycle:

- Issued Date in ElectioNet: September 21<sup>st</sup>
- Ballottrax Tracking Date: September 24<sup>th</sup>; **SOS** tracking mechanism
- Ballot Postmarked Date: September 26<sup>th</sup>
- Delivery Date: October 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Mr. Barron** surmised that based on his personal experience and voters that he's spoken to, ballots are arriving in the mail within 7-14 days from the issued date.

**Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE**:

Ballots Mailed:	183,915
Applications Received:	222,130
Applications Processed:	217,646, not including duplicates
<b>As of this meeting</b>	
Duplicates:	Over 33K
SOS Portal Duplicates:	126

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about the BlueCrest platform

**Mr. Barron** informed the Board that the **DRE** has not begun the mailing of **ABM**; however, the **DRE** is currently using BlueCrest as a mail sorter. **Mr. Barron** directed **Mr. Jones** to expound

**Mr. Jones** mentioned the Technician from BlueCrest was onsite to assist the **DRE** by enabling the **DRE** to complete signature verification and give voters credit for voting, while maintaining the security of ballots

**Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE** that the **ABM** received 39,274 and 35,500 ballots were scanned, thus far

**Mr. Barron** mentioned the usage of the **37** drop boxes and their locations and the **DRE** will add one more to Chattahoochee Hills (Chatt Hills) to total **38** Drop box locations. **Mr. Barron** mentioned the additional drop boxes and surveillance systems were purchased with grant funds totaling \$85,000 from Southern Poverty Law Center.

**Ms. Nuriddin** encouraged voters to utilize the My Voter Page from the **SOS** website to ensure their ballot was accepted. **Ms. Nuriddin** mentioned the goal is to reduce the amount of rejected ballots. Thereafter, **Ms. Nuriddin** inquired about the funding for drop box at Chatt Hills

**Mr. Barron** answered yes, the grant funds paid for the drop box, the surveillance equipment, and video storage

**Mr. Johnson** expressed gratitude for the **DRE** getting the EV location in Palmetto Library. **Mr. Johnson** mentioned the inquiries regarding the inside envelope of the ballot being glued together

**Mr. Jones** mentioned it's not required, it's for privacy purposes and the only envelope required is the outside envelope with the oath on the back for the voter's signature

**Mr. Barron** expressed concerns about voters voting without using the outside envelope and returning via the drop box. The **DRE** has seen ballots being returned without the outside envelope/ Oath; this makes the ballot invalid because the **DRE** does not have the ability to identify the voter to cure the ballot. The **DRE** has received at least 12-15 ballots, thus far

**Mr. Johnson** expressed gratitude for the **DRE** getting the EV location in Palmetto Library operational. **Mr. Johnson** inquired about the call center on Election Day, if there is an issue with locating their polling locations

**Mr. Barron** answered yes and there will be at least a 100 people staffing all three call centers and additional staff in the office responding to all inquiries

**Dr. Ruth** inquired about the bandwidth challenges at the Election Preparation Center (EPC) the **DRE** has encountered, and asked if the cachebox was procured

**Mr. Barron** answered yes and five Meraki devices installed. **Mr. Barron** explained the process for uploading the poll pads with the Cachebox and the Meraki devices

- Cachebox pulls the bulk file
- Cachebox pushes to the Meraki device
- Meraki device distributes the bulk file at 1Gig instead of slower Megabytes
- Significant Reduction in time to upload the Statewide bulk file

**Mr. Barron** mentioned the **DRE** purchased cradle points for all precincts to check on the status of all poll pads, the **DRE** was given access to EPulse the software that manages the poll pads

**Dr. Ruth** inquired about the confidence of the adjustments made to be ready for Election Day

**Mr. Barron** stated yes

**Dr. Ruth** inquired about signature verification, what happens if a voter signature cannot be verified

**Mr. Jones** stated the **DRE** must notify the voter by mail with regards to mismatches or no signature. However, if they signed up for Ballottrax the voter will be notified via email. The voter has until the Friday (November 6, 2020) after the election to cure their ballot.

**Dr. Ruth** suggested that External Affairs notify voters about the length of time it's taking for voters to receive their ballot in the mail on the website

**Dr. Ruth** inquired about a report from **SOS** with regards to the polling locations equipment allocations for each polling location. **Dr. Ruth** directed **Mr. Barron** to update the **BRE** upon receipt

**Mr. Barron** mentioned that he will inquire about **SOS** findings. **Mr. Barron** mentioned to the **BRE** that he will represent Fulton County on a Bipartisan Committee led by the **SOS**.

## NEW BUSINESS

### #5- OVERVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2020, SPECIAL ELECTION

**Mr. Barron** provided the vast majority of this item in item# 4. **Mr. Barron** mentioned the silver lining was having the ability to complete hands on training with new managers and poll workers ahead of the General. Special Election. **Mr. Barron** noted with **94** polling locations training, preparation and deployment continue to be vital for operations.

### #6- CERTIFY ELECTION RESULTS: September 29<sup>th</sup> Special Election

➤ **Unexpired Term for 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District (US House D5)**

**Mr. Barron** provided statistics for this election. The two candidates advancing to the December Runoff Election for the listed seat: Robert M. Franklin and Kwanza Hall

<b>Registered Voters:</b>	<b>379,123</b>
Votes Cast	21,746
Election Day	12,134
Early Voting	8,733
ABM/VBM	485
Provisional	394

**Chairperson Cooney** asked **Mr. Barron** was it his certification and testimony that the election results presented are a true and accurate count of all the votes cast in the Special Election held on September 29, 2020.

- **Unexpired Term for the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District**

Mr. Barron answered yes ma'am.

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to certify the election results. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## **#7- UPDATE OF PREPARATION FOR THE GENERAL AND SPECIAL ELECTION**

Mr. Barron informed the BRE:

- Any absentee Inquiries can be resolved by visiting the **website:** [fultonelections.com](http://fultonelections.com) or **phone:** 404-612-7060
- Post office recommending voters request ballot by October 20<sup>th</sup>
- Requesting an Absentee Ballot: <https://ballotrequest.sos.ga.gov/>
- Ballots returned to date: 39,274
- Ballot requests are being processed within 24-48 hours
- Ballots requested before October 16<sup>th</sup> will be mailed by Runbeck
- Dominion currently onsite to test printers to begin mail out sooner
- Ballottrax will be available for ballots mailed by Runbeck
- Permanent **30-EV** locations (6 more locations than in 2016)
  - **Mega Sites:** State Farm Arena, Benson Center, & Georgia Convention International Center
  - 3 -Senior Centers
  - 3- State Colleges
  - 2- 38ft Mobile Voting RVs
  - 33-35 voting locations per day
- Mobile RVs will be at various locations from October 12-27<sup>th</sup>
  - On the 29<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> will be utilized as an overflow
- Great Partnerships established throughout the county
- 37 Drop Boxes and adding an additional locations at Chattahoochee Hills
- Fulton App available on Google Play and Apple Store
- Various Informative Mailers sent to voters
- All media outlets are being utilized throughout the county:
  - Marta Public Transportation
  - Billboards
  - Digital Media
  - Direct Mailers
  - Know Before You Go; Skip the Lines, Vote Early;
- 40% of Provisional supplies will be assigned to each polling location

Mr. Johnson suggested that the **DRE** streamline the information given to voters by directing the voters to [fultonelections.com](http://fultonelections.com) for all their information needs

## **#8- PUBLIC CONCERN WITH DOMINION NEW SOFTWARE INSTALLATION**

Chairperson Cooney announced that the listed item was added due to the increasing concerns raised by several voters who sent several emails with regards to **SOS** approving a software upgrade to the voting equipment. Chairperson Cooney directed Mr. Barron and Attorney Ringer to provide insight.

**Mr. Barron** explained that he did not witness this software change but the issue stems from the Senate race with over 20 candidates that did not display all the candidates' names on the same screen. The software added would fix this issue and allow all the candidates on one screen in columns. **SOS** stated this was a De Minimis change submitted to the Election-Assistance Commission (EAC).

- De Minimis Change can be approved in 1-5 days
- Non-De Minimis change can take longer to approve 2-4 months
- Dominion has a team onsite completing those changes
- the **DRE** will complete L&A testing upon the completion of the software update

**Attorney Ringer** explained that the **BRE** was provided documentation on the Dominion fix to the issue from the SOS. **Attorney Ringer** recommended the **BRE & DRE** move forward with utilizing the State Certified Election equipment, the Unified State System

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board did not convene into executive session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other items requiring the Board's action, **Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wingate moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Ruth seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 11:22 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary