



APPROVED MINUTES

BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, September 14, 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), Sheila Hamilton, Claire Simms (Fox TV), Izabela Tringali, Melanie Goux, Kelli Carroll

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 through 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 amend the agenda to move Executive Session Meeting after item # 2, Communications and Public Response. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

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

No communications from the public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to close the regular session and convene into executive session to discuss pending litigation. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

After executive session, **Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to resume into regular session. The motion was made by Dr. Ruth, seconded by Mr. Wingate and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

OLD BUSINESS

#3– APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Special Meeting- August 11, 2020
- Regular Meeting- August 13, 2020
- Special Meeting- August 21, 2020
- Executive Session Meeting- August 21, 2020

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Regular, Special and Executive Session Meetings on August 11th, 13th, and 21st, 2020. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#4– MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR AUGUST 2020:

- Preparation for September 29th, Special Election for 5th Congressional District
- Early Voting (EV) began September 8th – September 25th
- Poll Technician Training began on August 31st
- **94** polling locations for September 29th Election
- **Election Day Allocations:**
 - 1,056 BMDs
 - 336 Poll Pads
 - 971 Poll Workers assigned
 - 38,449 Emergency/ Provisional Ballots ordered for assigned Polls
- All Training was in-person
- A legal hold remains on the **DRE** voting units from the April 18, 2017 and June 20, 2017 6th Congressional Special Election and Runoff Special Election (**Relocated to offsite facility**)
- Additional Polling **locations** to decrease the amount of voters assigned
- Bandwidth concerns being resolved- AT&T and Know Ink is assisting
- Total voter registration applications received in 2020: **198,655**
- **32,940** voter registration applications received in July
- As of September 1st, **833,940** (789,519 active and 43,551 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- Total New Applications: **67,119**
- Felon Hearings: **0**

- Felon Letters Mailed-611
- 2- Active Call Centers with more than 50 additional staff
- Runbeck will mail Absentee By Mail, initial mail out beginning September 19th
 - Mail out by vendor will conclude on October 16th
- 900 Series Printers order to make the ABM process more efficient
- Met with U.S.P.S regarding mail
- Administration Division allocating funds from the 6.3M Grant from Center for Civic Life into a budget
- 2 Late Filers
- VEO Team scheduling Demonstration via Zoom

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about a back log of voter registration applications

Mr. Jones answered that 10,000 application needs to be processed

Ms. Nuriddin asked for clarity

Mr. Jones responded that the back log consist of 10,000 and expressed that the amount is not much for Fulton

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the sample ballot

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** that Secretary of State's new system does not create a composite ballot; therefor the **DRE** is required to create with the assistance of **External Affairs**. This can occur once proofing is finalized, the final proof is approved, and all the polling locations are finalized. **Mr. Barron** mentioned upon the approval of the polling locations today the **DRE** should be able to provide a composite ballot soon

Ms. Nuriddin asked about Head of Household (**HOH**) mailing

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** that precinct cards have been ordered and the **HOH** mailing will be sent in the next couple days. The mailer will inform voters in the 5th Congressional District of their September 29th assigned polling and the November 3rd polling location

Ms. Nuriddin asked how many voters will be impacted.

Mr. Barron mentioned approximately 77 locations will be different from the Special Election to the General Election

Ms. Nuriddin implored the **DRE** to ensure voters are informed and educated on the changes made to their polling locations

Mr. Barron agreed

Mr. Johnson directed the **DRE** to provide the polling place changes to the Municipalities' Mayors and other elected officials

Mr. Barron explained that the Municipalities' Mayors, elected officials, NPU-Atlanta, Next Door app, and a Flyer will be a few methods utilized to ensure all voters **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

Mr. Johnson asked about the amount of drop boxes that will be throughout the county

Mr. Barron explained the goal is 41 total; however, City of Milton and Chattahoochee Hills are required to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to comply with the State Election Board's (**SEB**) rules. The drop boxes are being installed daily and most of the location meets the surveillance criteria currently and will be active upon installation.

Mr. Johnson inquired about the Runbeck, the vendor hired by **SOS**, to mail ABM for all Georgia counties for the General Election

Mr. Jones responded yes

Mr. Johnson inquired about utilizing Runbeck to late September and early October

Mr. Jones explained that once the printers are delivered, installed, and tested the **DRE** will begin mailing ballots, the goal is to be removed from Runbeck mailing list before the deadline date of October 16th

Mr. Johnson informed the **DRE** and **BRE** of an informational Session he was involved in a few days ago, where he discovered that information regarding ABM was no longer provided with regards to emailing and the email address was removed from the website. **Mr. Johnson** asked for clarity regarding the information being omitted

Mr. Jones informed the **BRE** that email applications are accepted with the restrictions in place; however, the **DRE** would prefer voters to use the portal

Mr. Johnson asked why the email option removed from the website

Mr. Jones answered that the goal is to steer voters to the portal

Mr. Johnson expressed his frustration with the **DRE** disregarding recommendation from the **Board** with regards to accepting emailed request from ABM and providing that information via the website

Mr. Jones expressed that the intention was not to exclude the email from the website

Mr. Johnson implored the **BRE** to make a motion

Mr. Barron explained that the plan was to drive voters to the portal

Mr. Barron explained his interpretation of the code

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-381

Making of application for absentee ballot; determination of eligibility by ballot clerk; furnishing of applications to colleges and universities; persons entitled to make application

(a) (1) (A) Except as otherwise provided in Code Section 21-2-219 , not more than 180 days prior to the date of the primary or election, or runoff of either, in which the elector desires to vote, any absentee elector may make, either by mail, by facsimile transmission, by electronic transmission, or in person in the registrar's or absentee ballot clerk's office, an application for an official ballot of the elector's precinct to be voted at such primary, election, or runoff. (B) In the case of an elector residing temporarily out of the county

Chairperson Cooney directed the **Mr. Barron & DRE's personnel** to restore the verbiage and the email information for submitting ABM request

Mr. Wingate asked was the **DRE's** portal fully functioning

Mr. Barron and Mr. Jones exclaimed yes

Mr. Johnson expressed understanding the reasoning for pushing the portal but providing voters with all the options is vital.

Mr. Barron explained that all of the issues that occurred with the request of ABM derived from emails; however, the information will be restored

Dr. Ruth mentioned reviewing the website for **DRE's** portal and one of the options on the portal allows voters to email through the portal. **Dr. Ruth** recalled in previous meetings the problems that occurred with voters submitting ABM request using the county email

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the signature verification on the portal

Mr. Jones answered no verification is completed through the portal

Chairperson Cooney inquired about personnel amount in the **DRE**

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** of the amount of permanent fulltime and supplemental fulltime staff

Chairperson Cooney explained her understanding of the ABM process and inquired about the ABM plan

Mr. Barron mentioned the SEB rule was updated to allow opening and scanning of ballots two weeks prior to the Election. The Voter Registration Division will move into **State Farm Arena** to complete the **ABM** process

Chairperson Cooney asked how the U.S.P.S assists with ABM process

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** that the **DRE** provided the U.S.P.S with samples of return envelopes. The **DRE** will be utilizing the BlueCrest machinery to add IBM codes for tracking; this code informs the **DRE** of the amount of return mail being received daily.

NEW BUSINESS

#5- ABSENTEE BY MAIL UPDATE

Mr. Jones informed the Board of the ABM Process:

Methods to Receive ABM Request

- Mailed Paper Application
- Email
- Fax
- Portal (**County & SOS**)

Application & Outbound Ballots

- SOS Portal ->ElectionNet-> Data Entry Team
- County Portal->Copy Scan Images into Work folder-> Data Entry Team/ ElectionNet
 - Data Entry Team

- Reject – Will contact via calls, emails, or letters
- Accept – Enter in ElectionNet
- Download File from ElectionNet and Upload the File to BlueCrest

Inbound Ballots

- Drop Boxes or USPS
 - Receive -> Verify-> Reconcile+
 - Timestamp
 - BlueCrest Sorter
- Signature verification
 - Accepted or Researched
 - Voting History updated- Data Entry
 - Ballot Extraction
 - Accepted or Rejected
 - Accepted scan- no marks no duplications needed
 - Tally-> Results

Mr. Barron informed the Board of the ABM Process from the strategy perspective with the assistance of the Vote At Home.

Registered Voters: ~790,000

- Turnout: 80%
- VBM Request Rate: 55%
- VBM Return Rate: 80%
- Number of mail ballots returned: **~275,000**

The path to success:

- 1) Understand the inbound ballot flow
- 2) Conduct high-level staffing analysis
- 3) Integrate staffing analysis into a day-to-day staffing schedule

Phase 1- September 18th

32 Days

- State will begin mailing out ballots
- Steady return (1k-5k per day) until October 19th
- “Pre-processing” of signature verification and sorting will be crucial operational steps
- By the end of Phase 1, a large cache of ballots will be ready to be fully processed (~80k)

30%- Estimated ballots returned

Phase 2- October 19th

14 Days

- State law allows “full processing” of all received ballots
- Will have to extract, prep, & scan immediate backlog of ~80k ballots
- Any new incoming ballots will also have to be sorted and credited
- Noticeable increase (3k-10k) in daily inbound volumes as deadline approaches

35%- Estimated ballots returned

Phase 3- Nov. 2nd

2 Days

- Largest share of volume will come in the last week –peaking on the ED-1 and ED-0 (20k-50k ballots per day)
- Any existing backlog will effect total processing timeline, leading to completion after ED+1
- Staffing and equipment will need to be precisely planned to handle the throughput required

30%- Estimated ballots returned

Phase 4-November 4th

3 Days

- Backlog needs to be cleared by ED+01
- Correctly postmarked ballots can still be received

5%- Estimated ballots returned

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the absentee ballot process for rejected ballots on the flow chart presented

Mr. Jones responded that the voter will received notice via mail that the signature did not match, the voter has until Friday after the election to cure this ballot, if the voter does not cure the ballot the ballot becomes a provisional ballot

Ms. Nuriddin asked are voters notified by U.S.P.S

Mr. Jones stated by law the **DRE** is required to notify voters via 1st class mail

#6- UPDATE OF ELECTION PREPARATION FOR THE SPECIAL ELECTION AND GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Barron informed the Board that the majority of the updates were covered in the previous item numbers. **Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE** that with all the increased polling locations and the training of new managers the upcoming Special Election provides the **DRE** with a great opportunity to provide additional training. The new poll workers will be trained and assigned to shadow senior Poll Managers during the September 29th Election

#7- APPROVAL OF EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS FOR GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Barron announced the 29 **locations** for the November 3rd Election. **Mr. Barron** noted that the internet provider (AT&T) may have found a solution for Chastain Park that will alleviate the security concerns that the **IT Department** previously highlighted that prevented **DRE** from utilizing the facility. Also, **Mr. Barron** mentioned if their solution works, this will alter the mobile voting unit schedule because it was slated to sit in the parking lot of the park.

29 EV Locations:

<https://fultoncountyga.gov/inside-fulton-county/fulton-county-departments/registration-and-elections/early-voting-locations>

- 5 locations per District
 - except in District 2, mobile voting units will assist with coverage

Mega Sites:

- State Farm Arena (SFA)
- Dorothy Benson Center
- Georgia International Convention Center (GCIC)

Outreach Colleges

- Georgia Institute of Technology (GTECH)
- Georgia State University (GSU)

- Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMC)

Mr. Barron noted the efforts to utilize Morehouse College, Clark-Atlanta University, and Spellman College but they decline, due to no students being on campus.

Mr. Wingate asked when will there be a final solution on Chastain Park

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** that AT&T has escalated the request and understands the timeline and the **DRE** should have a final decision by the end of this week on the installation

Chairperson Cooney expressed being pleased that the High Museum of Art **will be** an EV location

Mr. Barron mentioned that the High Museum of Art approached the **DRE** to volunteer their facility as an early voting location. **Mr. Barron** mentioned the silver linings that have occurred since the June 9th Election and some of the community partners that are involved in the making the General Election a success

- State Farm Arena
- Georgia International Convention Center (GCIC)
- High Museum
- ACLU of Georgia
- Metro Atlanta Chambers

Mr. Wingate noted that the Northern portion of the county seems **underserved**.

Mr. Barron mentioned that once Chastain Park issue is resolved the schedule for mobile voting will change drastically

Mr. Wingate inquired about using the Thomasville Furniture in North Point area

Mr. Barron responded that an effort was made but to get any connectivity would be next to impossible

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion recommending the addition of Chastain Park Gymnasium to be a permanent early voting location during the General Election. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wingate and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the 30 EV locations for the General Election. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0

#8- APPROVAL OF POLLING PLACE CHANGES FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

Ms. Williams stated “this request to approve polling location changes and precinct splits **is made** in an effort to reduce the number of voters assigned to precinct locations. We have confirmed with our legal counsel that time constraints may be waived due to the **onset** of COVID-19.

By reducing the number of voters assigned to facilities we are attempting to reduce voter wait time, should voters choose to vote in person on Election Day.

All relocations have been surveyed for handicap accessibility. The polling place changes will be advertised in the legal organ with the reason for the change noted.

All voters affected will be notified via a head of household letter and precinct card via postal mail.

We are also working with our Communications Department to advertise on billboards, bus stops, and marquees to encourage voters who choose to vote on Election Day, to confirm their precinct location on the Secretary of State my voter page website.”

Precinct(s)	Proposal #	Split to be Created	Facility Name	Reason	Proposed Change	Mile(s) to New Location
RW09	102 / 20	not applicable	North River Baptist Church 12090 Hardscrabble Road RW09	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Roswell High School 11595 King Road	1.9
RW09		RW09A	North River Baptist Church 12090 Hardscrabble Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	World Harvest Church 320 Hardscrabble Road	0.3
11 N	83 / 20	not applicable	Therrell D.M. High School 3099 Panther Trail	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Believers Bible Christian Church 3689 Campbellton Road	0.7
06D	119 / 20	not applicable	Morningside Baptist Church Gym 1700 Piedmont Road			
06D		06D1	06D Morningside Baptist Church Gym 1700 Piedmont Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Morningside Presbyterian 1411 North Morningside Dr	1.5
06D		06D2	06D Morningside Baptist 1700 Piedmont Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Haygood Memorial United Methodist 1015 E Rock Springs Road	3
JC01	121 / 20	JC01A	JC01 Shakerag Elementary School 10885 Rogers Circle	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	River Trail Middle School 10795 Rogers Circle	0.5
FA01B	122 / 20	FA01D	FA01B First Baptist Church of Fairburn 23 Malone Street	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	New Beginnings Senior Center 66 Brooks Drive	0.6
EP04A	123 / 20	EP04C	EP04A Brookview Elementary	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Woodland Middle 2745 Stone Road	2.4

			3250 Hammarskjold Drive			
12A	124 /20	12A1	12A Metropolitan Library 1332 Metropolitan Parkway	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Sylvan Middle 1461 Sylvan Road	1.1
02L1	51 / 20	not applicable	Piedmont Park Magnolia Hall 1320 Monroe Drive	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer 731 Peachtree Street	2.3
02L1	126 / 20	02L1A	02L1 Piedmont Park Magnolia Hall 1320 Monroe Drive	COVID-19 displacement return	The Fox Theatre 660 Peachtree Street	1.6
02A	127 / 20	02A1	02A Piedmont Park Magnolia Hall 1320 Monroe Drive	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Historic Academy of Medicine 875 West Peachtree Street	4.0
11M	128 / 20	11M1	11M Therrell DM High School 3099 Panther Trail SW	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Adams Park Recreation Center 1620 Delowe Drive	2.6
09K	129 / 20	09K1	09K Northwest Library at Scotts Crossings 2489 Perry Boulevard NW	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Scott Elementary School 1752 Hollywood Road	0.3
RW12	130 / 20	RW12A	RW12 Lebanon Baptist Church 11250 Crabapple Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Sweet Apple Elementary 12025 Etris Road	1.5
SC15	131 / 20	SC15A	SC15 The Enon Church 3550 Enon Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Cliftdale Elementary 3340 West Stubs Road	2.6
SC07A	132 / 20	SC07B	SC07A Bear Creek Middle School 7415 Herndon Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Creekside High School 7405 Herndon Road	125ft
08H	134 / 20	not applicable	Sutton Middle School 2875 Northside	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Covenant Presbyterian 2461 Peachtree	1.3

			Drive		Road	
02F1 02F2	135 / 20	not applicable	Central Park Recreation Center 400 Merritts Avenue	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Ponce City Market 675 Ponce De Leon Avenue	0.8
07M	136 / 20	not applicable	Cathedral of Saint Phillip 2744 Peachtree Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Buckhead Theatre 3110 Roswell Road	1
05J	137 / 20	not applicable	Butler Street Baptist Church 315 Ralph McGill Blvd	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	David T. Howard Middle School 551 John Wesley Dobbs Ave	0.9
11 B	138 / 20	11 B1	Ralph Bunche 1925 Niskey Lake Road SW	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Southwest Christian Academy 3911 Campbellton Road	1.2
ML03	140 / 20	ML03A	Hopewell Baptist Church 15730 Hopewell Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Summitt Hill Elementary 13855 Providence Road	5.7
08P & 09H	125 / 20	not applicable	Fowling Warehouse 1356 English Street	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Mount Ephraim Baptist 1202 West Marietta Street	1
SS13A/B	139 / 20	not applicable	Church of the Redemer 5185 Peachtree Dunwoody Road	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	North Fulton Training Center 5025 Roswell Road	3.3
UC02A	133 / 20	UC02C	UC02A Etris Community Center 5285 Lakeside Drive	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	The Gathering Place 6280 Bryant Street	0.5
07A	141 / 20	07A1	Sara Rawson Smith School 370 Old Ivy Road NE	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Sardis United Methodist 3725 Powers Ferry Road	1
SS09B	142 / 20	not applicable	Mount Vernon Baptist Church 850 Mount Vernon Highway	Decrease number of voters assigned to facility	Sandy Springs United Methodist Church 86 Mt. Vernon Highway	2.2

Mr. Wingate requested the precinct locator

Ms. Nadine informed the Board the information will be provided upon the approval of the polling location changes

Mr. Wingate asked whether with all the changes will the **DRE** have enough equipment

Mr. Barron said yes, the plan will be to utilize some of the EV equipment allocated

Mr. Wingate asked **on the record** is there enough equipment for the November 3rd, General and Special Election

Mr. Barron stated yes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved as amended, See item #1.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other items requiring the Board's action, **Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wingate moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 1:36 p.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary