



APPROVED MINUTES

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

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, May 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:

Mr. Mark Wingate, Vice Chairperson

Ms. Vernetta Keith Nuriddin

Dr. Kathleen Ruth

Mr. Aaron V. Johnson

Staff Attending: Mr. Richard Barron, Director; Mr. Ralph Jones, Registration Chief; Mr. Blake Evans, Elections Chief; Ms. Sharon Benjamin, Deputy Election 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 Manager Officer

Guests Attending: Milia Akkouris, Deanville Celestine, Helen Butler, Jacey Sebastian, Kent Strickland

Chairperson Cooney announced that this teleconferenced meeting is authorized pursuant to O.C.G.A. §50-14-1(g) because of the State of Emergency declared by Governor Kemp which resulted in state and local Government closures 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. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

#2– COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

Milia Akkouris expressed concerns for the absentee by mail process, about the status of her ballot, the election date stamped on the ballot and the efforts from **DRE** to assure voters of the overall absentee process.

Deanville Celestine inquired about adding the option to choose “None of the Above” on all future ballots.

Helen Butler inquired about the backlog of absentee by mail.

Kent Strickland requested details about polling place locations with COVID-19 concerns.

Mary Barron inquired about the county utilizing ballot boxes and requested a listing of locations.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to close the regular session and convene into executive session to discuss personnel issues raised by a Board member. 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 Mr. Wingate, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

OLD BUSINESS

#3– APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting- April 9, 2020
- Special Called Meeting- April 23, 2020

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Regular Meeting and Special Called Meeting on April 9th and 23rd, 2020. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#4– MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR April 2020:

- PPP & General Primary Elections delayed to June 9, 2020
- Lost Polling Places due to the Global Pandemic, 33 lost and counting
- Lost Polling Workers due to the Global Pandemic
- Carriers assembled and outfitted with voting equipment
- Procured PPE for all Early Voting Staff and Poll workers
- Approval of two Mobile Voting buses
- Recorded Training for Poll workers added to Scytl System
- 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**)
- Total voter registration applications received in 2020: **87,774**
- **10,875** voter registration applications received in April
- As of May 1st, **816,032** (768,551 active and 47,481 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- Felon Letters Mailed-**482**
- Purchased 20 Ballot Boxes to be installed throughout the county
<https://fultoncountyga.gov/inside-fulton-county/fulton-county-departments/registration-and-elections/absentee-ballot-box>
<https://gismaps.fultoncountyga.gov/portalpub/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=96c3363d99f74ed0bb38f53099e6b350>
- Administration Division managing expenditures and procurements during Global Pandemic
- 50 plus demonstrations of voting equipment cancelled due to COVID-19

Dr. Ruth informed **DRE** and **BRE** that the Governor Kemp has provided guidance on masks. **Dr. Ruth** inquired about procuring masks to offer to voters entering the polling facilities. **Mr. Barron** answered that the **DRE** will review their options for offering voters masks upon entering the voting facility.

Mr. Johnson recommended **DRE** submit a request (Wish list of items) for Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**) to the Board of Commissioners (**BOC**) and County Manager's Executive Team

Mr. Barron mentioned the request will be made

Mr. Johnson requested detailed information for the drop box locations

Dr. Ruth inquired about the drop box locations in the Buckhead area

Mr. Barron mentioned the closest was North Training Center; the **DRE** was limited in options due to renovations at Buckhead Library and Ponce De Leon Library. **Mr. Barron** mentioned that the drop box listing is available on the website and as is the GIS Map Drop Box Locator.

NEW BUSINESS

#5- UPDATE ON ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCESSING

Mr. Barron informed the **BRE** of the Absentee By Mail applications received:

- Applications by Mail: 104,779
- Applications Processed 96,924
- Apps Rejected: 688
- UOCAVA Processed: 50
- The voter will send their ballot to **DRE** to process
- Rejected Application Reasons:
 - No signature
 - No party selection
 - or Out of County

Mr. Barron informed the Board of the efforts the Department is making to complete all applications and the challenges **DRE** was experiencing with the County's outlook email. Currently, with the assistance of the Information Technology (**IT**) Department a solution was found and implemented to retrieve all emails from the outlook email.

Mr. Jones mentioned the vault was being created today by **IT** and staff will be assigned

Mr. Barron noted the Departments that have been assisting **DRE** through this process of doing Absentee Ballot by Mail on a large scale and continuing to prepare for Early Voting and Election Day. **Mr. Barron** expressed gratitude for being able to utilize staff from Finance, Tax Assessors, Tax Commissioners, & Libraries.

Mr. Wingate asked the process for Absentee Ballot By Mail, since the Secretary of State's Office (**SOS**) hired a vendor to mail the ballots for all Georgia Counties.

Mr. Barron explained:

- **SOS** sent an application to every active registered voter
- The application is returned via fax, email, or U.S.P.S mailing
- Voter Registration Division is responsible for processing the application request
- Every evening, **SOS** pulls a file and the next day a ballot is mailed from the vendor
 - Vendor, Runbeck Elections Service from Arizona
- Note: All ballots have the May 19, 2020 election date on the ballot

Mr. Wingate asked if there was a method of checking the status of the request

Mr. R. Jones answered yes, the voter can visit: <https://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do> and check the status of their request and ballot.

Mr. Jones mentioned most of the inquiries received are regarding the sleeve that's enclosed instead of an envelope as described in the written instructions

Mr. Johnson requested clarity on dates and the concerns of same household discrepancies regarding absentee request. **Mr. Johnson** reiterated their concerns of the overall process.

Mr. Johnson mentioned the **DRE** needs to discuss the process with **SOS** as we get closer to Election Day

Mr. Barron agreed.

Mr. Johnson referenced the comment that was made during Public Comments regarding Absentee Ballots not being counted on Election Day.

Mr. Barron explained that every timely absentee ballot by mail received by the close of business on Election Day is counted.

Mr. Wingate inquired about the **DRE** having the ability to print ballots within county

Mr. Barron mentioned a response will be forthcoming

Mr. Barron expressed understanding the frustration of the voters and the **DRE** has determined there will be a review of processes and procedures to ensure all processes are efficient. **Mr. Barron** also mentioned a system the **DRE** has identified as a potential solution in the near future

Ms. Nuriddin requested **Mr. R. Jones** provide contact information if voters have further inquiry

Mr. R. Jones provided his desk number to the public

#6- UPDATE ON PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY AND GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Mr. Barron updated the Board *that* on Election Day the county will provide the department with 200-250 personnel to assist with Absentee By Mail processing. The State statute reads that the counties cannot process absentee ballots until the day of the election beginning at 7am. **Mr. Barron** mentioned that unless **SOS** approved an Emergency Ruling on processing absentee ballots early, it is slated to start June 9th at 7am.

- 4 Day Rental of Georgia World Congress Center
- Additional scanners from **SOS**
- Precinct Cards due to Polling Place Changes of affected voters
- Head of Household Mailers will be sent next Friday to affected voters
- 5 EV Locations:
 - Alpharetta Branch Library
 - CT Martin Natatoriums
 - Garden Hills Elementary School Gymnasium
 - Sandy Springs Branch Library
 - South Fulton Service Center
- Dates: May 18-June 5, Closed on May 25th and open May 30th, Time: 9-4:30pm
- In-Person voting voters will experience a wait, Voting by Mail is highly encouraged
- Reduced locations and reduced number of voters allowed in the room
- PPE provided to all EV staff and Poll workers

Mr. Wingate questioned the polling place changes Fulton County is experiencing

Mr. Barron mentioned the changes of polling location have impacted the county: 39 of the changes were due to COVID-19 concerns and 6 were due to election date changes and school renovations

Mr. Wingate asked when “My Voter Page” will be updated with the affected voters

Mr. R. Jones stated by Friday.

Mr. Barron informed the Board that the locations affected by these changes will have assigned staff to direct voters and signage to assist as well.

#7- BRIEFING ON EMERGENCY POLLING PLACE CHANGES

Mr. Evans expressed gratitude to Fulton County Government, Fulton County Schools, and Atlanta Public Schools during these unprecedented changes the department is experiencing.

Mr. Evans explained the precinct proposals. All polling locations are American with Disabilities Act (**ADA**) compliant and all impacted voters will be notified as soon as possible prior to the next scheduled election.

Mr. Evans explained proposals were deemed Emergency Temporary Changes. The list of polling locations declined to be a polling location in the near future due to COVID-19 concerns is the following:

- 09/20 02C/05F proposed move to **Central Park Recreation Center** from **Cosby Spears High Rise**.
- 16/20 SS22 proposed move to **Sandy Springs Middle School** from **The Hellenic Tower**.
- 17/20 01D/E proposed move to **FanPlex** from **Georgia Hills Neighbor Facility**.
- 18/20 03I/04F proposed move to **Antioch Baptist Church Family Center** from **Center for Civil and Humans Rights**
- 20/20 03L proposed move to **Simpson Street Church of Christ** from **Fire Station #16**
- 21/20 09M proposed move to **Northwest Library at Scott's Crossing** from **Fire Station #28**
- 22/20 AP07A/B proposed move to **Manning Oaks Elementary School** from **St. James United Methodist Church**
- 23/20 FA01A proposed move to **First Baptist Church of Fairburn** from **Open Word Christian Ministries**
- 24/20 JC08 proposed move to **Taylor Road Middle School** from **Clear Springs Baptist Church**
- 25/20 RW03 proposed move to **Independence High School** from **Zion Missionary Baptist Church**
- 27/20 04V proposed move to **Paul L. Dunbar School** from **Dunbar Neighborhood Center**
- 28/20 08D/ 08N1/ 08N2 proposed move to **Morris Brandon School** from **Trinity Presbyterian Baptist Church**
- 29/20 12F proposed move to **Dobbs Elementary School** from **John Birdie Neighborhood Facility**
- 30/20 12G proposed move to **Perkerson Park Recreation Center** from **Lakewood Christian Manor**
- 31/20 12L proposed move to **Adams Park Library** from **The Love Center**
- 33/20 JC18 proposed move to **Hillside Elementary School** from **Mount Pisgah United Methodist Church**
- 34/20 RW01 proposed move to **Roswell Library** from **Northside Church of Christ**
- 35/20 RW02 proposed move to **Independence High School** from **Teaching Museum North**
- 36/20 SS01 proposed move to **Johns Creek Environmental Campus** from **Life Center Ministries Inc.**
- 37/20 SS04 proposed move to **Woodland Elementary School** from **St. Jude Catholic Church**
- 38/20 SS05 proposed move to **Abernathy Arts Center** from **Sandy Springs United Methodist Church**
- 39/20 SS18A/B SS31 proposed move to **Abernathy Arts Center** from **Sandy Springs United Methodist Church**

40/20 SS18A/B SS31 proposed move to **Sandy Springs Library** from **Sandy Springs United Methodist Church**

Mr. Evans explained the following listed proposals were for reasons not pertaining to COVID-19 concerns.

26/20 SC14A proposed move to **Southwest Regional Library** due to **Carver College** being sold

32/20 JC02 proposed move to **Northview High School** due to lack of communication and confirmation from **Johns Creek United Methodist**

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the polling place changes and their confirmation

Mr. Evans responded yes, for the Election Day of May 19th; however, when the election was postponed to June 9th the **DRE** was required to request confirmation again.

Ms. Williams informed the Board of the process for confirming polling locations for this year, once the election date was altered approximately three of the locations that confirmed initially have since declined to be a poll.

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. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 11:39 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary