



## UNAPPROVED MINUTES

### BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS SPECIAL MEETING – JULY 20, 2020

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Special Session on Monday, July 20, 2020 10:00 a.m.

## VIRTUAL MEETING

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

**Other Board Members Present:**

Mr. Mark Wingate, Vice Chairperson

Mr. Aaron V. Johnson

Dr. Kathleen Ruth

Ms. Vernetta Keith Nuriddin

**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 & Director of External Affairs

**Guests Attending:** Aileen Nakamura (Coalition of Good Governance), Bea Brown (Coalition of Good Governance), Rhonda Martin (Coalition of Good Governance), Marilyn Marks (Coalition of Good Governance), Jeanne Dufort, Liz Throop, Shea Roberts

**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 June 29, 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 to include an announcement from Chairperson Cooney. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

#### **Chairperson Cooney Announcement:**

“It is not only that this Board owes a gesture of mourning and respect for the leadership of two great men who left us all last Friday, July 17, **Congressman John Lewis** and the **Reverend C. T. Vivian**. I think it is our particular responsibility – and honor – to recognize that we, Fulton County’s Board of Registration and Elections, and the dedicated staff of our Department of Registration and Elections, share with these late leaders, and must carry forward, the great task of ensuring that the voices of all our citizens will be heard in elections that are open, available to every voter and fairly counted so that everyone can share in our

American democracy. Having worked with you all, I am confident that the memory of John Lewis and C. T. Vivian inspires us, as John would exhort us, to never give up and never give in, in carrying out our task.”

## #2– COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

**Jeanne Dufort** communicated the issues in the June Elections; long wait times, BMDs allocations, emergency ballot rule violations, and ballot secrecy concerns.

**Shea Roberts** expressed concerns for the lack of privacy while voting.

**Marilyn Marks**, Executive Director of Coalition of Good Governance, implored the board to conduct fair and accurate elections. Ms. Marks expressed concerns of ballot secrecy issues.

**Bea Brown** expressed concerns with the Logic and Accuracy Testing being conducted at The Election Preparation Center.

**Rhonda Martin**, Board Member of Coalition of Good Governance, expressed concerns with ballots not being counted

**Aileen Nakamura**, Member of Coalition of Good Governance, offered a solution to long lines and poll book failures to equip all polling precincts with Paper Poll Book back-ups

**Liz Throop** expressed voter concerns during Early Voting at South Annex and concerns of COVID-19 exposure due to limited social distancing.

## NEW BUSINESS

## #3– COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

**Ms. Corbitt** summarized External Affairs efforts in conjunction with the **DRE** to assist the Department with their communication needs. This issues that occurred not only affected voters in Fulton County but throughout the state of Georgia.

### “THE CHALLENGE

While all government services have been impacted by COVID-19, few have experienced greater impact than elections.

The June 9, 2020 Election brought unprecedented challenges with equipment, polling locations, poll worker engagement and training, and long lines due to social distancing. These challenges led to poor voter experiences and loss of trust in the elections process.

Following the June 9<sup>th</sup> Election, Fulton County has identified numerous process improvements that will improve operations and the voter experience.

Communicating these improvements that will take effect for the August 11<sup>th</sup> Runoff and November 3<sup>rd</sup> General Election will be critical to help raise voter awareness of improvements and restoring trust.”

### Guiding Principles:

- Transparency
- Trust
- Equity

## Communication Channel Overview

- FGTV
- Digital- Web, Email, Social
- Influencer & Community Outreach- Elected Officials, Student Groups, & Service Organizations
- Media
- Direct Mail & Advertisement- Print, Broadcast, Social

## Key Messages for August 11<sup>th</sup> Runoff Election

- Fulton County is making it convenient & safe for voters to cast their ballots in person or by mail.
- Fulton County is making early voting bigger and better than before.
- Fulton County has improved its processes by adding more locations, more poll workers and improving training and absentee ballot processing
- We encourage voters to cast their ballot by absentee ballot or early voting if possible.
- Fulton County voters going to the polls on Election Day should verify their polling place in case it changed since June.

**Mr. Barron** stated “During the June 11 election, several issues, including very high Election Day turnout, high volume of voters assigned to precincts, new equipment, and staffing challenges due to COVID-19, resulted in minimum staffing levels at many polls, and a sense of stress among poll workers. A poll worker survey helped pinpoint additional issues. **Mr. Barron** listed the challenges the **DRE** experienced during the June 9<sup>th</sup> Election and provided methods of improvement for the upcoming elections.

## Areas of Concentration and Improvements:

### Poll Worker Training

- Refinement based on feedback from a group of experienced poll managers
- In-person training for every poll worker hands on training with poll equipment
- Customer service training for every poll worker

### Poll Staffing

- Staffing from June 9<sup>th</sup> **PLUS**
- +1 additional Poll Clerk at every poll
- +1 Technician at every poll
- Meals will be provided to poll workers onsite

### Early Voting

- 20 total Early Voting Locations- to include 3 per Commission District, 1 Mega-Site (State Farm Arena), & 1 Outreach location during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week
- Target: 40%+ of votes during EV

### Absentee Ballots

- Dedicated Call Center established to support absentee ballot requests
- Standard set for emailed absentee ballot applications
- Now accepting absentee ballot applications via absentee ballot drop box

### Poll Locations

- Increased polling locations and reducing voters per location
- Voters will be notified 2 weeks prior to the election day

### Voting Equipment

- Supply checklists have been modified to ensure all accessories are available
- All equipment will be connected to power to test electrical connections on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>
- At 3 a.m. on Election Day, equipment will be unsealed, powered on, and ready for the day
- All polling locations will have a dedicated technician

### Poll Support

- Poll technicians will be able to download and use the Web EOC app to report issues and ask for support
- The call center will return to Emergency Operations Center
- All polls will be stocked with supplies for 100% voter turnout
- Supplies will be well- labeled

**Dr. Ruth** asked about the influencers labeled in the presentations

**Ms. Corbitt** explained the influencers were the County Commissioners, Mayors of Fulton County’s Municipalities, Fulton County **Legislative** Delegation, School Board Members, Non-Profit Groups, and other Elected Officials

**Ms. Nuriddin** suggested the **BRE** be added to the email listing

**Ms. Corbitt** agreed

**Mr. Wingate** asked how much coverage External Affairs receives from local media

**Ms. Corbitt** expressed there’s a lot of interest in Fulton County; highlighting the areas of coverage. The goal of External Affairs is to work with **DRE** and the **BRE** to ensure information is accurate and timely.

#### #4- POLLING PLACE CHANGES FOR AUGUST 11<sup>TH</sup> ELECTION

**Ms. Williams** 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.

Proposal #s	Precinct(s)	Facility Name	Reason	Proposed Change	Mile(s) to New Location
41/20	02A 02L1	Park Tavern 500 10th Street NE	Reduce number of voters assigned to Park Tavern	Piedmont Park Magnolia Hall 1320 Monroe Drive	0.6
42/20	02B 02L2 05D	Liberty Baptist Church 395 Chamberlain Street SE	permitted to return to original precinct	Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church 435 Peachtree Street NE	1.1
43/20	06F	Butler Street Baptist Church 315 Ralph McGill Blvd NE	renovations completed return to original location	Ponce De Leon Library 980 Ponce De Leon Ave	2.0
44/20	07D	Peachtree Presbyterian Church 3434 Roswell Road NW	renovations completed	Buckhead Library 269 Buckhead Ave	1.0
45.2/20	08D	Morris Brandon Elementary 2741 Howell Mill Road NW	renovations completed	Northside Library 3295 Northside Parkway Atlanta 30327	1.0
46/20	10C	C.T. Martin Recreation Center 3201 Martin Luther King Jr Dr.	renovations completed return to original location	Old Adamsville Emergency Shelter 3404 Delmar Lane	0.5
47/20	JC04 A/B/C	Messiah Lutheran Church 4765 Kimball Bridge Road	renovations completed return to original location	Dr. Robert E. Fulton (Ocee Library) 5090 Abbotts Bridge Road Johns Creek 30005	0.7
48/20	JC12	Dolvin Elementary School 10495 Jones Bridge Road	renovations completed	Northeast / Spruill Oaks Library 9560 Spruill Road	2.0

49/20	SC211 SC212	Christian City Welcome Center 7345 Red Oak Road	Senior COVID-19 Safety	Oakley Elementary 7220 Oakley Terrace	1.5
50/20	SS01	Johns Creek Environmental Campus 8100 Holcomb Bridge Road	permitted to return to original precinct	Life Center Ministries 2690 Mt. Vernon Road	3.5

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the listed polling place changes. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## **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. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Nuriddin seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 10:53 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary