



## APPROVED MINUTES

### **BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS SPECIAL MEETING – JUNE 29, 2020**

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Monday, June 29, 2020 at 10:00 a.m., in the The Government Center, Assembly Hall, 141 Pryor Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

**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

**ALL PERSONS ENTERING THE BUILDING:  
MASK MUST BE WORN AND TEMPERATURES WILL BE TAKEN. SOCIAL DISTANCING  
WILL BE ENFORCED AND SEATING LIMITATIONS EXIST.**

**Staff Attending:** Mr. Richard Barron, Director; Mr. Ralph Jones, Registration Chief; Mr. Blake Evans, Elections Chief; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Mr. David Lowman, County Attorney; Mr. James Reese, Production Manager; Ms. Jessica Corbitt, Director of External Affairs & PIO; Darryl Carver, Division Manager

**County Manager and Executive Team:** Mr. Dick Anderson, Ms. Anna Roach, Mr. Kirby Ellis, Ms. April Pye, Ms. Patrise Perkins-Hooker, Ms. Bridgette Bailey

**Office of County Commission:** Chairman Robb L. Pitts, D7, At- Large; Ms. Harriet Thomas, Chief of Staff; Mr. Ambuj Jain

**Guests Attending:** David Ross (Democratic Party of Georgia), Halsey Knapp, George Balbona, Several Media Outlets

#### **#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 5-0.**

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

**Halsey Knapp** provided the **BRE** with a comprehensive report. **Mr. Knapp** requested an explanation of why the emergency ballot rule was not implemented at the polls that experienced long lines.  
**(Written report provided)**

**George Balbona** communicated that the Secretary of State's (**SOS**) office failed to take responsibility for the mishandling of certain aspects of the elections statewide.

## NEW BUSINESS

### #3– INTERIM REVIEWS OF TASK FORCE INITIATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ELECTION OPERATIONS

**Chairman Pitts** communicated to the **BRE** that two task forces were established at the conclusion of the June 9<sup>th</sup> Election due to statewide issues during the election. The Internal Task Force will meet weekly to provide the **DRE** and **BRE** with recommendations that the **BRE** can consider for implementation. The task force will review six areas of concern.

**Concentrations:**

- Absentee by Mail Process
- Voting Equipment
- Polling Locations
- Poll Workers
- Personnel
- Communication Efforts

**Chairman Pitts** expressed that one of the task force goals will be to have all registered voters to vote in various manners.

**Goals per Election:**

40% Absentee by Mail                      40% Early Voting                      20% Election Day

**Mr. Jain** spoke briefly to reiterate the task force objective, which is to analyze the areas of concerns and provide the **BRE** with recommendations. The Citizens Election Task Force is comprised of twenty volunteers who have been divided into sub-committees to concentrate on specific areas to formulate recommendations. These recommendations will be reviewed and consolidated to present to the **BRE** in the near future.

**Ms. Nuriddin** inquired whether a third task force was formulated

**Chairman Pitts** mentioned that certain **BOC** members voted to create a task force for the **BRE**; however, he does not have the specifics for that task force and is currently unaware of any plans

**Ms. Nuriddin** inquired about approval for funding for the task forces and the members of the third task force. Ms. Nuriddin asked if the third task force is a re-doubling of efforts.

**Chairman Pitts** recapped the **BOC** meeting. A motion was made and approved and a budget was mentioned but there are no specifics, at this time. **Chairman Pitts** informed the **BRE** that the Internal Task Force is comprised of County employees and the Citizen's Task Force are county citizens volunteering, no county funds were requested.

**Dr. Ruth** asked about the deadline for the report

**Chairman Pitts** announced that the recommendations will be available by July 9, 2020 and the **Chairman** reiterated that the task forces were designed to provide recommendations only.

**Chairperson Cooney** expressed gratitude on **Chairman Pitts'** support and all the efforts and resources the county has utilized to improve the overall voting experience of voters.

**County Manager Anderson** advised the **BRE** of their efforts to assist the **DRE** from an operational standpoint. **CM Anderson** explained the process used was the same process used previously to assist the Tax Commissioner and Assessor by removing the pain points and strengthening management. All initiatives and resources will be presented and approved by the Board of Registration and Elections (**BRE**).

**Ms. Bridgette Bailey** presented a brief overview of action items being discussed and brought forth for consideration.

**Work Plan for August 11, 2020:**

- Partnership with Atlanta Hawks/ State Farm Arena
- Postcards to voters encouraging absentee and early voting
- Fully staffed Call Center and overstaff early voting locations
- Hiring Technicians from a Technical company
- Enhanced Poll worker training
- Increased polls in county facilities; decrease numbers of voters assigned to a poll
- Increase staff in high volume polling locations
- Roving vans of election equipment and supplies
- Contract with Event Planning Companies to provide tents and chairs

**Work Plan for November 3, 2020:**

- Establish an online portal to receive absentee ballot applications
- Mail all registered voters an absentee ballot application
- Develop a mobile application
- Implement a Chatbot
- Outsource call center operations
- Utilize county-certified master trainers to assist in teaching worker training classes
- Contract with a commercial real estate firm to identify polling locations - impose strict cancellations penalties
- Implement an Election Day text communications
- Staff each polling site with an Election Technician
- Recommend additional full-time staff positions to include
  - o **Voter Education Coordinator**
  - o **Poll Worker Recruiter/ Trainer**
  - o **Absentee Ballot Coordinator**
  - o **Technical Manager**

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about temporary structures for voting, expansion of voting facilities; tents with electrical.

**Ms. Bailey** expressed that this was not considered previously but it can be discussed at the next meeting.

**Ms. Nuriddin** requested more information on the Hawk's relationship and inquired about the Chatbot tool.

**Ms. Bailey** explained the Chatbot was an automated mechanism with frequently asked questions for voters who do not want to speak with a live person.

**Chairperson Cooney** informed **Ms. Nuriddin** that the Atlanta Hawks item will be discussed shortly by Chairman Pitts.

**Ms. Nuriddin** requested the record to reflect that she was not aware of a partnership with Atlanta Hawks for upcoming elections.

**Dr. Ruth** requested consideration of a translator and can the **DRE** provide ongoing poll worker training

**Ms. Bailey** answered that the **DRE** currently has those tools in place and their intention is to expand on their current efforts with regards to training and supplemental material

**County Attorney Perkins-Hooker** acknowledged the **BRE** and their efforts during the election cycle.

#### **#4– REVIEW OF BRE VOTING AND ELECTIONS ACTION PLAN**

**Dr. Ruth** explained the decision to compile and disseminate an Internal Action Plan, the drafted plan will be review in conjunction with the final draft presented to the Board on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Johnson** explained that the **BRE** want to encompass a **full scope plan**. **Mr. Johnson** informed the **BRE** that their action plans encompass items from voters, civic groups and the general public

#### **#5- APPROVAL OF EARLY VOTING (EV) LOCATIONS: GENERAL PRIMARY, NONPARTISAN, & SPECIAL RUNOFF ELECTIONS ON AUGUST 11, 2020**

- EV Dates: July 20- August 7, 2020
- Monday thru Saturday, 8:30am -6pm
- **19 Permanent Locations**
- **1 Outreach Locations: August 3-7, 2020**

##### **Locations:**

Alpharetta Library	Northside Library
Buckhead Library	Northwest Branch at Scotts Crossing Library
College Park Library	Ponce de Leon Library
C.T. Martin Natatorium and Recreation Center	Robert F. Fulton Ocee Library
East Roswell Branch Library	Roswell Library
Gladys S. Dennard Library at South Fulton	Sandy Springs Library
Louise Watley Library at Southeast Atlanta	South Fulton Service Center
Milton Library	State Farm Arena
New Beginnings Senior Center	Wolf Creek Library
Northeast/Spruill Oaks Library	

**Chairman Pitts** announced to the Board the **Atlanta Hawks** Partnership. **Chairman Pitts** mentioned receiving a call from Mr. Steve Koonin with the idea of utilizing the State Farm Arena and over 300 paid fulltime and part-time employees. **Chairman Pitts** informed **Director Barron** and the **Elections' Task Forces**, that a partnership with State Farm Arena in conjunction with the Atlanta Hawks was being forged to create a Mega-Early Voting Location for August and November 2020 Elections. **Chairman Pitts** expressed excitement and gratitude for the partnership.

Collectively, All Board members expressed their excitement and gratitude for the opportunity.

**Mr. Johnson** inquired about the map provided with the listing of potential EV locations and coverage of Commission **District 6**

**Mr. Barron** explained that in the Palmetto and Chattahoochee Hills area during an election year the voter turnout is extremely low; however, the **DRE** can assign an outreach location for the last week of early voting. **Mr. Barron** added that the map provided more locations because there were additional location being considered.

**Mr. Johnson** reiterated **Mr. Wingate's** idea regarding temporary structures, trailers or modular units. **Mr. Johnson** mentioned not knowing the cost but to utilize temporary structures at the sites that are unwilling to be polling locations would be a good alternative to maintain the polling locations

**Mr. Barron** mentioned in his former role in another state the Election Department used trailers as voting locations and the trailers were effective.

**Ms. Nuriddin** mentioned that **SOS** stated that a mobile home (trailer) can be retro-fitted as an election location for \$30,000.

**Dr. Ruth** encouraged the BRE and the Task Forces to be innovative on locating polling locations.

## **#6- DETERMINATION OF DRE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Chairperson Cooney** explained state law legislation pending and pertaining to the documents from the Election Task Force and the **BRE** Action Plan. Item #6, will be postponed to a later meeting.

**Mr. Barron** informed the Board that the **DRE** was informed that Atlanta Public Schools (**APS**) will begin school the same week of Election Day. The Department of Registration and Elections will be required to move **22** more Polling locations for the General Primary Runoff Election of **August 11, 2020**, if **APS** does not reconsider.

## **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. Ms. Nuriddin moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wingate seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 11:33 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary