



APPROVED MINUTES

BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING – JULY 11, 2019

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, July 11, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., in Assembly Hall of the The Government Center Building, 141 Pryor Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

Swearing- In of Chairperson, Democratic and Republican Board Members

Term: July 1, 2019- June 30, 2021

Conducted by The Honorable Eric Dunaway, Superior Court Judge

Presiding: Ms. Mary Carole Cooney, Chairperson

Other Board Members Present: Mr. Mark Wingate, Vice-Chairperson
Ms. Vernetta K. Nuriddin
Dr. Kathleen Ruth
Mr. Aaron V. Johnson,

Staff Attending: Mr. Ralph Jones, Registration Chief; Mr. Blake Evans, Elections Chief; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Ms. Sharon Benjamin, Deputy Elections Chief; Mr. Johnny Harris, Elections Officer; Ms. Breauna Jenkins, Administrative Coordinator I; Ms. Cheryl Ringer, Senior County Attorney; Ms. Jessica Corbitt, PIO & Director of External Affairs; Ms. April Majors, Public Affairs Manager; Mr. Gregory Thomas, Public Affairs Manager; Jasmine Campbell, External Affairs

Guests Attending: Penn Payne (Georgia Democratic Party), Foris Webb, III (City of Atlanta Municipal Clerk), Debra Bowen (Republican Party), Betty Clark (Republican Party) Alma Monegro (City of Atlanta), Trey Kelly (Fulton County Republican Party), May Baron, Jenn Thomas, James Robertson, Corey Adams (City of South Fulton) Milia Akkouris (FC Citizen), Austin Johnson (Aaron V. Johnson)

#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

Foris Webb, III commended the department for being transparent and responsive to City of Atlanta (**COA**) during elections and non-election years. **Mr. Webb** recommended that all municipalities build a similar relationship. Due to **HB 316**, there is work to do and the City of Atlanta is offering to partner with **DRE** on any and all Voter Education and Outreach events; while encouraging the citizens to get involved, as well.

OLD BUSINESS

#3– APPROVAL OF MINUTES

➤ Regular Meeting – June 13, 2019

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Regular Meeting on June 13, 2019 which was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

➤ Executive Session Meeting – June 13, 2019

A motion to approve the executive session meeting minutes for June 13, 2019 was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wingate and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#4– MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR JUNE 2019

- Supplemental staff scheduled to return on July 24th
- 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
- Secured two sites, Fairburn and Roswell City Hall, to meet all Municipal Clerks regarding the General Election in November
- There will be an overlap between the Special Runoff Election in October and the start of early voting for the November General and Special Election
 - Early Voting for the November General and Special election begins October 15, 2019
 - The Special Election Runoff is October 15, 2019
- Total Applications received in 2019: **137,084**
- **21,165** voter registration applications received in June
- As of July 1st, **789,456** (724,831 active and 64,625 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- Conducted Qualifying of Board of Commissioners (BOC), District 6 Candidates for Special Election on September 17 and Runoff on October 15, 2019
 - June 24-27, 2019; 9am-4:30pm
 - June 28, 2019; 9am-12pm
 - Nine Candidates Qualified
- Completion of Training for 2020 Budget by the Director and Administrative Manager
- Management attended a National Election Cyber Exercise at the Secretary of State's Office
- Surveying neighboring counties similar in size to see if department salaries and job descriptions are comparable
- Sharon Benjamin, completed Certified Public Manager Program (**CPM**)
- Breauna Jenkins, completed Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today Supervisory Series
- Charisse Walker, Jodi Brittan, & Thomas Johnson, II; Georgia Registrar Official Certification

Chairperson Cooney inquired about Ms. Benjamin's Capstone project for her **CPM**

Ms. Benjamin mentioned the project was implementing a program to audit polling locations to ensure compliance of all polling locations with applicable laws

Mr. Johnson referenced the number of early voting locations and the increased cost due to several calls from municipalities

Mr. Evans spoke concerning the proposed Intergovernmental Agreements, and stated that although each of the ten participating municipalities is paying more, some of the deductions offered by the DRE make the overall projected election costs in 2019 less than the overall costs from 2017. In 2017, the total November elections budget was about \$2.2M and the current budget, if no more reductions are made, totals \$1.5M.

Mr. Evans emphasized that the City of Atlanta (**COA**) will not have an election within this General Election. If the **COA** was a participant in the General Election, then the **COA** would absorb about 50% of the total shared election costs. Although, the total elections budget would increase, the percentage of the costs attributable to the other cities would decrease significantly, thereby lowering their election costs. **Mr. Evans** mentioned that to assist the municipalities the **DRE** has found, and proposed, cost savings by reducing the number of early voting locations to eight (8) instead of sixteen (16).

Mr. Johnson required about the deadline to make a decision regarding early voting

Mr. Evans communicated that the **DRE** is attempting to have all contracts and early voting locations before the **BRE** for their approval at the next meeting

Mr. Wingate inquired about the last day the for the **COA** to decide on an election for their Homestead Exemption

Dr. Ruth asked if the **DRE** is able to verify the online training for poll workers

Mr. Evans stated yes, the poll workers are unable to register for in-person training until online training is completed

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the escalating cost of elections and if the Board of Commissioners (BOC) have intervened

Mr. Evans stated that the department is continuously reviewing the budget line by line to reduce costs

Ms. Nuriddin requested an update on the polling changes that are currently being advertised for the **BRE** meeting in August

Mr. Evans mentioned that **HB 316** requires extended advance advertisement and the polling locations are pending until final approval by the **BRE**

Mr. Wingate inquired about staffing for the Special and General Elections

Mr. Evans informed the **BRE** that availability letters have been mailed out and responses have been received; however, DRE is still processing returned availability letters.

Mr. Wingate inquired about the deadline for staffing poll locations

Mr. Evans explained that the final listing will be after the final training on September 7, 2019

Ms. Nuriddin requested the **Chairperson** and the **BRE** give **Mr. Webb** (City of Atlanta Municipal Clerk) a moment to provide clarity to the current inquiries of cost and the City of Atlanta's participation in the November General Election

Mr. Webb stated that the **COA** will not be contracting with the **DRE** to conduct the upcoming General Election. He expressed that the **COA** has always incurred a disproportionate amount of the cost until a few years ago, when shared costs were implemented. **Mr. Webb** expressed that election costs are contingent upon the requests or needs of the municipalities. The municipalities are currently disturbed by

the cost due to the **COA** previously absorbing a substantial portion of the required cost to run an election. However, the cost is fair based on the percentages. **Mr. Webb** encouraged the municipalities to become more engaged and involved with this process to better understand the policy and procedures that govern this body.

Mr. Jones informed the **BRE** that there have been no updates regarding the Felon Report, and due to this issue, the initial report may be massive.

#5- UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 17TH, SPECIAL ELECTIONS – BLAKE EVANS

DRE conducted Qualifying for Board of Commission (**BOC**), District 6 Candidates for the Special Election to be held on September 17 and Runoff on October 15, 2019

- June 24-27, 2019; 9am-4:30pm
- June 28, 2019; 9am-12pm
- Nine Candidates Qualified
- 123,000 voters impacted

City of Atlanta conducted Qualifying for Atlanta Board of Education, District 2 Candidates for the Special Election to be held on September 17 and Runoff on October 15, 2019

- July 8-10th, 8:30-4:30pm
- Nine Candidates Qualified
- 52K voters impacted

Mr. Evans informed the **BRE** of the scheduling and advertisement of Logic and Accuracy (L&A). Testing has been advertised and scheduled for August 8th and will occur at the Fulton County Election Preparation Center and open to the public.

Dr. Ruth inquired about where L&A testing is advertised

Mr. Evans informed the **BRE** that the information is advertised in the legal organ called the Daily Report

Mr. Johnson inquired about a number of polling locations that will overlap from the first day of early voting for the Special Runoff Election and Election Day from the Special Election

Mr. Evans informed the board that **DRE** has not identified an overlap

Ms. Nuriddin requested an update on Voter Education and Outreach and utilizing the new voting equipment

Mr. Evans informed the **BRE** that the timeline has shifted slightly; however, **DRE** should be one of the first counties to receive equipment after the Pilot Program counties

Chairperson Cooney asked has a vendor for the new voting system been chosen

Mr. Evans stated that the Department has not been notified of the vendor that has been chosen

NEW BUSINESS

#6- ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Cooney reviewed the BYLAWS and the expired term of the Democratic member ended June 30, 2019. The newly appointed vice chairperson will be chosen by the Republican Party to serve a one year term ending on June 30, 2020.

Dr. Ruth nominated **Mr. Mark Wingate, Republican.**

A motion was made by Dr. Ruth to nominate Republican member, Mr. Mark Wingate, as Vice-chairperson from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin and passed by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

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 Mr. Wingate, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

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