



APPROVED MINUTES

BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING – August 8, 2019

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, August 8, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., in Assembly Hall of the The Government Center Building, 141 Pryor Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

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. Richard Barron, Director; 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. Nadine Williams, Elections Preparation Manager; Ms. Breana Jenkins, Administrative Coordinator I; Mr. David Lowman, County Attorney; Ms. Jessica Corbitt, PIO & Director of External Affairs; Ms. April Majors, Public Affairs Manager

Guests Attending: David Ross (Georgia Democratic Party), Sally FitzGerald (League of Women Voters), Shawn Ouelta (Indivisible 4), Betsy Schumlbroch (Indivisible 4), Penn Payne (Georgia Democratic Party), Alma Monegro (City of Atlanta), Stacey Hopkins (FC Citizen), James Robertson (BOC), Cynthia Battles (GA Coalition for People's Agenda), Corey Adams (City of South Fulton) Milia Akkouris (FC Citizen), Tori Ladipo, R. Tutashinda (New Georgia Project)

#1– APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin and carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

#2– COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

Stacey Hopkins advocating for Vote by Mail process instead of current voting system and the forthcoming system.

Milia Akkouris requesting research and logistical data from Department of Registration and Elections (DRE) to understand how DRE determines the amount of early voting locations

OLD BUSINESS

#3– APPROVAL OF MINUTES

➤ Regular Meeting – July 11, 2019

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Regular Meeting on July 11, 2019. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

➤ **Executive Session Meeting – July 11, 2019**

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the executive session meeting minutes on July 11, 2019. The motion was made by Ms. Nuriddin, seconded by Dr. Ruth and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#4– MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR JULY 2019

- Supplemental staff scheduled to return 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
- 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
 - Identified as the only affected precinct is Wolf Creek Library
- Total voter registration applications received in 2019: **165,042**
- **27,958** voter registration applications received in July
- As of August 1st, **812,118** (717,639 active and 94,479 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- Received iPads for Voter Registration Drives from Information Technology Department

Mr. Jones informed the Board of Registration and Elections (**BRE**) of the new felon process in accordance with OCGA 21-2-231(c)

- Secretary Of State (**SOS**) training on July 31, 2019
- **SOS** submits a list of felons to the department to process
- Felon letters are generated and placed on the Dashboard
- The date the letter is printed starts a 40 day clock for felons to respond to the notice
 - Letters should be mailed immediately
 - Requesting a hearing or providing documentation (Will stop the clock)
- When the 40 day clock expires, the system will automatically update voter status to cancelled
 - No vote required from the **BRE**
 - No additional correspondence will follow

Ms. Nuriddin inquired of how this process will impact the described voter on Election Day

Mr. Jones explained that it would not affect a voter who is within the 40 day timeframe for the upcoming election on September 17th

Mr. Johnson inquired of the process for identifying the list of reported felons

Mr. Jones indicated that the Department of Corrections provides the Secretary of State (**SOS**) with a list of convicted felons with the exception of first-time offenders

Mr. Johnson inquired about the new process for **BRE** to be aware of removing of felons

Mr. Jones informed the **BRE** that procedures are currently being adopted and **DRE** will provide the Board with a report on a monthly basis beginning in October

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Mr. Jones informed the Board that the Felon Report Dashboard currently has over 6,500 due to the inability to process felons since April 2019

Ms. Nuriddin asked about the voting status of registered voters on the felon list

Mr. Jones stated the voter is active until a letter is generated and the 40 Day clock ends, **DRE** has not generated any letters

Mr. Wingate inquired about conflicts with the upcoming Special Election on September 17th

Mr. Jones explained that no voters will be impacted during the upcoming Special Election; the department will begin processing the letters next week

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about errors in the removal of voters with same or similar names

Mr. Jones informed the Board of the process, the voter will vote a provisional ballot and an investigation will ensue

Chairperson Cooney clarified the process for the felon report and the actions required by the **BRE**; the updated process will be informational for the Board, unless the voter requests a hearing; will not require any action

Mr. Barron mentioned the confirmation process that will require action from the Voter Registration Division. **Mr. Barron** noted one of the public comment speakers (Stacey Hopkins) was instrumental in improving the process.

Mr. Jones informed the **BRE** of the confirmation process and the three reasons letters are generated: Returned mail, No activity for 5 years, and Post Office Change of Address (within the County) also known as National Change of Address (**NCOA**). **Mr. Jones** believes this system will update the rolls in a more efficient manner.

- **SOS** receives updated mailing information from the post office, then distributes countywide
- Voter Registration is currently processing 21,000 confirmation notices
- Within County - **DRE** updates the record automatically
- If no response is received from out of county voters, the voter will move to inactive status

Mr. Barron requested **Mr. Jones** update the Board on voters who are in pending status. Due to updated legislation, the voter rolls have increased to over \$20,000.00

Mr. Jones informed the **BRE** that according to **HB 316**, no voter will remain in pending status except for citizenship, age, invalid address, and no signature. That voter will become Active; however, marked as an (Mail Identification Required) **MIDR** Flag on their voter file to reflect their failure to verify through **DDS** (Department Drives Services) or **SSA** (Social Security Administration)

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

- **Board of Commissioners (BOC), District 6**
- **Atlanta Public Schools (APS) Board of Education (BOE), District 2**
- 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

- Includes one early voting location and Election Day precinct, Wolf Creek Library
- Three early voting locations

- Train the Trainer completed by the Elections Chief, Deputy Elections Chief, and Elections Officers

NEW BUSINESS

#6- RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION OF SERVICE OF JOANN HECTOR

Chairperson Cooney read a proclamation on behalf of the Board for **Ms. Joann Hector's** fifty years of dedicated service to Fulton County citizens and the Department of Registration and Elections.

a. CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION TO DAVID REEVES

Chairperson Cooney read a certificate on behalf of the Board for **Mr. David Reeves'** fifteen years of dedicated service to Fulton County citizens and the Department of Registration and Elections.

#7- ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VOTER REGISTRATION STAFF, GEORGIA REGISTRAR OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION (GROC)

Chairperson Cooney and the Board recognized Thomas Johnson, Voter Registration staff member, for successfully completing the Georgia Registrar Official Certification (GROC).

#8- STATUS REPORT ON NEW STATE-WIDE VOTING SYSTEM

Mr. Barron informed **BRE** that **SOS** announced the vendor of the new voting system as Dominion Voting. Georgia will be implementing a system with a new method of voting using Ballot Marking Devices (**BMD**). **Mr. Barron** mentioned that no information has been given other than the vendor; however, **DRE** contacted several counties that are currently using this system to gain more insight.

- The voter will make selections on the system
- The voter's selections will print out in a ballot format
- The voter will retrieve their ballot from the printer positioned below or next to the unit
- The voter will walk their ballot to a scanner and scan their ballot to be cast
 - Ballot will drop into a secured box or bag
- Georgia has added a new auditing system, Risk Limiting Audit or Random Audit (No full directives)

Mr. Barron mentioned:

- The cost of the system will be more expensive to the County due to paper, toner, and potential carriers for the new voting systems
- All counties are slated to receive some equipment at the end of August
- **Mr. Barron** contacted **SOS**, Chris Harvey, regarding a suggestion that was made during a management meeting. The suggestion was to add the survey to the new voting systems and

utilize in early voting locations to get voters accustomed to the new system

- Plan to request the **SOS** to assign a Project Manager to the County
- **Barron** was informed that the pilot counties have been reduced to (6) six counties instead of (10) ten

- **Mr. Barron** mentioned possible options for counting Absentee Ballots, with his contacts he's learned that there are multiple options; however, one will serve the County better in 2020 and in the future
- **Mr. Barron** will continue to contact former colleagues regarding more concrete information
- **Barron** informed **BRE** that the units on litigation hold will remain in the warehouse and take up a tremendous amount of needed space until the case is closed. The amount of equipment will double and storage space is limited.
- The new system will require hiring of additional staff
- **Barron** requested **Elections Chief** to complete a survey of neighboring counties and like size counties out of state on the amount of permanent staff employed
 - **DRE** determined that Fulton County has 6-10 fewer positions than counties that are smaller in size
 - **DRE** intends to request additional staff to better support the Department and registered voters in the County

Dr. Ruth asked **Mr. Barron** to discuss any empirical data regarding the security of the system

Mr. Barron stated that there are multiple versions of **BMDs** and multiple vendors that make systems, so it is hard to determine. **Mr. Barron** suggested having the new vendor speak to the **BRE** regarding the new system.

Dr. Ruth inquired about the Pilot Counties and being able to contact them regarding best practices

Mr. Barron informed the Board that the **DRE** intends to contact and visit those counties

Mr. Nuriddin inquired about the increased cost of toner and paper, and whether or not technical support was factored in

Mr. Barron mentioned that the machines are under warranty for two years and he is unsure of the support **SOS** will render thereafter

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the cost of additional equipment and staffing needs to support this new system

Mr. Barron expressed concerns regarding all the components and **DRE** intends to staff polling locations to combat those concerns

Mr. Johnson implored the **DRE** to begin Voter Education and Outreach and that knowing the vendor is enough to begin disseminating information to citizens

Mr. Barron explained that due to the limited information, **DRE** is not equipped to begin full implementation of voter education. **DRE** will have a more comprehensive plan in place before the next meeting; the department is working diligently to collect more information from various sources.

#9- APPROVAL OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT (IGA) TO CONDUCT GENERAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 5, 2019 AND GENERAL RUNOFF ELECTION ON DECEMBER 3, 2019

- Alpharetta, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Johns Creek, Milton, Roswell, South Fulton, and Union City

Mr. Barron informed the Board that on August 7, 2019, Commissioners Hausmann and Ellis presented a Resolution to **BOC** for approval that affected the contracts being approved. **Mr. Barron** explained this resolution alters the cost to municipalities for all elections until the end of 2019.

BOC Agenda Item# 19-0630:

- Elimination of the 10% Administrative Fee (Resolution that passed on August 2, 2017; Agenda Item:17-0628)
- Flat Rate, to allow Municipalities to properly budget
- General/Special Election- Cost per registered voter **\$2.96**
- General/Special Runoff Election Cost per registered voter **\$2.46**
- Cost includes ten (10) early voting locations
- Resolution passed with 5-Yeas and 1-Nay

Mr. Barron explained:

- The initial proposed cost was 1.9 million; this cost is fair and normal for the current size of participating municipalities excluding City of Atlanta
- **DRE** received complaints and came up with more ways to reduce the cost to all municipalities
- During Municipal Elections that **DRE** conducts, cost is based on municipality's needs that are at a cost
- **DRE** will propose the number of early voting locations and hours; however, the dates are mandated by the Georgia Election Code
- One of the Municipalities continued to complain to **DRE** and expressed a need for reduced hours, days and locations in their city
- **DRE** presented all Municipalities with a 3rd proposal, the city that complained the most responded with requesting more hours and days at no additional cost; the times and locations matched the initial proposal presented
- During odd year Municipal Elections, **DRE** is tasked with proposing the best possible proposal to include early voting locations and hours, weekend voting, staffing needs (supplemental and permanent) - cities are responsible for those costs
- **DRE** maintains uniform schedule for all municipalities to ensure voters are not disenfranchised, with the exception of outreach locations during major election years
- **BOC** involvement was due to complaints of cost from a few municipalities. **BOC** decided to formulate a measure that cities could potentially use to budget their cost in future elections
- Resolution eliminated the 10% administrative fee, a fee that assisted with cost incurred from other departments assisting **DRE** during elections (e.g., **Sheriff, D.R.E.A.M & IT**)
- Legal Counsel will present new or amended contracts to be forwarded to all Municipalities as soon as possible

Ms. Nuriddin inquired about the cost of the election and recent single digit voter turnout

Mr. Barron mentioned the reduction in cost is due to the cost sharing with the County for this upcoming election and to the new resolution

#10- APPROVAL OF EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS FOR GENERAL ELECTION & GENERAL RUNOFF ELECTION

- Alpharetta Branch Library, College Park Historical Bldg., East Point Library, East Roswell Branch Library, Fairburn Library, Milton Library, Park Place at Newton, Roswell City Hall, South Fulton Service Center, and Wolf Creek Library

Chairperson Cooney asked **Mr. Barron** will there be any changes to the early voting locations, given the information reported on the Resolution.

Mr. Barron stated no changes with regards to locations. The number of EV sites has doubled since the last comparable election in 2015.

History of Fulton County Early Voting (EV) Locations:

2012	Presidential Election	6 EV sites
2014	Gubernatorial Election	18 EV sites
2016	Presidential Election	37 EV sites
2018	Gubernatorial Election	31 EV sites
2020	Presidential Election	40 EV sites (Proposing)

Mr. Barron expressed since 2013 Fulton County has expanded early voting, nearly three times the amount of any large neighboring county. **Mr. Barron** explained that Municipalities determine the amount of EV sites and **DRE** ensures that municipalities are adhering to all applicable laws when making determinations. **Mr. Barron** informed the Board that **DRE** is excited to be able to provide future outreach voting services to Atlanta University Center due to House Bill 316 (**HB 316**). **HB 316** allows early voting locations to include non-governmental buildings. **Mr. Barron** expressed that **DRE** is closely reviewing the library renovation schedules to ensure we are adequately covered for the 2020 election cycle.

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the listed early voting locations for the General/ Special Election and the General/ Special Runoff Election. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.

#11- APPROVAL OF PRECINCT PROPOSALS: 22/19, 24/19, 27/19, 28/19, 29/19, 30/19, & 31/19; 1/19M, 2/19M, 3/19M, 4/19M, & 5/19M

Ms. Williams explained the proposed changes of the listed proposals. All polling locations are ADA compliant and all impacted voters will be notified no later than 30 days prior to the next scheduled election.

22/19 01J; Name of polling location was changed from **Southeast Atlanta Library** and renamed **Louise Watley Library at Southeast Atlanta**

24/19 Increasing polling locations, too many voters assigned. Removed from **Therrell High School** and assigned precinct 11R to **Mt. Carmel Baptist Church**

27/19 JC14; Temporary change due to renovations, change will become a permanent change **Dolvin Elementary School**

28/19 09B; Moved for logistical reasons, location better serves the voters from **English Park Recreation Center** to **Coretta Scott King Young Leadership Academy**

29/19 JC04A/B adding JC04C Temporarily changed to **Messiah Lutheran Church** due to the renovation of **Ocee Elementary School**. Change will become permanent due to school scheduling conflict

30/19 Temporarily moved to **Carver College** due to renovations, renovations are complete. Will resume at permanent polling location of **Southwest Library (Evelyn G. Lowery at Southwest Branch Library)**

31/19 SC14A; **City of South Fulton** petitioned DRE to relocate polling location to better serve the voters. Poll will be relocated to **Carver College** from **Aviation Community Cultural Center**.

Mr. Johnson inquired about proposal 29/19

Mr. Jones informed the **BRE** that proposal **29/19** will affect the split of JC04B due to the Fulton County School Board, JC04 was added

Mr. Johnson inquired about the map with proposal 31/19 that displays SC14A in multiple locations

Mr. Evans explained the map follows the boundary lines of South Fulton. **Mr. Evans** requested a recommendation from **SOS** and was informed that creating separate precincts would be in violation of Georgia Election Code, because no voters exist in the designated locations

1/19M City of Milton all council district changed to At-Large; ML011 to become ML01A
And ML012 to become ML01B

2/19M City of Milton all council districts changed to At-Large; MI021 & ML022 change to ML02A and ML023 & ML024 changed to ML02B

3/19M City of Milton all council districts changed to At-Large; ML03 & ML07A will remain and ML071 & ML072 changed to ML07B

4/19M City of Milton all council districts changed to At-Large; ML04A/B/C changed to ML04 and ML05 A/B/C changed to ML05

5/19M City of Milton all council districts changed to At-Large; All Precinct names remain the same ML06A, ML06B, & AP10

Ms. Nuriddin expressed concern for minority voters being diluted in the City of Milton and this request coming before the census next year

Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve all proposals as listed. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Ruth 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. Mr. Wingate seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 11:45 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary