INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections

FROM: Richard L. Barron, Director, Registration and Elections
Nadine Williams, Elections Chief
Ralph Jones, Registration Chief
Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager

RE: Monthly Operations Report – JULY 2021

DATE: August 3, 2021

ELECTIONS DIVISION

During the month of July the focus of the Election Division activities were on the following tasks:

November 2, 2021 General / Municipal Election:
The municipalities' office build surveys and resolutions have been forwarded to CES and the SOS as received for election and ballot building. Elections is awaiting the resolution for the ESLPOST and TSPLOST for forwarding.

Polling Locations:
Proposed precinct changes to date will be presented to the board at the August board meeting. The proposals will include two location changes which will decrease the Election Day polling sites to 259.

Check In Locations:
We are attempting to increase the number of check locations to a total of nine in an effort to continue decreasing the amount of precincts reporting to one location and to expedite the check in and election reporting process. Staff is currently scouting additional locations.

- Frederick Douglass High School – new location
- Holcomb Bridge Middle – new location
- Liberty Point Elementary – to replace South Annex
- Maynard Jackson High School – to remain
- North Springs United Methodist Church – to replace North Annex
- Paul D. West Middle – to remain
- Vickery Mill Elementary – to replace Roswell City Hall
- TBD
- TBD

Advance Voting:
All municipalities have been advised of the approved Advance Voting locations for the November 2nd election. Staff is currently revising training material to include SB202 procedural changes to include Advance Voting Manager duties regarding the absentee ballot drop boxes.

Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes:
We are compiling information from the SOS to ensure Advance Voting Manager training will include the SB202 absentee ballot drop box procedures.

Poll Worker Recruitment & Training:
Election Officers are in the process of revising class curriculums to ensure SB202 procedures are included and awaiting SOS guidance on procedures and new forms to finalize. We are working with the Communications Department to rebrand all Advance Voting and Election Day training material and presentations, to include training videos regarding form completion. The SOS has approved usage of the Know Ink electronic fee schedule to expedite poll worker payroll, these procedures will be included in poll worker training.

Election Preparation Center & Hapeville Annex:
L&A will be conducted at the Election Preparation Center. Staff is currently drafting procedures regarding chain of custody for all equipment and documents and COVID -19 protection guidelines. Staff is currently assisting with the numerous ORR request received by searching, sorting, and scanning copies of documents as requested.   The WDS inventory system purchase has been completed. In-person training and virtual training is being conducted by the vendor.

Mobile Voting Units:
We are working with Communications to change the wrapping of the mobile voting units to remove the words "Vote here". Units will be utilized for voter education, Election Day emergency use, if approved, and loaned to other county departments upon request.

Post-Election Plan Assessment:

	Due Date	Completion Status
Develop an Annual Automated Elections Project Plan		
• Develop Elections Project Plan for Election Division operations to include warehouse operations, equipment deployment, polling site selection etc.	2/26	Completed
• Develop detailed Elections Project Plan for Early Voting operations to include staffing, site selection, recruitment plan, equipment deployment, etc.	2/26	Completed
Poll Worker Staffing Plan for Election Day Workers		
• Fully implement and utilize poll worker staffing plan	2/26	Completed
• Develop database for poll workers to include those recruited on-line and by the SOS	2/26	Completed
• Develop communications plan for poll worker recruitment	3/31	Completed
• Develop poll worker assignment process	3/31	Completed
Implementation of Poll Worker University for Election Day and Early Voting Staff	7/15	Completed
Enhanced Poll Worker and Election Technician Screening Process		
• Work with temp agencies to further develop and refine screening process of all election workers; submit action plan	3/31	Completed
Automate Poll Worker AMS Entry and Pay		
• Investigate a method to automatically populate fields in AMS poll worker data entry; work with HR	3/31	Completed
• Contact IT and HR to determine an automated pay option for poll workers	3/31	Completed
• Investigate options for outsourcing poll worker pay	3/31	To remain in-house
Implement Early Voting Staffing Plan		
• Develop early voting desk procedures	3/31	Completed
• Define written early voting recruitment plan	3/31	Completed
• Define written early voting recruiting assignment	3/31	Completed
• Develop early voting training outline/plan	3/31	Completed
Document Polling Location Selection Process		
• Define and submit written procedures on the polling place selection process (document should include eligibility, restrictions and any supporting documents for signature)	3/15	Completed
Create an Equipment Inventory and Tracking Process		
• Investigate inventory tracking system for election equipment	3/31	Completed
• Inventory all election equipment	8/30	In progress
Revise Elections Check-In Lists for Election Equipment Return		
• Develop written audit procedures and refine checklist for election equipment return on election night	8/30	In progress
• Secure additional check-in sites	3/31	Completed

• Develop written process for securing additional check-in sites	3/31	Completed

Tasks to Be Performed for Future Reporting Periods:
- Confirming Achieve IT work duties are on task
- Virtual meeting conducted for election planning, preparation, and processes
- Meeting and review of Elections Division internal processes and procedures
- Organize warehouse spaces
- Implement an automated inventory management system
- Create directory of poll workers
- Reorganize check in procedures
- Meetings with Task Force regarding creation of Election Central

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE:

AREAS OF FOCUS THROUGH 2021

- **Absentee Ballots**

Ensuring that we process absentee ballot requests with accuracy and in a timely manner is of upmost importance. Chain of custody and accountability are areas in which we opportunities for improvement.

After the June 2020 Primary Election, we focused on ways to process applications without errors. We worked with United States Digitial Response (USDR) to create a portal for Fulton County voters in 2020 that aided us in absentee ballot processing and delivery, which complemented the SOS portal. Processing applications and delivery of ballots and Fulton County IT and USDR are completing the finishing touches on an update which will automate the delivery of faxed, emailed and mailed applications to Absentee Officers for processing.

Bluecrest is slated to update software security features in mid-August to our ballot delivery and receipt system. After the software update is completed, Bluecrest will return for a mock election by the first week of September, with a second mock election slated for later in September before we can begin mailing ballots to November General Municipal Election voters on October 12. This will test our procedures and chain of custody documents.

We purchased software that will enable us to send batches to Bluecrest to print ballots for mailing. The current process requires us to select each ballot individually when we prepare ballots for printing. Quadient's software will allow us to send ballots to Bluecrest in batches to print, which will make the process much more efficient and much easier and quicker.

Since March we have been working with the County Manager's office, Finance and Human Resources to create an Absentee Ballot Division within the department. That division will be overseen by Deputy Director, Patrick Eskridge. He came on board in June 2021. After creating PDQs for the six positions that will encompass the permanent staff in the absentee division, funding was identified, approvals of the PDQs were received, salaries were set and Board of Commisioners (BOC) approval was achieved. The positions for Absentee Manager, Absentee Supervisor and four Absentee Officers were posted and closed. The next step in the process is to review applicants on the registers once we receive them and select candidates for interviews. We will have the new team in place in September ahead of the November General Municipal election.

We have an Business Process Review RFP slated for the Board of Commissioners Recess Agenda on August 18. The original vendor that we selected withdrew from consideration. We had to undergo negotiations with the next vendor in line, which created a delay in putting the RFP in front of the commissioners for approval. In the RFP, a subject matter expert in absentee ballot processes will be on site to aid Mr. Eskridge and the new team with docuemting standard operating procedures (SOPs) and consulting on best practices for completing our mission.

The WDS inventory system has been purchased. It has an absentee module. Training on the basics of the new inventory system in underway. We will work with WDS to incorporate chain of custody tracking of batches as the year progresses in the lead up to the Primary General Election in 2022.

- **Supplemental Staff**

We rely heavily on supplemental staff to conduct our elections. Carter Jones, the SEB monitor assigned by the SEB to Fulton County in late October 2020, who worked through early January 2021, stated that we have an overreliance on supplemental staff. His concern from observations he made was that we had too few middle managers to oversee such a large team of supplemental staff members. In November, in particular, when we had 12 locations from which we were operating, an increase of eight more than normal, he observed how the dearth of permanent, full-time management staff made it more difficult for us to administer an election. His recommendation was to spend a portion of the money that we allocate each year to a staffing agency toward investment in more permanent, full-time managers and in retaining quality supplemental staff that gain institutional knowledge during a long election cycle.

The history of staffing in Fulton County's department of Registration and Elections is one of decreases in permanent staff followed by slowly rebuilding staff over several years, which has recently culiminated in significant increases. 24 permanent staff members.

o   2009 – 24 FT staff
o   2012 – 18 FT staff
o   2013-2018 – Increase to 21 FT staff
o   2019 – 34 FT staff
o   2020 – 36 FT staff
o   2021 – 37 FT staff
o   2021 - We requested nine new positions in summer 2021, recently approved by the BOC. We created the Absentee division mentioned above, and also are adding an IT Manager, Financial Systems Manager and a Voter Education and Outreach Manager. Once we hire successful applicants for those positions, we will have 46 full-time staff.
o   2022 - We plan to submit a request for 12 new positions ahead of the 2022 election cycle to bring our permanent staffing level to 58 full-time positions.

Through consultations with the successful vendor in the RFP, as well as the County Manager's executive team, we will determine the best method going forward to staff our elections. Whether we implement a hybrid model of bringing staff in through traditional Fulton County Human Resources and also a staffing agency, moving to solely bringing in staff through Fulton County Human Resources or staying the course with a staffing agency coupled with our more robust full-time staffing level that we hope to have on board in early 2022, will be decided in the near-term.

•   **Combatting Misinformation Surrounding Elections**

Working with External Affairs we plan to provide information for a Mythbusters style section on our website for common misconceptions or falehoods that are spread. Additionally, we will video our operations surrounding tabulation and scanning of ballots in order to have our own video content of events. If necessary, we will be able to edit video rebuttals, if necessary.

Training poll workers thoroughly, revamping standard operating procedures, following best practices, maintaining thorough records, posting legally shareable items on our website, ensuring chain of custody is efficient and tight and conducting ourselves with transparency are necessary for combatting misinformation, as well.

•   **Adequate Contigency Planning**

Working with our staffing we will have workers on standby should a COVID outbreak occur during in the future, both to replace internal staff, but also to replace poll workers and technicians in polling locations, if necessary. Our staffing partner has planned for extra people to be on standby should we have an emergency during logic and accuracy testing or in the absentee ballot processing area or at any early voting or Election Day polling location. This will alleviate delays in equipment delivery, service interruptions to voters or other issues that may arise.

Our mobile buses will be readied for deployment to polling locations prior to elections should the governor declare a state of emergency that would require emergency polling places, in addition.

REGISTRATION DIVISION

This Monthly Report provides a summary of the critical registration activities, workload levels and voter statistics for the Registration Division of the Fulton County Registration & Elections Department for July 2021. The primary activities upon which we worked in July were processing voter registration applications, confirmation notices, researching street issues, municipal voter/street audits as well as voter registration applicant processing problems, preparing notices to voter registration applicants, scanning, indexing registration cards, and training.

VOTER REGISTRATION

The total number of voter registration applications we have received in 2021 is **55,883**. We received **8,174** voter applications in July. We are processing those applications.

As of August 1st, 848,903 (823,606 active and 25,297 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County.

The Historic Overview of Registration Applications for the Months of June/July are as follows:

Year	June Voter Registration Applications	July Voter Registration Applications
2012	13,395	21,077
2013	4,992	6,918
2014	18,951	12,444
2015	7,165	9,465
2016	22,335	26,238
2017	23,937	24,350
2018	25,761	28,740
2019	21,165	27,958
2020	28,562	27,260
2021	8,511	8,174
Total Applications for 2021		55,883
Total Applications Processed 2021		55,415
Total New Applications for 2021		17,820

WORKLOAD STATISTICS FOR July:

Voter Registration Applications Needed to be Processed	
Total Applications needed to be processed	468
DDS Applications	368
Online Applications	0
Paper Applications	100
Confirmation Letters	0

Completed Voter Registration Applications Processed for July			
Total Number of Processed Applications			11,798
Total New Registrations to Fulton County			6,844
New Registration (1st Time)		3,565	
DDS Applications	2903		
Online Applications	181		
Paper Applications	481		
Transferred into Fulton		3,279	
DDS Applications	2,819		
Online Applications	125		
Paper Applications	335		
Total Number of Changes to Fulton County			4,954
Address Changes Only	3,468		
Name & Address Changes	496		
Duplicate (No Changes)	437		
Name Changes	553		
Total Number of Removals of Fulton County			15,037
Felons	82		
Moved out of State	9		
Duplication	80		
Error	9		
Hearing	0		
Not Verified Deletion	8		
Requested	15		
Transfers out of county	2,612		
Vital Records	452		
Mental Incompetent	0		
Inactive to Deletion	11,770		

REGISTRATION REPORTS:

FELON LIST
State law requires counties to review felon reports and to conduct hearings for those voters with matching data that raises questions regarding their eligibility to vote in accordance with O.G.C.A 21-2-228. All reports must be processed in accordance with O.C.G.A. 21-2-231.

Number scheduled for August Hearing 0.

We mailed 72 letters to voters who are suspected felons. If they do not respond, they will be removed from the voting rolls.

DEPUTY REGISTRAR ACTIVITIES

The Registration Division completed the following Voter Education Activities for the Month of July:

Deputy Registrars Trained	Deputy Registrar Classes	Deputy Registrar Drives
0	0	0

We issued 80 TVICs. We sold 2 voter list CD's.

PERSONNEL/STAFFING:
We have a total of 15 permanent employees and 3 managers currently. Ralph Jones has resigned as of August 6, 2021. The Registration Chief position has posted. Interviews will be forth coming. Our new Registration Manager is Shamira Marshall. We have 2 Registrar Officers vacant position because of the promotion of Shamira Marshall and the resignation of Sante Askin. We will start conducting interviews on Aug 10, 2021.

NGE TRAINING PRESENTATION FROM SOS
Voters that are in Inactive status and have no contact through two general election cycles are then subject to be removed from the voter list. This process is referred to as NGE As an example, a voter that is Inactive as of July 1, 2017, and does not vote in the remainder of 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 is eligible for this process. Voters numbering 11,770 were removed from the rolls on July 28, 2021

NO CONTACT CONFIRMATION CARDS
We received notices that were mailed on August 2, 2021 as part of the No Contact list maintenance process. These notices were sent to voters who have not had any type of contact with election offices in at least 5 calendar years (O.C.G.A. 21-2-234). If a voter is mailed a No Contact notice, they must respond within 30 days to avoid being moved to inactive status.
There are 185,666 voters on the No Contact list statewide. Fulton has 32,460 voters on the list.

TASKS TO BE PERFORMED FOR FUTURE REPORTING PERIODS:
- Notifications of Hearing for Felons
- Coordinating Deputy Voter Registration Drives as Requested
- Continue List Maintenance Activities
- Continue Review / Update Voter Registration procedures
- Continue Indexing, Scanning Voter Registration Applications
- Continue to Perform / Conduct performance counseling sessions
- Respond to State Election Investigations
- Continue Precinct Card Mailings and other Correspondences
- Staff Training

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

This report provides specific administration and election tasks performed during the month of July 2021. Standard operations and activities from the Administrative Division include: personnel, payroll, procurement, finance, travel and training coordination and support to the Board of R&E and Registration and Elections Divisions.

Zoom Meetings Attended
Department Supervisor's Meeting - Weekly
County Manager's Strategy Team - Weekly
Municipal Election Review – Budget, Contract & Timeline
Finance Meeting - Weekly
Purchasing Meeting – Weekly

Personnel Vacancies and New Positions

Title	Type Positions	Status of Recruitment
Registration Officer	Existing Positions (2)	Posted, received qualified list, preparing for interviews
Registration Chief	Existing Position	Posted, will close 8.9.21
Absentee Ballot **Manager**, **Supervisor** and **Officers**	New Positions and New Division	Posted, will close on 8.8.21
Financial Systems Manager	New Position	Posted, will close on 8.8.21
Voter Education Manager	New Position	Posted, will close on 8.8.21
Information Systems Manager	New Position	Posted, will close on 8.8.21

Grants Update

There were two grants awarded from the same organization, Center for Tech and Civic Life. The deadline to expend funds was June 30, 2021 and the grant report was due by July 31, 2021. We are in the process of reconciling the budget to refund any unused funds.

Happy Faces' Outstanding Invoices

The Board of Commission approved the spending authority with Happy Faces for the 2021 Elections, at its Regular Meeting on July 14, 2021. We were then able to process all outstanding invoices for payment, and will start preparing assignments and start dates of supplemental staff.

Elections Budgets

The election budget was setup by Finance for the November 2, 2021 elections only. We were still waiting on flat-rate contributions from a few municipalities.

Election Description	General Fund
Municipal/Special Elections, Nov 2	$ 7,384,191
Municipal Runoffs, Nov 30	$ 4,266,390
Total Election Costs	**$11,650,581**
Municipal Payments	$ 4,251,151

Voter Education and Outreach

The VEO plan was drafted and submitted to the County Manager's team for review. Following that submission the County Manager team, requested a number of edits, revisions, and additional information for several areas within the plan. We are currently working on making those corrections, and will revisit the review with the CM team, once all edits have been made.

We have received several VEO requests to begin in August, and staff have been meeting regularly to discuss and plan event details and attendance, and are awaiting confirmations for dates. Staff is also working toward identifying new/upcoming opportunities for outreach.

The VEO Manager position has been posted, and upon the conclusion of the advertisement, we will plan to begin conducting interviews around Mid-August.

Absentee Division

This Division is new within the Department, approved by the BOC in July 2021. All positions are posted for hiring.