

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Addison Lester, Chairman
Darryl Hicks
Aaron Wright

FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Floyd L Jones, Director
April Crosby, Elections Supervisor
Patrick Stough, Assistant County Attorney



140 Stonewall Avenue West
Public Meeting Room
Fayetteville, GA 30214

MINUTES

February 27, 2018
5:00 p.m.

Welcome to the meeting of your Fayette County Board of Elections. Your participation is appreciated. All regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and are generally held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

Chairman to Call the Meeting to Order

Chairman Hicks called the February 27, 2018 Board of Elections meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Lester moved to approve the Agenda as published. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION:**1. Election of Chairman to the Fayette County Board of Elections.**

Chairman Hicks stated that every two years the Board selects a Chairman to represent the Board for a two-year period. He then moved to select Mr. Addison Lester as Chairman of the Board of Elections. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Hicks turned the gavel over to Chairman Lester.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No one spoke during public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**2. Consideration of staff's request to approve the January 23, 2018 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes.**

Mr. Hicks moved to approve the January 23, 2018 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

There were no items for Public Hearing.

Director Jones stated that he had received a list of deceased citizens but had not had an opportunity to review the list. He stated that the deceased list would be on the March Agenda. He added that there was no election to be held prior to March.

Director Jones stated that no felon list had been provided to him for February.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items for approval.

OLD BUSINESS:

There were no Old Business items for consideration.

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Review of the current Fayette County Board of Elections' Bylaws.

Chairman Lester stated that the Board wanted to review the by-laws every February, however, they were recently approved in October 2017. He asked the Board if there were any changes.

Mr. Wright suggested that the wording in the by-laws needed to be amended to reference which County Code of Ethics was in use by the by-laws. Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough replied that as far as he was aware the Code of Ethics provided with the by-laws was the most current code.

Chairman Lester observed that the County Code of Ethics, on page 3, stated that it applied to those appointed by the Board of Commissioners. He pointed out that he is the only person on the Board who is appointed by the Board of Commissioners and that the other two members were possibly ratified. Director Jones briefly explained the process for those appointed to the Board of Elections from a County Commission perspective stating that the political appointees were acknowledged as appointments.

Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough stated that the Board of Election's vote to approve the by-laws as written assumed that the Board would abide by the county's Code of Ethics.

Mr. Hicks moved to ratify the Board of Election's By-Laws. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 1," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

4. Consideration of staff's recommendation to approve Poll Managers for the May 22, 2018 General Primary Election and the July 24, 2018 Primary Runoff Election.

Director Jones stated that a list of poll managers had been provided to the Board through the Agenda packet as required by Georgia Law and the By-Laws. He stated that those highlighted in green were new poll managers and the one in yellow was currently a poll manager but may change due to health matters.

Chairman Lester asked what the notes next to the poll managers' first names meant. Director Jones replied that the notes were Election Supervisor April Crosby's internal notes pertaining to the qualifications of those recommended to be poll managers.

Mr. Hicks asked how poll managers were selected. Director Jones replied that the selection of poll managers goes back a number of years, but that, usually, poll managers are picked after they come through the ranks as clerks and assistant managers. He added there was not a truly scientific manner of picking poll managers and that generally they are selected after expressing interest of being in the position.

Mr. Hicks moved to approve the poll managers' list. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 2," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

5. Discussion of House Bills 680 and 848 and of Senate Bills 59 and 403.

Director Jones gave a high-level overview of House Bills 680 and 848 and of Senate Bill 403. He mentioned that Senate Bill 59 was a bill to move toward paper balloting, but that it did not have the same priority behind it as Senate Bill 403 had. He further explained how paper balloting could differ from the current electronic balloting based on a demonstration provided by ES&S.

Chairman Lester added that during the demonstration given a week ago, it was noted that House Bill 680 appeared to have been drafted by one of the vendors promoting paper balloting, and as a result it had a potential of shutting out competing vendors.

The Board reviewed a draft letter to be sent to Fayette County's Legislative Delegation that opposed House Bill 680 and supported Senate Bill 403 with certain changes made during a recent state committee meeting.

The Board accepted the draft letter as written, agreed for the letter to be mailed to the county's Legislative Delegation, and asked Director Jones to email them an official copy. The Board did not vote on this matter. A copy of this request, identified as "Attachment 3," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

6. Discussion concerning the May 22, 2018 General Primary Election.

Director Jones gave a high-level review of the upcoming May 22, 2018 Primary Election pertaining to machines, mandatory Saturday voting, election machines, and staffing requests. The information that was discussed was provided to the Board in the Agenda packet. Discussion followed.

The Board directed Mr. Jones to return to the March Board of Elections meeting with recommendations on expanding voting hours during the three weeks of early voting. Special consideration was given to the possibility of expanding voting hours during the third week. Mr. Jones replied he would return with recommendations.

The Board consented to accept the report provided by Director Jones. No vote was taken. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 4," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- A. Next Board of Elections Meeting Date:** Director Jones reminded the Board that the next Board of Elections' meeting will be held on Thursday, March 29 at 5:00 p.m. in order to accommodate the upcoming GEOA / VRAG Conference.
- B. GEOA / VRAG Joint Conference:** Director Jones reminded the Board that the GEOA / VRAG Joint Conference will be held from March 25 through March 28, 2018. He added that he would email itineraries to the Board members when available.
- C. Qualifying for Office:** Director Jones reminded the Board that qualifying for local office will begin on Monday, March 5, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., and then from Tuesday, March 6 through Thursday, March 8 qualifying would continue from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. He added that qualifying would end at 12:00 noon on Friday, March 9, 2018. He stated that those who want to run for the offices of County Commissioner or Board of Education would qualify at the local party offices. He concluded that those running for the office of State Court Judge need to qualify at the Election's Office.

- D. Primary Runoff Election Update:** Director Jones reminded the Board that during the January 2018 Board of Elections meeting, he spoke about the possibility of dual elections being necessary if there was a runoff election in July. One runoff election would be for federal candidates and the other runoff election would be for all other candidates. He stated that he had a recent conversation with the Secretary of State's Office during which the Secretary of State's Office indicated it may have found a solution to the dual election problem. Director Jones reported that he then asked if that solution would solve dual elections when municipal / county elections occur and he was told by the Secretary of State's Office that the solution was promising for all such scenarios.
- E. Automatically Renewing ES&S Contract:** Director Jones stated that the Elections Department has a contract with ES&S for software. He stated that the contract expires each year and requires staff from both departments to revisit the issue. He stated that he had worked with the Purchasing Department and the contract has been amended to be automatically renewable for the next five years, meaning both staff will not have to "reinvent the wheel every year."
- F. Elections Website:** Director Jones reminded the Board that during the January 2018 Board of Elections meeting, Mr. Wright stated some at the Republican Party mentioned there was conflicting or confusing information on the website. Mr. Jones reported that he had reviewed the website and made updates to it. He acknowledged that there is still some information from 2017 on the website only because there is no information at this time that would replace the 2017 information. He suspected that some of older information would be replaced in the near future as fresher information becomes available.
- G. Poll Worker / Absentee Worker Applications:** Director Jones informed the Board that Elections Supervisor April Crosby has completed her Management Development Project by creating and posting poll worker and absentee worker applications on the website. He stated that this effort would provide a greater opportunity for citizens to apply for and be appointed to those positions, and he was looking forward to its prosperous results.
- H. Electronic Voter Registration:** Director Jones informed the Board that prior to leaving employment, former County Registrar Leigh Combs was able to convert the Voter Registration filing system from a hybrid electronic / paper filing system to a full electronic filing system with redundant information being stored both in E-Net and AXS. He explained that the Information Technology Department has confirmed that there are contingencies on retrieving information stored on county computers. He further added that E-Net is a program maintained by the Secretary of State's Office.
- I. National Change of Addresses / In-County Change of Address:** Director Jones said he first learned of this initiative after Mr. Hicks sent an email from NPR regarding a lawsuit involving Fulton County. He explained that he later found out that the problems being faced by Fulton County were actually statewide problems. He stated that the basic problem was in receiving changes of addresses from the post offices pertaining to "within-county" movers that resulted in some people on the voter registration list who were registered at one address when they reside at a different county address. Director Jones reported that the Secretary of State is working with the post offices and had provided the counties with National Change of Address Changes for Within-County Movers. He concluded that Fayette County had updated approximately 250 voter records based on the information provided.
- J. Simplifying the Budget:** Director Jones reported he had been in a very brief meeting with Chief Financial Officer Mary Parrott regarding ways to possibly simplify the department's budget. He stated that many departmental budgets had one line item for expenses, but the Elections budget had several line items for the same types of expenses. He explained that the current budget's structure was done at a time when questions regarding how much an election cost could not be answered in a timely basis, but he concluded that that time was over.

- K. Municipalities Invoiced for the 2017 Elections:** Director Jones reported that the following jurisdictions were billed for the November Elections and, when necessary, the runoff:
- a. Fayette County Board of Education . . . \$43,333.26
 - b. City of Fayetteville . . . \$2,300.00
 - c. Town of Tyrone . . . \$1,147.02
 - d. City of Peachtree City (election and runoff) . . . \$15,110.09
- He continued reporting that the aggregate billing total for all four jurisdictions was \$61,890.37. He informed the Board that the Finance Department reported all jurisdictions, with the exception of Tyrone, have paid their invoice, meaning \$60,890.37 has been reimbursed to the county. The funds are not returned to the Elections budget but are returned to the General Fund in the "Municipal Handling Fee" account.
- L. Board of Commissioners Retreat:** Director Jones reported that the Elections Department, along with all county departments, has been asked to give a fifteen minute presentation to the Board of Commissioners during the upcoming Retreat. This will be a time to discuss the department's purpose, 2018 accomplishments, projects / goals in 2019, the county's budget (provided by Finance), and 2019 budget requests including personnel changes / requests; contracts; or significant asset or equipment changes. The presentation will be held on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 and Elections is the second department on the docket to give its presentation.
- M. County Registrar Position:** Director Jones reminded the Board that the Elections Department had twenty-eight people apply for the position of County Registrar. Last Friday, both he and County Clerk Tameca White interviewed six of the candidates and selected two for a second interview. He said the second interviews are currently set for this Friday, March 2 beginning at 2 o'clock for the first candidate and 3 o'clock for the second candidate. This has been an operation in juggling schedules and trying to make it as accommodating as possible for everyone.
- N. Departmental Budget Due Date:** Director Jones informed the Board that the department's budget will be due by March 23, 2018 and so his attention will soon be going to developing the budget.
- O. Fayette County Historical Society:** Director Jones stated that several weeks ago the Elections Department was contacted for records. He said the records were found dating all the way back to the 1970s. He explained that had the county followed the retention schedule for those records then the records would have been destroyed a long time ago. He further explained that the records did not have redactable information, but did provide some history of Fayette County regarding how the county voted for offices ranging from President of the United States to city council. He informed the Board that he provided those records to the Fayette County Historical Society for keeping and that he intended to continue providing such records as they are found or become available.
- P. Machinery Repair:** Director Jones stated that he had been told that from time to time the Tech Team would ask to go to the Elections Trailer to make a review and repair of the elections machinery. He said the answer the team received was always, "There's not enough time," or "There's not enough budget." Mr. Jones stated that he was a big believer that if there are no machines or broken machines then there is no election. He stated that he authorized the Tech Team to go to the trailer, assess the equipment, and make repairs as able. He reported that apart from two DREs and two Express Polls, all machines were repaired. The ones that are not repaired have to be shipped to Texas for repair. He concluded that the Tech Team was "singing praises" for the ability to get this work accomplished.
- Q. Twiddling Thumbs:** Director Jones stated that when he came to the Elections Department someone told him all he would do was twiddle his thumbs. He suggested that person did not know what they were talking about.
- R. Congratulations and Thank You:** Director Jones congratulated Mr. Lester for becoming Chairman and he thanked Mr. Hicks for working with him during his time as Chairman.

ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:

There was no Attorney's Report.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS:

Campaign Disclosures: Mr. Hicks mentioned that he has been questioned about campaign disclosures and, as a result, he wanted to know what kind of training staff received with regard to the responsibilities of filing campaign disclosures. Director Jones replied that the State of Georgia provides training on the topic all the time and even asks for opportunities to conduct training. He said Marie Bazille from Ethics came to Fayette County last year to give training. He explained that there this is an on-going learning process and that he is often on the phone with Georgia Ethics asking questions and getting clarity. He further explained that he maintains a list of who is required to provide campaign disclosure reports on his computer and he is in contact with all elected officials about their requirements. He also confirmed that there are some campaign disclosure reports that have a grace period for those who turn in their reports late and there are other campaign disclosure reports that do not have any grace period associated with them.

"What is important to us?": Chairman Lester asked the Board what was important to it with regard to hiring the County Registrar such as "bench strength to succeed Floyd" or "just strong bench strength period." Mr. Hicks stated that, in his opinion, when the Board looks at a person at the level of County Registrar, which is a supervisory level, then that person needs to be able to move into the next level. Mr. Wright added that he wanted someone who could step into the director's role if need be while being able to know all jobs. He said someone who has leadership skills was what he was really wanting to have as well as someone who could "think outside the box." Director Jones commented that he does not like the phrase "think outside the box" so much only because even the phrase is outdated, but rather he would have someone who could blow up the box. Chairman Lester and the Board stated they were looking forward to meeting the candidates on Friday.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Wright moved to adjourn the February 27, 2018 Board of Elections Meeting. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

The February 27, 2018 Board of Elections Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Floyd L. Jones, Director

Addison Lester, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Elections of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 29th day of March 2018. Referenced attachments are available upon request in the Board of Elections' Office.

Floyd L. Jones, Director