

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Darryl Hicks, Chairman
Addison Lester
Aaron Wright

FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Floyd L Jones, Director
April Crosby, Elections Supervisor
Brian Hill, County Registrar



140 Stonewall Avenue West
Public Meeting Room
Fayetteville, GA 30214

MINUTES

April 24, 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 Lester called the April 24, 2018 Board of Elections meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. It was noted that Mr. Wright was running late and would be joining the meeting in progress.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Hicks moved to approve the Agenda as published. Chairman Lester seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0-1 with Mr. Wright not present for the vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No one spoke during Public Comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consideration of staff's request to approve the March 29, 2018 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes.

Director Jones informed the Board of a correction to the minutes. Mr. Hicks moved to approve the March 29, 2018 Board of Elections Meeting Minutes. Chairman Lester seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0-1 with Mr. Wright not present for the vote.

PUBLIC HEARING:

2. Public Hearing of staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as deceased.

Director Jones pointed out that the deceased list was provided on three pages rather than the traditional one page since the list was now being updated on a weekly basis rather than on a monthly basis, with a page representing a week.

No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to staff's recommendation.

Mr. Hicks moved to approve staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as deceased. Chairman Lester seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0-1 with Mr. Wright not present for the vote. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 1," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

3. Public Hearing of staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as felons.

Director Jones stated that the felons list would remain as a one page report since the felons are provided to the office on a monthly basis. The Board noted that one felon was on the list twice. County Registrar Brian Hill explained the reason the felon was on the list two times was because he had two different addresses.

No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to staff's recommendation.

Chairman Lester moved to approve staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Electors List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as felons. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0-1 with Mr. Wright not present for the vote. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 2," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items on the Agenda.

OLD BUSINESS:

There were no Old Business items on the Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Presentation from Fayette County's Chief Information Officer, Phil Frieder, pertaining to cyber-security awareness both in Fayette County government and in the Elections Office.

Fayette County's Chief Information Officer, Phil Frieder, introduced himself by providing his credentials and qualifications for discussing this matter. He spoke for 55 minutes and answered questions from the Board.

Mr. Wright joined the meeting at 5:08 p.m. while Mr. Frieder was giving his introductory remarks.

Mr. Frieder stated that threats begin with people and that the first line of defense included these four ingredients:

- Sound Principles
- Well-Trained Staff
- State-of-the-Art Protection, and
- Prevention Systems

He stated that nearly every breach, to the tune of between 60% - 70%, involves people. He suggested that proper training, administrative buy-in, and effective discipline are ways to enhance cyber-security. Mr. Frieder then spoke about how these ingredients work together to secure the county systems and, to a lesser degree, secure the Election's systems.

Mr. Wright asked Mr. Frieder about which resources could be utilized. Mr. Frieder replied that MS Isaac would be a good resource, but it was a one-size-fits-all answer. He suggested there could be better answers, but that MS Isaac would work with the county.

Mr. Wright further suggested that state-mandated security procedures are reviewed in conjunction to what the county is already doing in order to ensure, as best as possible that there are no security gaps in the systems. Mr. Hicks added that Director Jones should contact the state to see if they are working with the Department of Homeland Security to determine if the election process is secure. Chairman Lester stated that the bottom line is that the Board wanted to know where the greatest weakness is as it concerns where the state meets the county in its technological security systems. Mr. Frieder concluded that his big goal both from the perspective of the county and as a citizen is to educate and empower the leaders to understand that the digital world is invisible, that if technology is implemented then the county needs to ensure that it is good stewards not only of the citizens' money but also of the citizens' data.

The Board did not provide further direction and 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.

5. Discussion pertaining to the current practice of training and deputizing Deputy Registrars.

Director Jones said he was not trying to kill the spirit of what is currently occurring. He said the role of deputizing deputy registrars has been the role of the County Registrar and so far as he is aware that function was most recently done by former County Registrar Leigh Combs. He said when Mrs. Combs left Fayette County's employment, the duty fell to him for a time and that is when it caught his attention. He said that Exhibit A in the backup material is dated from 2007. He said the work and methodology behind registering deputy registrars apparently has not changed around 2007, even though election laws changed all the time. Director Jones said he called State Liaison Melanie Freschette to determine if there was current information on training Deputy Registrars. He reported that the liaison stated there was no new information and questioned why Fayette County was deputizing Deputy Registrars.

Director Jones explained the new practice, using Gwinnett County as an example, of how to modify the practice. It was determined that the recommended information is currently on the Secretary of State's website, is not contradictory to the older information currently under use, does not require notification to the newspaper, provides rules on how voter registration drives have occurred, reduces the requirements both on the elections staff and volunteers, and protects voter integrity.

Ms. Darryl Anderson added that she likes to have her people trained since that helps her protect the integrity of her work and her team. She said she wanted her group to be perfectly professional and above board.

Discussion followed on how the process would work and Director Jones answered several questions from the Board.

Ms. Anderson stated that she would prefer for her team to have badges so that the group appears as professional as possible. She added that citizens embrace the volunteers better if there are badges or some identifier showing they are legitimate. Director Jones confirmed that badges are not required under the new system. Mr. Wright stated he did not see the need to produce badges. Mr. Hicks replied that a compromise system could be reviewed to allow for badges but make a distinction between regular county election employees and the volunteers.

Director Jones asked the Board if it could support the new system and then have the attorney to the next scheduled meeting to discuss potential liabilities with the Deputy Registrar program.

Mr. Hicks moved to approve the Version 2012 Registration Rules and Procedures Policy. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Director Jones asked for those who have taken the training should the oaths be allowed to expire or should they be ended. It was agreed that the oaths would come to an end one way or the other. It was agreed the County Attorney would be asked about whether to let the oaths expire as well.

Mr. Wright further asked if information could be gathered on how many other counties issue badges to those who request the training. Director Jones said he would put the question on Firefly to gather information.

A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 4", follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

6. Discussion regarding the daily / hourly rate of pay of the Absentee staff.

Director Jones stated this item was on the Agenda based on a request from County Administrator Steve Rapson. He stated that his office issued a survey through the Firefly system that goes to all 159 counties in Georgia asking how much poll workers and absentee workers are paid, and he reported that only a handful of counties replied to the survey. He reported that there are really two sets of payments being made by Fayette County; one is for the poll workers who actually work on Election Day and the other is for Absentee workers who work (as an example) during the three weeks of Absentee in Person (early) elections. Mr. Jones stated that the findings indicated that the payment scale for the Election Day workers appears to be on the high side, but that should be fine since there are other counties who pay more. He stated that the findings showed, however, that the pay scale for Absentee workers was higher than any other responding county. Furthermore, the pay scale made did not have any distinction between the payments a manager makes, an assistant manager makes, or a clerk makes. That meant that an Absentee Clerk makes the same amount of money as an Absentee Manger makes. Mr. Jones stated that the findings leave the conclusion that the county can do better with regard to the Absentee pay scale, but the open questions were how to actually make the changes and what would the changes be.

Director Jones showed that other responding counties seem to have similar problems by not paying their employees by the responsibilities they carry. He suggested that Fayette County could immediately change pay scales, or it could change the pay scales through attrition- meaning new hires would come to the job under the new payment scale while those already working for the county would retain their agreed upon payment. It was pointed out that there is very little turnover in the Absentee staff so the attrition method would take time to fully implement. Discussion followed. It was added that any change would not be able to be made for the May 22, 2018 election, and it was also understood that the proposed Fiscal Year 2019 budget was calculated, in part, on the current pay scale. It was agreed that any change made to the pay scale would affect Fiscal Year 2019 and would result in saving money for the county.

There was other discussion about making the poll workers and absentee workers contractual employees and that the contract could delineate how much would be paid for each job a person could work. It was agreed that this possibility would resolve the pay question currently under discussion, but that the attorney would need to be consulted regarding this option.

The Board agreed to have this item return to the next Agenda in order to get the attorney's opinion. The Board did not vote on this option. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 5," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Update on the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget: Director Jones provided the Board with an email from County Administrator Steve Rapson showing the changes to the proposed Fiscal Year 2019 budget. He reminded the Board that the original budget that he had proposed budgeted for five elections, however, the budget had been scaled back to two elections with an understanding that any additional election would be funded from the county's fund balance. Mr. Jones stated that he mentioned this possibility at the three-day County Commissioner's Retreat that was held last week from April 18-20, 2018, and he concluded that records from his original request and what was said at the Retreat would be notice to the county of these possibilities. Mr. Jones pointed out that the reduction from five elections to two elections affected both the payroll portion of the budget and the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) portion of the budget. He showed that the Postage budget was significantly reduced since it removed anticipated funding should the precincts be consolidated. He informed the Board that Commissioners Brown, Oddo, and Ognio had agreed that consolidating precincts prior to the 2020 census was probably not a good idea unless substantial cost savings could be demonstrated. He stated that the Building Maintenance fund was also reduced by \$8,000 with that money going to a different fund entitled Stonewall Renovation CIP (Capital Improvement Project.) He explained that any request made by any department for renovation purposes was being aggregated to the

renovation fund. Mr. Jones pointed out that both the postage line item and the building fund line item were colored in yellow by Mr. Rapson, meaning they were still under consideration, but it appeared that would be the likely result.

Update on the County Retreat:

- Chairman Lester mentioned that at the Commissioner's Retreat, one of the big issues raised by the Commissioners concerned filing ethics documents at the local level. Director Jones reported that all of Fayette County's local elected officials are up to date on their ethics filings, however, this issue came up several weeks ago in a conversation with Commissioner Rousseau. It was understood that the local filing officers are basically distributors of paperwork but they cannot advise the elected officials on how to complete their paperwork. Moreover, if an elected official does not turn in paperwork the local filing officer has to inform the state. There are also possibilities in place for the county to be fined. Mr. Jones stated that this matter was discussed at the County Retreat and it resulted in the Board of Commissioners agreeing to include this matter in its Legislative Delegation package in order to have ethics filings returned to the state level and not required at the local level. Chairman Lester added that the Georgia Transparency Commission also wanted the ethics filings returned to the state level so there was no issues with the state with regard to this approach.
- Director Jones further reported that Commissioner Brown is adamant about having extended hours during early elections while Commissioner Oddo is not in favor of extending voting hours. He said he had not received feedback from any other Commissioner on where they stood on the matter of extending voting hours. Mr. Wright added that he is not opposed to extending hours but there is probably a better way to spend the money. He further added that if the voting hours are expanded then it would have to apply to all elections once and for all. Chairman Lester told the Board that Mr. Jones left Mr. Brown with the message that there is still 45 days to vote. Mr. Jones pointed out that ballots have already begun to return prior to the three-weeks of early election from both the military and civilians- for the upcoming election. He said he has asked the County Registrar to keep records of how many ballots have been requested and how many are returned.
- Director Jones stated that he has asked Library Director Chris Snell to work with him on getting the message of early elections out to the public. He said she is a great resource in reaching out to the community. He further mentioned that *The Citizen* reporter, Ben Nelms, will be running a story about turning out the vote in early elections. He added that an effort is underway to create signs in order to get the word out that early elections are underway.
- Director Jones informed the Board that the County Commission was interested in whether the EasyVote / EasyCampaign program would be updated to provide accurate information on when ethics filings are due. He reported that he will have a meeting with Mr. Ron Davis later in the week when this matter will be discussed, but he had no feeling on what the outcome of the discussion would be.

Marilyn Watts: Director Jones stated that former Board of Elections member Marilyn Watts passed away on Saturday, April 21. He reported that there had been no word on any arrangements.

Leaving Early: Director Jones stated he would be leaving work early on Thursday since he had received an invitation from Mr. Dan Cathy to attend an early screening of *Marvel's Avengers: Infinity Wars* movie at the Fox Theater in Atlanta. He said the invitation allowed for him to bring a guest and he had chosen to take his son, Samuel, with him.

County Registrar Brian Hill: Director Jones stated that County Registrar Brian Hill is doing great and it appears he is the right man for the job. The Board agreed that he appears to be very knowledgeable and was very likeable. Mr. Jones stated he had received an invitation to speak to the Democratic Woman's Committee in June about voter registration questions. He said he had agreed to attend and speak, but then the schedule was changed to have him speak on April 21. Mr. Jones stated that he was unable to speak on April 21 due to family commitments so the Democratic Women's Committee had asked for Mr. Hicks to speak, but Mr. Hicks was unable to speak due to prior commitments as well. Mr. Jones stated that he was able to send Mr. Hill to speak to the committee and that the feedback he received from Mr. Hill's speech was outstanding.

ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:

There was no Attorney's Reports.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS:

Best Practices: Chairman Lester reminded the Board that it needs to provide feedback to Mr. Jones regarding their thoughts on best practices learned at the recent GEOA / VRAG Conference. The Board agreed to provide the feedback.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Hicks moved to adjourn the April 24, 2018 Board of Elections meeting. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The April 24, 2018 Board of Elections meeting adjourned at 6:49 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 25th day of May 2018. Referenced attachments are available upon request in the Board of Elections' Office.

Floyd L. Jones, Director