

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Addison Lester, Chairman
Darryl Hicks
Aaron Wright

FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

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



140 Stonewall Avenue West
Elections Office, Suite 208
Fayetteville, GA 30214

MINUTES

August 28, 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 August 28, 2018 Board of Elections meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and he thanked those in the audience for attending.

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Lester stated that the audience was likely in attendance for one matter and that Director Jones had information in relation to that matter. He recommended that Director Reports be moved ahead of Public Comments in order for the Director's Report to be given, and once given the Agenda would follow in published order immediately with Public Comments. Discussion followed.

Mr. Wright moved to move the Director's Report immediately before Public Comments. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Report on Extending Early Voting Hours in Fayette County: Director Jones reviewed the information provided to the Board in March 2018 as reason for not extending voting hours in Fayette County. He further provided findings from the *Brennan Center for Justice- Early Voting: What Works?* and he also provided the conclusion from The Washington Post entitled: "Why don't American's vote? We're too busy" authored by Scott Clement. Copies of the cited reports, identified as "Attachment 1," follow these minutes and are made an official part hereof.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Paul Oddo: Board Member Aaron Wright read an email into the record from Fayetteville City Councilman Paul Oddo who did not support extending voting hours. A copy of the email, identified as "Attachment 2," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

Leonard Presberg: Mr. Presberg stated that the general sentiment that Fayette County does well enough does not aim high enough. He thought the Board should look for ways to make sure everyone has the ability to vote, and he thought the job of the Board was to encourage voters to vote while providing the opportunities for voters to vote that they may not have if the county limits itself to the minimum standard. He agreed that Fayette County does very well with voter turnout and that there are those who do not vote, but there are others who have trouble getting to the polls during business hours and election hours. He said this was national problem,

and this was an opportunity for Fayette County to rise above the national voting problems and to show all that Fayette does better. He understood that during the elections hours and logistical matters are matters, but they are far outweighed by the civic benefits. He encouraged more opportunities to vote on Saturdays and he also encouraged Sunday voting.

(Director's Note: The audio system did not clearly record the speaker's names. A good faith effort has been made to correctly spell and/or provide the speaker's last name with the acknowledgement that last names may not be correctly recorded.)

Cheryl Cork: (Note- Cork may not be the proper name- audio recording is not distinctive enough to clearly identify the speaker's last name.) Ms. Cork stated that the City of Fayetteville's website reads that it supports the right of citizens to vote. She noted that the traffic in Fayette County is growing worse and working hours often provide roadblocks to people trying to vote. She recommended that the Board to extend to two evening days and to extend to two Sundays to open. She further asked if she can use her debit card everywhere in the state why can she not vote at the nearest precinct.

Jennifer Morratt: Ms. Morratt said she and her husband were discussing this matter earlier in the week and they questioned "Whatever happened to personal responsibility?" He stated that no matter how much early voting is expanded it still takes personal responsibility for a person to actually vote. She stated that she is retired, but she recalled in earlier years where a person had to be 21 years old to vote and there was one special day for voting. She said people did not miss voting since voting was so important. She stated that voting is a great privilege that requires responsibility, and that there have to be parameters around voting in order to have a good, solid system. She did not believe extended voting hours should or need to be expanded.

Darryl Anderson: Ms. Anderson said she had been a poll manager for 17 years and was in fact the first poll manager hired by former Elections Supervisor Carolyn Combs. She said she knew the Elections Office intimately and she spoke on behalf of the Elections Office. She said she knew the polls and knows who comes to vote and when. She said her experience is that people do not come to vote except during presidential elections. She recalled many elections where she could sit at her polling place and play games on her cell phone. She understood there is a need for possibly expanding hours during a presidential election, but she was realistic to the perception that the early voting location that may get a line is the Peachtree City location. She encouraged everyone to show up to vote. She said one of the concerns she has had about the Elections Office is to make sure the Elections Office is more diverse in its hiring practices.

Randy Hough: Mr. Hough stated that given the statistics provided by the Director, Fayette County ranks highly not only statewide but nationally. He said Mr. Presberg's comments seemed to give those statistics "just a sigh" rather than acknowledging the good results. He had the ideal is that everyone who has an obligation to vote to actually vote. He said the government does not have an obligation to get everyone to vote since individuals have that obligation. He said he has to meet those obligations and has never missed an opportunity to vote. He pointed out that everyone in the audience was able to make it to the meeting which began at 5:00 p.m., since that was the appointed time. He stated that given the amount of time to vote during the election there should be an ability to show up to vote on time and fulfil their obligation. He stated that the government provides the opportunity to vote but the citizen has to be responsible enough to vote. He suggested that the notion of a person needing "one more hour" or "one more day" given the amount of time already provided to vote early was "patently absurd."

Dawn Oparah: Ms. Oparah stated that when voting was only on Tuesday the schools would always close down to allowing voting. She said working schedules and many other things have changed from that time until now. She suggested there are times when access and opportunity to vote are limited and may be even more limited with an historic election on the horizon. She wanted to make sure everyone had access and opportunity to vote so she supported extending voting hours.

Bonnie Williamson: Mrs. Williamson commended the Board of Elections for the job it does but stated it should not settle for "good enough" when it can be better. She stated that it cannot be known if there is a need to remain open later if there is not even an attempt to see if there is that need. She suggested that retired people may have opportunities to vote in the hours already available, but that younger generations may not have the same opportunities given their family and work-related obligations. She concluded by giving her support for trying the longer hours.

Claudia Eisenberg: Ms. Eisenberg stated she has voted since she was 18 years of age and she recalled a time that in order to vote absentee there had to be letter from the employer or a doctor's excuse. She said today has a better system and that opportunity is provided. She said she had heard the reasons given for having more hours, but given the number of days to vote plus absentee by mail, she could not see how providing more hours with more money would make the opportunities much better.

Susan Samson: Ms. Samson said voting is a right, not a privilege, and that voters need to be given the opportunity to vote. She stated that voting by mail is a real option for people who know they have that ability. She said she is a Deputy Registrar and she knows many who do not know about Absentee by Mail voting. She encouraged the Elections Board to educate the voters on the options they have to vote. She further suggested that providing a Sunday to vote would be exceptional.

Terry Williamson: Mr. Williamson said Fayette County, compared to other counties in Georgia is very politically active, and that as a state Georgia may be very high with regard to voter participation, but he stated that from a national perspective, the United States' participation in the voting process is abysmal. He said he has worked in the international level and has observed other nations be much more active in elections. He said it mystified him why any Elections Board would not be interested in bringing more people into the voting process. He suggested that the hours may be long and he had compassion about that, but that is what the workers signed up to do. He added that he had not heard of the costs for extending hours. He said everyone needs to be concerned about spending taxpayer's money, and he asked if there was a way to flex hours in order to meet the request for extended hours.

Pat Ernest: Ms. Ernest stated that it seems like Georgia has an incredibly generous voting schedule already. She thanked the Board for its work and said she prays for each Board member. She added that she did not see the need to spend more taxpayers' money in order to have earlier voting. She said this was a matter of priorities and choices and that it involved only one day a year. She suggested people could be adults and do the right thing.

Eileen Meratha: Ms. Meratha said she has formerly lived in Washington State where a ballot was always mailed to the home and there is always access. She said voting is a right. She said there are people who have strenuous schedules and who live in poverty in Fayette County. She said there needs to be an effort to provide opportunity to those who are less privileged to vote, to educate them, and to teach them how to get to the polls. She thought there were amazing ideas to be explored, and that the county could help the citizens do their part by meeting them halfway.

Maria Rosenbach: Ms. Rosenbach stated she was the person who worked two jobs non-stop. She understood there is a cause and effect for changing hours, but there are real people who are not able to vote given their circumstances, and she encouraged extended voting hours.

Allison West: Ms. West stated that not everyone has the ability to take off their jobs and vote or to ignore other responsibilities. She said she is a full time student who does not have a flexible schedule. She understood that Fayette County does better than other counties, but it does not mean it cannot do better.

Tyrone Jones: Mr. Jones stated that it sounds like there is adequate amount of time for voting. Mr. Jones stated that there is a number of people who do not vote and he asked what number of those simply would not vote versus those who are disenfranchised from the vote.

Randy Ognio: Mr. Ognio agreed with Councilman Oddo and he asked if research had been conducted to support that three weeks of early voting created a larger turnout than just one day of voting. He suggested that there has not been that big of an increase given early voting. He asked "when the effort stop?" He said the longer the time for vote is a longer time for corruption or voter fraud. He said an absentee ballot does not require longer hours since the ballot will be mailed to you. He asked again where the matter stop.

Carol Springsteen: Ms. Springsteen stated that across America not many places have early voting. She said early voting is a privilege that is given to Georgia in order to exercise the right to vote. She said employees will let their workers vote, there are absentee ballots, and there are ample opportunities. She stated there are other ample opportunities to vote and that this is a want, not a need, to extend voting hours.

Director Jones replied to Cheryl Cork's question about the ability to vote in any precinct by saying this matter was broached at the July 27, 2018 Board of Elections Meeting. He suggested that Vote Centers were the way to address her question and that he was personally in favor of enacting Vote Centers as opposed to the current vote by assigned precinct that is currently in place.

Regarding Mr. Williamson's question about shifting the hours, Mr. Jones stated it was something that could be looked into. Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough added that there is law requiring certain hours that may inform this question as well.

Chairman Lester asked Director Jones when he needed a decision from the Board on this matter. Mr. Jones replied the sooner the better so that the word can be provided to the voting public. Chairman Lester added that information would be provided via the paper and social media.

Betty Davis: Ms. Davis asked if Fayette County had a database so that it could notify citizens of the happenings in Fayette County. Director Jones replied that an attempt was made some years ago so that citizens could be informed through a free subscription service of which events were occurring in Fayette County. He stated that the effort required citizens to subscribe however, and that the effort failed since communication.

Mr. Hicks stated that he starts from the other end since he is, by nature, customer focused. He thought that as society, nation, and community how you encourage more people to vote. He said he is often stuck with the thought about "why do we really not want to early vote." He stated that the math for extending hours is relatively small, then what is the reason to not strive to get as many people as possible to vote. He said he wanted more people to vote and that everyone is encouraged to vote. He asked why people build a wall and say "we've done enough." He said he did not want the society to devolve into a matter of not wanting someone to vote "since it may impact me and my vote." Someone in the audience began snickering at which point Mr. Hicks stated that he did not interrupt or snicker when others spoke and that there should be respect for each other even in disagreement. He said if we have the opportunity to encourage more people to vote then we should encourage them to vote. He said it is unknown what the outcome is until it is tried. He asked why not try something. He said this not about one side than other side, but that, if he had an opportunity then he would try to open more opportunity without overly burdening the staff.

Mr. Wright said it was a pleasure to serve on the Board and that he had much agreement with what Mr. Hicks had to say. He said the Board had to be mindful of being good stewards of the county and the trust placed in them by Fayette County. He said there was a lot of commonality in desire, but the question is how to execute with the resources allotted to the county. He pointed out that his daughter accommodated him to the meeting and he is no stranger to being a parent with responsibilities. He said he felt good about the current voting process since it is secure. He said there is potential change at the state level that may provide additional customer service. He thought the people should be looking at the changes coming from the State in the next legislative session. He stated that he is in favor of expanding awareness of early voting but not in extending voting hours at it stands. Mr. Wright added that any change that he would be in favor of, initially, should be a one-time change and not to have changes from election to election unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Chairman Lester said he was in agreement with much of the comments that were given. He said he was not in favor of Sunday voting, but if flexing hours would help some commuting voters. He said the biggest issue at hand is apathy and getting people to take personal responsibility. He said despite the hours people who want to vote will vote.

Mr. Hicks asked for Director Jones to provide a cost analysis to shift the hours. Mr. Stough added that the law does not allow for less than normal business hours. Mr. Wright added that when policy changes come, and future changes comes, and the Georgia Legislature makes can add to voter confusion. He suggested that the changes need to be made once and not constantly in order to avoid voter confusion.

The Board directed Mr. Jones to provide the cost analysis for potential changes and to present them at the September meeting.

Commissioner Rousseau Request: Director Jones stated he had been asked to give a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners concerning elections security. He stated that the matter should be limited to what Fayette County does and not

broadened into state security matters, especially since the state is in current litigation. Mr. Hicks stated the conversation should be on county processes.

Educational Purposes: Mr. Wright added that there had been some discussion about upcoming legislative changes at a coming meeting. Director Jones stated that the county is moving toward a Governors Election and, given the other tasks at hand, he asked the Board's indulgence to bring some of the items introduced at the July meeting up at a future date, potentially even in January since there is no Board meeting in December. The Board agreed to the request.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consideration of staff's request to approve the July 27, 2018 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Wright moved to approve the July 17, 2018 Board of Elections' Meeting Minutes. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

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.

Mr. Wright moved to approve staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Elector's List who are registered in the State of Georgia's Secretary of State Voter Registration System as deceased. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 3," 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.

Mr. Wright moved to approve staff's recommendation to remove registered Fayette County voters from the Elector's 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 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 4," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

OLD BUSINESS:

4. Director to provide an update on the Elections Trailer and potential use of Fire Station #4. This matter was last discussed at the July 27, 2018 Board of Elections meeting.

Director Jones reminded the Board of the problems with the current Elections Trailer. He stated he had emailed the Director of Buildings and Grounds and County Administrator Steve Rapson concerning the use of Fire Station #4. He provided several reasons why Fire Station #4 is an optimal place for Elections equipment. He stated he discussed the matter with Fire Chief David Scarbrough who agreed it may be a great place for Elections. Mr. Jones stated the Fire Chief had mentioned a reimbursement of about \$5,000 would likely need to happen so that the Fire Fund could be reimbursed, but that the Fire Chief was providing an off-the-cuff figure that may likely change. He stated that the Building and Grounds Department have initially stated they think using the Fire Station is a good fit for the Elections Department. Mr. Jones stated he was informed that the Public Defender's Office was

looking to move out of the building as well, and he said if that happened he would love for the entire building to be used for Election Purposes.

Chairman Lester asked when new Fire Station #4 would be built. Director Jones replied that the Fire Chief mentioned New Fire Station #4 would be built in 12 to 15 months, even though the Building and Grounds had speculated the new fire station could be built in a matter of three to five months.

The Board did not take action or provide direction on this matter. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 5," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

NEW BUSINESS:

5. Review and discussion concerning the November 6, 2018 Dual Election to be held in Fayette County.

Director Jones stated there will be two different elections occurring simultaneously. He said the first election includes federal, state, and county questions. The second will involve city questions for only those residents of the City of Fayetteville and the City of Peachtree City. He explained the reason that drives dual voting.

Mr. Jones also spoke about the need to enter into Intergovernmental Agreements and about a few methodologies available on how to charge the cities. He recommended that the cities be charged based on their number of citizens who chose to vote for city matters. He explained how he came to his conclusion to recommend the third billing option.

Chairman Lester asked if the cities had been made aware of potential costs. Mr. Jones replied that he had informed Peachtree City Clerk Betsy Tyler and City of Fayetteville Clerk Anne Barksdale of potential costs, but he could not say if the clerks had informed their cities' leadership.

The Board agreed to bill the cities with Method Number 3 as presented. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 6," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

6. Consideration of staff's recommendation to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Fayetteville for the purpose of conducting the municipality's 2018 Special Called Election(s), and authorization for the Chairman and Elections Director to sign said agreement.

Mr. Hicks moved to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Fayetteville. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 7," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

7. Consideration of staff's recommendation to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Peachtree City for the purpose of conducting the municipality's 2018 Special Called Election(s), and authorization for the Chairman and Elections Director to sign said agreement.

Mr. Hicks moved to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Peachtree City. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 8," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

8. Consideration of staff's request to allow Fayette County residents who desire to serve as volunteers with the Elections Office to work as unpaid volunteers under staff supervision.

Director Jones stated that there is a poll manager who wants to be a part of the county under Election Supervisor April Crosby's supervision so that she can come and fill her hands with something to do. He stated that earlier in the day, a second person has asked to work as a volunteer as well. He stated there was a potential history where a similar request was made and turned down.

He said the Human Resources Department did not have a problem with volunteers working for the Elections Office and even provided a form that the Library uses for its volunteers.

Mr. Wright stated his concern was not Human Resources related but confidentiality related since they will have sensitive voter data. He also did not know what the administrative step would be to have someone like that be a volunteer around sensitive voter information.

Assistant County Attorney Patrick Stough asked the Board for some time to research this matter from a legal perspective. The Board agreed to Mr. Stough's request. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 9," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

9. Discussion concerning security in the Fayette County Election's Office.

Mr. Wright mentioned that he has been on the Board since 2016 and has had a chance to network with other Election's officials. He stated that because the county election staff deals with the general public, sensitive information, and felons in their capacity as felons, it can cause very heated exchanges. He said it has resulted in heated exchanges and general security concerns. He said he wanted to explore the option about how county personnel can take care of themselves. He said he wanted to make sure anyone who comes into contact with felons will have security. He said there have been discussions with the some commissioners and with the Sheriff's Office about security concerns and then he asked Director Jones to provide an update on where the matter currently stands.

Mr. Jones stated he placed a request for security measures in January 2018. Over the following months, there were meetings with the Marshal's Office and with Ultimate Security about what measures could be added. He said the discussion was placed on hold from May until the end of the runoff elections since he was necessarily focused on the elections, but after the July runoff he reached out to determine where the security process stood. He discovered that the matter was still under consideration and discussion after nearly eight months. It was only within the past three weeks that the security had been approved although no one had yet come to the Elections Office to install security. He suggested that the county needs to provide security but, if not, then it does not need to punish those who chose to secure themselves.

Mr. Hicks asked if the security in discussion was a physical person or other measures. Mr. Jones replied it was other measures such as panic buttons, cameras, and similar measures. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hicks stated that the best approach was to provide for physical building security and even consider enhanced security- similar to what is in the Finance Office- so that unauthorized individuals would not be able to get behind the counter to where voter information is located. He did not believe arming the employees was prudent from a liability perspective and the exposure it could place Fayette County in. Mr. Hicks concluded that he would not lobby to change county policy regarding the ability of employees to be armed.

Mr. Wright agreed there needed to be physical security added. He also added that he trusted the employees more than a "nare-do-well" who would come off the street armed. Mr. Wright suggested that he was open to having discussions with the powers that be in order to change the policy.

Chairman Lester decided that the best course is to allow the already approved security measures to be implemented, to determine what other security should be added, and then discussion may occur about other needs for security. The Board agreed to Chairman Lester's recommendation. A copy of this request, identified as "Attachment 10," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

ATTORNEY'S REPORTS:

There was no Attorney Report.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS:

Mr. Wright: Mr. Wright stated it was good to see such good participation at the meeting. He also encouraged everyone to pay attention to the upcoming meeting and changes at the legislature and for everyone to have their voices heard.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Lester moved to adjourn the August 28, 2018 Board of Elections Meeting. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

The Board of Elections meeting was adjourned at 7:11 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 September 2018. Referenced attachments are available upon request in the Board of Elections' Office.

Floyd L. Jones, Director