

CLAYTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATIONS

Regular Business Meeting
4:30 PM

April 14, 2020

APPROVED POST SUMMARY MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Wesley, Vice-Chair Foster Hall, Secretary Johnson, Treasurer Givens, Board Member Pullar, Director Dozier, Supervisor Houston, Attorney Reed, and Elections & Registration Assistant Garrett.

REGULAR BUSINESS BOARD MEETING

1. Chair called the meeting to order.

2. Moment of silence observed.

3. Adoption of Agenda:

Motion made by Vice Chair Foster-Hall, seconded by Treasurer Givens. Vote Unanimous. Motion carried.

4. Approval of March 10, 2020 Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Motion made by Board Member Pullar, seconded by Vice-Chair Foster-Hall to approve the March 10, 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Vote Unanimous. Motion carried.

5. Approval of March 18, 2020 Special Called Board Meeting minutes.

Motion made by Board Member Pullar, seconded by Vice-Chair Foster-Hall to approve the March 18, 2020 Special Called Board Meeting Minutes. Vote Unanimous. Motion carried.

6. *PUBLIC COMMENT*: Citizens will be given a three-minute maximum time limit to speak before the Board of Elections and Registration about various topics, issues, and concerns. Public comments will be limited to thirty (30) minutes. Following thirty minutes of hearing from the public, the Board of Elections and Registration will allow the remainder of citizens who have signed up to be heard at the next regular business meeting.

In-person Public Comment during of the Clayton County Board of Elections & Registration Regular Business Meeting have been temporarily suspended amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Comments can be submitted online via submission form located at:

<https://www.claytoncountyga.gov/government/board-of-commissioners/county-boards/elections-and-registration-board/board-of-elections-registration-meeting-public-comment-form>

1. Larry Auerbach submitted an online public comment: The Secretary of State has sent absentee ballot application to all active registered voters. If feasible, it would be good to also send applications to inactive registered voters. These people may legally vote if they have not moved. They are in danger of losing their right to vote by missing this election. Also, I have worked with the Clayton Board of Elections office for some years now and I want to express my appreciation for the professionalism and proficiency of the office.

7. Old Business:

A. Board Directives, as necessary

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Director Dozier informed the Board of the recognition of outstanding By-Laws and recommended tabling the discussion until a future meeting.

9. New Business

A. Director's Report

Director Dozier informed the Board that the Election had been postponed twice. On March 14, 2020 Secretary of State Raffensberger postponed the Presidential Preference Primary that was scheduled to be held March 24, 2020. The new date was in conjunction with the 2020 General Primary to be held May 19, 2020. April 9, 2020, Secretary of State Raffensberger postponed the Presidential Preference Primary again, along with the General Primary scheduled for May 19, 2020 to a new date of June 9, 2020 due to Governor Brian Kemp's extension of the declaration of Georgia in a Public Health State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Director Dozier informed the Board that any ballots cast during the Advanced Voting in the March Presidential Primary Election and as well as any absentee applications submitted by mail will be counted and processed.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the Clayton County Board of Commissioners issued an ordinance to closed county operations. Further, an ordinance included a Shelter in Place from the Clayton County Board of Commissioners and Governor Brian Kemp.

Director Dozier informed the Board that despite the closure the Board of Elections and Registration Office is deemed as essential therefore, the office has only been closed to the public. We have been working 5+ days a week in order to meet all elections deadline driven tasks associated with the elections as well as make the adjustments as changes evolve in the elections process. The office is implementing and following guidelines as provided by the Center for Disease Control in order to reduce the exposure to COVID-19, including maintaining six-foot distancing, wearing gloves and mask, as well as sanitizing countertops as needed.

Director Dozier informed the Board that if a voter casted a ballot in the March Presidential Primary Election before postponement, the ballot would be counted and the voter will have the opportunity to cast a ballot for the General Primary Election on June 9, 2020. If a voter did not have the opportunity to cast a ballot during Advanced Voting before the postponement of the Election, the voter will have the opportunity to cast a ballot for the Presidential Preference as well as the General Primary Election through the usage of a combined ballot.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the office is still awaiting a sample ballot from the Secretary of State's office which may be delayed due to the adjustments of the new Election dates. Press releases are being scheduled with Clayton County Communications to be sent via media blast.

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Board Member Pullar expressed that she has concerns about the staff still working in the office during this pandemic despite taking the recommended precautions and inquired on the possibilities of collaborating with Information Technology to be able to work remotely from home.

Director Dozier informed the Board that due to the nature of work and access to confidential information required to process applications, the staff are unable to take the information to their homes in order to reduce vulnerability. Governor Kemp deemed Elections as essential business under the state Public Health Emergency. Therefore, Election Officials are required to report to conduct the business of elections.

Board Member Pullar inquired on the announcement of other county offices in the state being able to close and work remotely through the Firefly statewide messaging system.

Director Dozier informed the Board that some other counties are significantly smaller with less volume, which would allow them to work on a reduced work force.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the office was able to work on reduced days up until the fluctuation of absentee ballot applications increased in the office. The office has minimized contact by using separate entrances as well as using the telephones to communicate with internal colleagues.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the office is following the guidelines as prescribed by Governor Kemp, the CDC, and Clayton County EMS Director Chief Merkinson. The office staff is frequently sanitizing common areas and looking to implement a screening process that the County has provided prior to new hires coming onboard.

Director Dozier informed the Board that as of April 1, there are 197,491 (183,996 Active; 13,495 Inactive) voters in Clayton County.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the new dates for Advance Voting for the Presidential Preference Primary and General Primary has been set by Secretary of State Raffensberger to begin May 18, 2020 and will end June 5, 2020. The second Saturday for Saturday Voting is May 30, 2020 and Sunday Voting date is set for May 31, 2020. The last day of Advance Voting will be June 5, 2020. The new dates for Advance Voting for the General Primary Runoff will be July 20, 2020 – August 7, 2020.

Director Dozier informed the Board that Secretary of State Raffensberger set the new Voter Registration deadline for the June 9, 2020 election for Monday, May 11, 2020.

Director Dozier informed the Board that both Election Dates are now the same dates in which the Regular Board of Elections meetings are scheduled to be held. A Board recommendation will be needed in order to change the dates to coincide with the Special Called Board Meeting to certify the elections if applicable.

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The Board discussed holding the Regular Board Meeting in conjunction with the Special Called Board Meeting to certify the June 9, 2020 Combined Election as well as the August 11, 2020 General Primary Runoff, if applicable. The discussion was tabled until a future Board meeting.

Director Dozier informed the Board that poll workers have been surveyed in regards to serving as a poll official on Election Day. Due to COVID-19, we lost a 50% of our Poll Officials however, 80% informed us that they would return once the COVID-10 pandemic subsides.

Director Dozier informed the Board that she would provide a target date in regards to preparation for the June 9, 2020 Election after assessing the progress in the upcoming weeks while making adjustments and learning new policies and information as it is released from the Secretary of State.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the office is receiving an average of 3,000 absentee ballot applications per day. A total of 16,351 absentee ballot applications have been received in the office as of today, April 14, 2020. Out of that total, 11,817 are being processed. 4,545 of those applications are deemed as returned mail/undeliverable. The office has processed 5,506 ballot applications as of yesterday. April 13, 2020.

Director Dozier informed the Board that some absentee applications are being received via email communication that allows for a more tedious process of downloading and resizing in order to interpret the information on the application.

Board Member Pullar inquired on if the United States Post Office will deliver ballots that do not obtain a postal stamp.

Director Dozier informed the Board that no policy has been received from the Secretary of State's office regarding postage however, the Atlanta Journal Constitution released an article regarding postage payment on behalf of the county.

Board Member Pullar expressed that the Board Members should be amenable and reach out to their Commissioner to address this matter and that the County should make means to incur the cost for postage.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the office is going to provide voter education on how voters can submit their voter applications via email communication that includes taking pictures and utilizing scanning applications from their phones.

Director Dozier informed the Board that if the County were to incur the cost of postage for every registered voter in Clayton County to mail their ballot, the charge to the county would be approximately \$100,000.

Board Member Pullar made a recommendation to the Elections office to request the Commissioners to produce a short video collaborating with Communications educating voters on how to submit the absentee ballot application via postal mail and email communication to include filling out the form, sealing the form, and submitting it to be processed in the Election office.

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Director Dozier informed the Board that the State Elections Board will hold a meeting that includes discussion of absentee drop boxes being allotted within the counties. The Office is in discussion with the County legal department to evaluate the possibilities of drop boxes being utilized for the upcoming Election.

Attorney Reed informed the Board that the County is preparing for budget amendments due to the current state of the county. Drop boxes will give voters the options to cast a ballot another source of casting a ballot without incurring the county extra expenses.

Board Member Pullar inquired on the security of the ballots while being delivered as it pertains to the election legalities.

Attorney Reed informed the Board that the County is working with the Elections office to assure that the drop box will be placed strategically to secure that ballots are not being mishandled.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the office is currently researching and exploring options that will ensure that we are in compliance with the Emergency State Election Board rule as well as security and safety measures along with exploring budgetary friendly options for the County.

Board Member Pullar expressed that the office should prioritize what is important despite monetary cost associated with businesses that are crucial to executing the Election.

Director Dozier informed the Board that the County has requested to reduce departmental budgets by 15% as well as implement a hiring freeze as a result of the possible reduced tax revenue.

Director Dozier informed the Board that she will keep the Board updated as changes and adjustments are made to the office from the Secretary of State and State Election Board.

Chair Wesley expressed her gratitude for the staff's diligent work during this pandemic on behalf of the Board.

Motion made by Board Member Pullar to Director Dozier to request the County Communications Department to release a video on how to fill out, capture a photograph and mail their absentee ballot application back to the county office, seconded by Secretary Johnson. Vote Unanimous. Motion passed.

Treasurer Givens informed the Board that there is communication on social media and websites that provides direction on how to properly complete and absentee ballot application.

Director Dozier informed the Board that she would contact the Communications Department about exploring options for releasing footage that provides direction on how to complete an absentee ballot application while keeping the County Office and Board in a nonpartisan position.

G. Hearing to remove felon's from elector's list.

There were no felons present for hearing.

H. Hearing to remove deceased from elector's list.

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Motion made by Board Member Pullar, seconded by Treasurer Givens, to remove 50 deceased voters from the electors' list. Vote Unanimous. Motion passed.

8. Executive session:

There was no Executive Session.

9. Adjourn.

Motion made by Board Member Pullar to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting at 5:31 P.M. Motion seconded by Vice-Chair Foster-Hall. Vote Unanimous. Motion passed.

{SIGNATURES ON NEXT PAGE}

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CAROL WESLEY, CHAIR

DOROTHY FOSTER HALL, VICE-CHAIR

DARLENE JOHSON, SECRETARY

DIANE GIVENS, TREASURER

PATRICIA PULLAR, BOARD MEMBER

ATTEST:

BRIANNA GARRETT, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT