

CLAYTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION

Regular Business Meeting  
4:30 p.m.

August 8, 2017

SUMMARY MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Dorothy Hall, Vice-Chairman Harry Osborne, Secretary Ruth Ash, Board Member Patricia Pullar, Board Member Carol Wesley, Director Shauna Dozier, and Clerk Allison Ruotolo. NOT PRESENT: Elections and Registration Supervisor Kamardi Carter.

1. Chairman Hall called the meeting to order.
2. Moment of silence observed.
3. Motion by Board Member Pullar, second by Secretary Ash, to adopt the agenda for the August 8, 2017 Regular Business Meeting of the Board of Elections and Registration. Vote unanimous.
4. Motion by Board Member Pullar, second by Secretary Ash, to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2017 Regular Business Meeting of the Board of Elections and Registration. Vote unanimous.
5. PUBLIC COMMENTS:
  1. Benjamin Galimore of Clayton County addressed the board regarding his receipt of notification of removal due to a felony conviction. Mr. Galimore stated he is not a convicted felon but is on probation.

Vice-Chairman Osborne stated he would like to postpone action on #29 of the August 8, 2017 Felon List until further information can be obtained and placed on the next agenda to give the office time to check into the case. Mr. Osborne stated he appreciated Mr. Galimore's interest in maintaining his status and privilege to vote. The board will contact Mr. Galimore upon receipt of information.

6. Old Business:
  - A. Director Dozier stated she would email the 2018 Fiscal Budget Year enhancements approved by the Board of Commissioners to the board.
7. New Business:
  - A. Director's Report.
  - B. Hearing to remove felons from elector's list.
  - C. Hearing to remove deceased voters from elector's list.
8. Director Dozier informed the board of pre-proposed renovations of the Elections Center/Former 911 Bunker and presented a preliminary blue print that would accommodate a Police Training facility and house the Information Technology Data Center in order to conserve county funds in the amount of \$275,000. Accommodations include housing eight Information Technology staff members, placing the Police Training facility in the rear of the bunker, and reducing/restructuring space for the Elections Center. The renovations will provide for an elections training room and an opportunity to update security. Ms. Dozier stated the information was brought to her attention last week and she has been working with Deputy Chief Operating

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Officer Alex Cohilas and the Department of Information Technology. Director Dozier explained possible options for a building in the future but the county is looking to reduce the number of buildings used in the county instead of increasing use.

Board Member Pullar asked how the changes would affect the voting equipment.

Ms. Dozier explained the Department of Information Technology would be housed on the other side of the building in the rear and a secure door with badge access and security cameras would separate the space.

Board Member Pullar asked about Election Night Check In setup.

Director Dozier expounded on a possible layout of the space but informed the board the renovations are still in the preliminary stages. Ms. Dozier wanted to bring the information to the board for their recommendations and opinions.

Board Member Pullar stated there would still have to be a place for public observation.

Ms. Dozier illustrated possible space solutions for public observation.

Board Member Pullar inquired about inclement weather and suggested proposing a canopy during renovation discussions.

Director Dozier stated she would present the suggested canopy during discussions and assured the board the check in center in the Elections Office would still be used.

Ms. Dozier stated renovations will probably begin within the next six months and that she has explained the security of the machines, the GEMS server, and the upcoming elections during the discussions.

Board Member Pullar inquired about and suggested improving the Wi-Fi connection in the building.

Director Dozier informed Ms. Pullar she has already discussed Wi-Fi enhancements with the Information Technology Director.

Chairman Hall asked Ms. Dozier about her mentioning the renovation being a temporary solution and the possibility of the Archives building becoming a permanent location.

Director Dozier stated it may be an option in the future but is contingent on when the new Department of Information Technology building will be completed. The Archives building on Battlecreek Road will be utilized to secure voting equipment during renovations.

Board Member Pullar suggested moving Elections and Registration to the Archives building since the county is looking for space for other departments. Ms. Pullar stated surrounding counties have dedicated buildings for their operations while our department is growing exponentially and is still where it was ten years ago.

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Ms. Dozier stated she would continue to make inquiries on options during upcoming renovation discussions.

Board Member Pullar expressed concern that the Elections Division is being viewed as second tier and asked why the office was not brought to the table from the beginning with all the plans that have already been drawn not understanding there are mandated laws requiring election equipment be secured, or if the space was going to be sufficient for the operation we hold. Ms. Pullar stated Director Dozier should have been included to outline what the office needs are as opposed to being given what the county wants the department to have.

Ms. Pullar recommended the Deputy Chief Operating Officer come to the September board meeting to discuss the plan period and to make a compromise in terms of the space allocated to the department along with a definitive time table as to how the construction will take place since the needs of the office are still not being taken into consideration and we were not at the table from the beginning. A calendar of events was not requested and the office does not want to be caught up assuming construction will be finished in the time frame given.

Chairman Hall agreed with Ms. Pullar and stated they seem to be making plans for us instead of involving us in the plans.

Board Member Wesley stated she believes they need to be a little more inclusive with the plans instead of this is what is going to happen while others have been at the table. Also, if they are unable to attend the meeting then supplying all the information should be sufficient.

Chairman Hall stated there have been a couple of requests from the board requesting additional space.

Board Member Pullar expressed concern receiving less space which goes along with getting new elected officials and having to start over with needs from the beginning. Ms. Pullar stated that is why the board members need to be involved to assist the Director and possibly get a better result.

9. Director Dozier stated while on the subject of space, she found out the space used for Advance Voting is being repurposed to temporarily house Planning and Zoning. Ms. Dozier contacted Mr. Stanford upon learning this information to express her grave concern, find out about a timeline, and what can be done. Director Dozier continues to work with Mr. Stanford and understands the Tax Assessor's Office is relocating to Annex 3 which is under construction. Until the Tax Assessor's Office is relocated and the new department in Planning and Zoning can move into that space, they are temporarily being housed in the Ceremonial Courtroom. To what date she is not certain but she has explained to them for the municipal elections she accommodate space in the Elections Office to conduct Advance Voting but for 2018 she will not be able to do that. That is the only choice because the office is required by law to have an Advance Voting location within the building the Elections and Registration Office is housed.

Board Member Pullar asked to send an email from the Board of Elections and Registration if there is going to be any changes in terms of our office space or reallocation of our equipment space to be notified as soon as possible, or meet to discuss it before an unilateral decision is made. Ms. Pullar stated this does not make any sense. This is the second thing being taken away

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without a seat at the table to discuss what we are going to do. It looks like decisions are being made without giving any thought to what transpires with other departments, specifically the Board of Elections and Registration. Ms. Pullar suggested asking Mr. Stanford to come to the meeting and writing an email voicing the board's concerns in reference to all the changes being made without their knowledge and input to ascertain if there are any other decisions being made that includes the office. It seems as if the Board of Elections is treated as if it is not an integral part of the operation of the county so it does not matter.

Chairman Hall asked if the same individuals over making the request about the transformation of the Elections Center are the same people over the Planning and Zoning, or is that a different committee.

Ms. Dozier stated she is unaware.

Board Member Pullar stated the Chief Operating Officer is over all of that.

Director Dozier stated she spoke with Mr. Stanford today and he submitted information to those involved to see about expediting the construction in Annex 3 so the Tax Assessor's Office can relocate and we can use this location. Ms. Dozier stated she expressed her grave concern about having 176,000 voters in the office because she understands it housed there before and it was chaotic.

Ms. Pullar stated she would not say it was chaotic but limited in space and an uncomfortable situation.

Chairman Hall stated she would work with Director Dozier in obtaining more information to compose a memo to the COO and forward copies to the board.

10. Director Dozier stated the office received a petition from the City of Jonesboro to verify 228 pages with an estimated 1,210 signers to be turned back into the city by August 17<sup>th</sup>. The staff is undergoing training to verify the petition. After completing the petition, credit will be issued to the voters who signed. The petition submitted is to seek a permit to sale alcohol in the City of Jonesboro.

11. Director Dozier informed the board the intergovernmental agreements for the City of Jonesboro and the City of Morrow were approved by the Board of Commissioners on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

12. Director Dozier expounded on a municipal roundtable discussion conducted with all cities on August 3<sup>rd</sup> with the exception of the City of College Park to establish an annual meeting to discuss best practices, concerns, needs, and expectations with timelines for upcoming elections.

13. Ms. Dozier stated the office continues to work on the City of Riverdale redistricting with an expectation to be completed next week. The office is working with the city on voter education surrounding the redistricting going from at large to wards. Director Dozier explained she is working with the Department of Information Technology to put something on the Click Clayton app, working with GIS to build a website illustrating the changes, and will attend town hall

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meetings to explain how to use the website, receiving the precinct card, and discuss the ballot. Ms. Dozier will present a report at the next meeting regarding the website and updates.

Board Member Pullar requested putting it on CCTV.

14. Ms. Dozier stated as of August 1<sup>st</sup> there are 165,424 registered voters.

15. Ms. Dozier informed the board the Secretary of State's Office ran the No Activity for Two General Elections process on July 28<sup>th</sup>. As a result, 17,364 voter statuses were updated to cancelled in Clayton County. In accordance with the election code and retention, the records will be retained for 24 months. The process is part of the election code voter list maintenance.

Director Dozier stated that on August 8<sup>th</sup> those impacted by the National Change of Address Confirmation notices will go into inactive status because the 40-day clock to respond to the notice, update voter registration, or make contact with the office will end from June 30<sup>th</sup>. Voters will remain eligible to vote in inactive status. Status will update to active when updates are made to the voter's record.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Osborne, second by Chairman Hall, requesting the attorney's office apprise themselves of the lawsuit filed in regard to the cancelled voters by the ACLU and the NAACP; and inform the board of the present status and how, if possible, this board can join with the ACLU and NAACP in regard to the lawsuit against the Secretary of State's office. Vote unanimous.

Vice-Chairman Osborne stated he contacted Director Dozier a couple of weeks ago or last week regarding information in the newspaper about the lawsuit having merit and the action of the Secretary of State's office implementing the present law is in fact an act of voter suppression. Mr. Osborne stated he does not want to be a party to it. He doesn't know if legally we can engage in the same or similar action. Mr. Osborne believes this is an activity by our legislature to suppress the vote of certain vulnerable people in our population. Mr. Osborne is asking for a legal opinion of what the lawsuit is about and they offer a legal opinion if there is a way to for the board to support the action that is being sought by the ACLU and NAACP in the lawsuit.

Board Member Pullar stated she would like the voters notified of their purging voter registration status by postcard or letter going forward and for it to be an office practice going forward.

Motion by Board Member Pullar, second by Vice-Chairman Osborne, to send out a letter or postcard to voters that have been cancelled from the electors list according to O.C.G.A. 21-2-235 to advise them of this action and the steps they need to reregister with an amendment to explore other ways of communication with voters outside of postcards and letters by public meetings, programs by the Elections Director, and CCTV so not to be limited to postcards and letters in addressing the situation informing the public and the affected voters of the change in their status. Vote unanimous.

Director Dozier stated she would provide a report of the National Change of Address Confirmations received by the office to process at the next board meeting. Over 4,000 of the returned mail that have forwarding addresses have been sent back out to the forwarded addresses

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of voters to give them the opportunity to update their voter registration. Those belonging to other counties are scanned to the receiving county for immediate review and the hard copy is placed in the mail.

16. Director Dozier stated the office has conducted nine voter education events since the last board meeting to include back to school bashes to register parents and students that are seventeen and a half going into their senior year. Elementary students interested in the process and voters affected by the National Change of Address Confirmation have received demonstrations on how to use the Click Clayton app and the website to update their voter registration onsite. Most of the events were conducted in Commission District 2. The office continues to use resources to seek out events through websites, pages and anything the county advertises.

17. Motion by Vice-Chairman Osborne, second by Board Member Wesley, to remove the list of felons from the electors' list with the exception of #29 being postponed and action on that individual be continued at the next meeting. The board will ask the Elections Director to inquire on the status of Benjamin Galimore. Vote unanimous.

18. Motion by Board Member Pullar, second by Secretary Ash, to remove the list of deceased voters from the electors' list. Vote unanimous.

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**{SIGNATURES NEXT PAGE}**

There being no further business, motion by Board Member Pullar, second by Board Member Wesley to adjourn the Regular Business Meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m. Vote unanimous.

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*Dorothy Foster Hall*

DOROTHY FOSTER HALL, CHAIRMAN

*Harry A. Osborne*

HARRY A. OSBORNE, VICE-CHAIRMAN

*Ruth F. Ash*

RUTH F. ASH, SECRETARY

*Patricia Pullar*

PATRICIA PULLAR, BOARD MEMBER

*Carol Wesley*

CAROL WESLEY, BOARD MEMBER

ATTEST:

*Allison R. Ruotolo*

ALLISON R. RUOTOLO, CLERK

