BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY, GEORGIA
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING
September 9, 2019

Chairman Tim McFalls called the meeting to order. Present were Board Members Terence Dicks, Marcia Brown, and Sherry Barnes. Also present were Executive Director Lynn Bailey, Assistant Director Travis Doss, Board Attorney Rachel Mack, and members of the public.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of the minutes from the August 5, 2019 Regular Monthly Meeting. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the minutes be approved as disseminated. Ms. Brown seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The next agenda item was the Public Hearing on the relocation of the polling location for Precinct 102, which formerly voted at the Crawford Avenue Baptist Church. Staff gave a presentation explaining the following:

- The move was required because the church did not meet the accessibility requirements for a polling place.
- Three locations were under consideration for the move: The Kroc Center, the Bethel AME Church, the Julian Smith Casino
- The precinct would be split along Walton Way to provide better convenience for voters with a portion of the voters reporting to the existing polling location at the Paine College HEAL Complex and the remainder reporting to the newly established polling location at the Kroc Center.
- The effective date for the change would be the March 24, 2019 Presidential Preference Primary
- 1680 voters would be affected by the changes.
- All voters would be notified of the change by first class mail and notice would be posted at the former polling place, as required.

Following the presentation, Chairman McFalls called for any public comments. Comments were as follows:

- Comment regarding the plan for providing adequate notification of the change. Chairman McFalls explained that each active and inactive voter would be directly notified via first class mail. He also explained that staff would use social media, press releases, and advertisements to assist with notifying voters.
- Comment inquiring why Bethel AME Church was not selected as the polling site. It was explained that a determination was made that the Kroc Center offered better voter access and parking.

There were no further comments. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the precinct realignment and polling location changes be approved as presented. Mr. Dicks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion of the replacement of the polling location currently located at the Augusta University Christenberry Fieldhouse. Staff provided the following update:

- After months of study, the only option under consideration is the Friedman Branch Library located at 1447 Jackson Road.
- There are no changes in the projected timeline for the ongoing road construction project at the intersection of Wrightsboro and Jackson Roads. Construction scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2019.
- The current polling location at Christenberry Fieldhouse meets all of the requirements of the law for a polling location, however, City infrastructure in the immediate area is lacking for voters with mobility disabilities who are dependent upon public transit.
- Receiving Board approval for staff to move forward with the administrative steps for relocating a polling place during the September 9, 2019 Regular Monthly Meeting would give staff adequate time for advertising, submitting the change to the Secretary of State's Office, and notifying voters well ahead of the next upcoming election on March 24, 2020.
- Acknowledgement that if the change is put into place, a traffic officer will be hired for each election due to the high concentration of traffic in the area of the Friedman Branch Library.

Board member Terence Dick requested that staff obtain information regarding bus stops and city infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the Friedman Branch for the Board's consideration in making their final decision on the relocation. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that staff proceed with the preliminary steps for the relocation of the voters currently voting at the Augusta University Christenberry Fieldhouse to the Freidman Branch Library effective with the March 24, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary. Mr. Dicks seconded the motion. Chairman McFalls recognized and thanked the staff from Walton Options for Independent Living who were in attendance at the meeting for engaging the Board and spearing heading the relocation of the polling location.

The next item on the agenda was an update on the November 5, 2019 General Municipal Election. Staff reported the following:

- The qualifying period for the November 5, 2019 General Municipal Election ended on Friday, August 23, 2019.
- No election will be required in the City of Hephzibah as only two candidates qualified for the two seats that are open.
- An election will be required in the City of Blythe because five candidates qualified for the two seats that are open. Should a runoff be required, it will be held on December 3, 2019.
- The election in the City of Blythe will be conducted using the current DRE voting system.

The next agenda item was a discussion of the expansion of the hours for Advance Voting. Because not all Board members were in attendance at the meeting, the Board decided by consensus to table this matter until a later date in order to permit full participation in the discussion by all Board members.

The next agenda item was an update on filling the position of Chief Deputy Registrar. Ms. Bailey reported that interviews had been conducted and that she was pleased to announce that Deputy Clerk Katina Joyner had been promoted to Chief Deputy Registrar. Mr. Dicks made a motion to ratify the hiring of Mrs. Joyner for the position of Chief Deputy Registrar. Mrs. Barnes seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was an update on the new voting system. Ms. Bailey reported the following:

- Training has been conducted for the 7 counties piloting the new system for this November's election. 6 will be using the ballot marking devices and 1 will be using hand marked paper ballots.
- All 56 counties who previously purchased ballot on demand hardware and software for printing provisional and absentee paper ballots will be provided with replacement equipment at no additional cost.
- The SOS's Office has established a Rules Committee that will work to develop rules, best practices, and procedures for the new voting system. Executive Director Bailey has been appointed by the Secretary of State as a member of the Rules Committee and will serve as liaison between the State Election Board and an ad hoc Working Group of local election officials dedicated to this project.
- New voting equipment is not expected to be on hand until after the November 2019 General Municipal Elections.
- Plans are underway for the removal and decommissioning of the current voting system.

The next agenda item was Old Business. There was no Old Business.

The next item was New Business. Ms. Bailey reported the following:

- The annual training conference of the Georgia Voter Registration and Election Officials Association would be held in Savannah December 8-11, 2019.
- Requested that the November 11, 2019 Regular Monthly and Certification meeting be rescheduled to Tuesday, November 12, 2019 to accommodate the November 11th Veteran's Day Holiday. The Board agreed by consensus.
- Ms. Bailey stated that she would be away from the office from October 10 – 25, 2019, but that Mr. Doss would be in attendance at the October 14th Regular Monthly Meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Dicks made a motion that the meeting stand adjourned. Mrs. Barnes seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brown, Secretary for the Board

Approved:

Timothy McFalls, Chair