

BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY, GEORGIA  
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom  
May 4, 2020

Item #1 - Chair Tim McFalls called the meeting to order. Present were Board Members Terence Dicks, Bob Finnegan, Sherry Barnes and Marcia Brown. Also present were Executive Director Lynn Bailey, Assistant Director Travis Doss, and Board Attorney Rachel Mack.

Item #2 - Approval of the minutes from the April 20, 2020 Regular Monthly Meeting. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the minutes be approved as disseminated. Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Item #3 - Update on the June 9, 2020 General Primary and Nonpartisan Election. Ms. Bailey reported the following:

Absentee by Mail

- For the June 9<sup>th</sup> General Primary, 15,206 Democratic, 7,676 Republican, and 726 Nonpartisan ballots have been issued electronically and by mail for a total of 23,668 ballots issued thus far. Continuing, Ms. Bailey stated that in previous General Primaries the total number of voters participating was approximately 24,000 voters.
- For the postponed March 24<sup>th</sup> PPP, 1026 ballots were issued electronically and by mail, 786 mail and electronic ballots were returned and are on hand to count, and 2724 AV ballots are on hand and ready to count

Update on drop box installation

The boxes have been received. Plans are being finalized with the Marshal's Department and Central Services for installing boxes and providing required security for the boxes, such as video surveillance, pursuant to the State Election Board Rule permitting the drop boxes. She explained that the drop boxes at all four locations will be installed outdoors and available to voters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the period of time that they are open. Ms. Bailey stated that the goal was to have all four boxes open for the opening day of Advance Voting on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Continuing, Ms. Bailey stated that an instruction/warning poster had been developed by the State and is required to be posted at each box and that the boxes must be emptied once a day at a minimum. She further explained that the location of the drop boxes was required to be posted on the county's website.

### Available Grants from the GA Secretary of State's Office

- Up to \$15,000 matching grant for non-consumable security, accessibility, and general supplies. This grant has been applied for and we expect to receive full reimbursement.
- Up to \$3,000 matching grant for personal protective equipment. This is a new grant and will be applied for when the applications are distributed by the State. We expect to receive full reimbursement.
- Up to \$3,000 matching grant for drop boxes. This is a new grant and will be applied for when the applications are distributed by the State. We expect to receive maximum reimbursement.

The Chair then opened up the floor for questions from the Board on any matter concerning the June 9<sup>th</sup> election. Questions and answers were:

- Is a sensor required inside the drop box that would notify us if someone opened up the door?

Answer: No. The drop boxes are steel boxes mounted to the ground in concrete. Ballot pick up is required every 24 hours and video surveillance of the boxes is required.

- How is security of the ballots guaranteed during transit?

Answer: The State Rule requires that ballots be picked up by two sworn officials. The ballot envelopes are counted on site by the two officials and the number of envelopes recorded onto a Chain of Custody form. The ballots are then placed into a secure container for transport back to the Elections Office. Upon receipt of the ballot envelopes by the Elections Office staff, the container is opened, the envelopes recounted, and the number recorded on the Chain of Custody form. This rule was patterned after the law currently in place for transporting voted ballots and memory cards from the polls to the Tabulation Center on Election Night.

By consensus, the Board accepted the report as information.

Item #4 - Discussion of Opening Advance Voting Sites. Ms. Bailey began the discussion by stating that the purpose for the agenda item was to provide options to the Board for safely operating Advance Voting during the pandemic.

A discussion then ensued regarding the following:

- The various options for Advance Voting hours ranging from opening the Municipal Building only to opening up all of the sites were presented to the Board.

- More and not less poll workers will be needed due to the extra tasks required, such as, paying special attention to line management, sanitizing equipment, and the additional monitoring of voting equipment required with the new system.
- That voters deciding to vote in person, whether during Advance Voting or on Election Day, will likely experience longer than normal wait times as poll workers navigate through the challenges presented by COVID-19 including cleaning equipment between usages and distancing requirements.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the Board adhere to its normal practice of opening the Municipal Building Advance Voting Site on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day prior to the Election and opening up 3 additional satellite sites for six days beginning on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday prior to the date of the Election. The motion passed with Mr. Finnegan voting nay.

Item #5 - Discussion of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Poll Workers. Ms. Bailey explained that this matter was brought up for discussion and tabled during the April Regular Monthly Meeting due to the fluid nature of the circumstances surrounding the pandemic. She stated that since that time, she had spoken with EMA Director Chief Chris James and he made the following recommendations:

- Poll workers be mandated to wear PPE when in direct contact with voters
- Management be trained to offer frequent breaks during the day
- Voters be encouraged to wear a clean face-covering when entering a polling site.

Ms. Bailey continued stating that the proposed policy adhered to the CDC recommendations including reducing crowd size at polling locations, preventative actions poll workers can take, preventative action to be taken at polling locations, and recommendations for processing mail-in ballots. In addition to the overall recommendations of the CDC, the policy also addressed specific procedures put into place by the Board of Elections for voters, poll workers, polling locations, and processing mail-in ballots safely to effectively address the CDC recommendations. Continuing, Ms. Bailey stated that adequate PPE had been procured for both Advance Voting and Election Day poll workers including gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, alcohol wipes and safety glasses

After further discussion, Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the policy for PPE for poll officers and voters be adopted as modified by the insertion of the recommendations by the local Emergency Management Agency. Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion, which carried unanimous.

Continuing the discussion, Mr. Finnegan made a motion that the Board follow staff recommendations to offer each poll worker an additional \$40 hazard pay for each day worked during the June election and the ensuing August runoff. Mrs. Barnes seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Item #6 - Old Business - There was no Old Business to come before the Board

Item #7 - New Business - Ms. Bailey suggested that the Board consider convening a special called meeting for the purpose of bringing the Board up to date on any new information relative to the June 9<sup>th</sup> Election on Monday, May 18, 2020. Mr. Dicks made a motion that the Board convene a special called meeting on Monday, May 18, 2020. Mrs. Brown seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

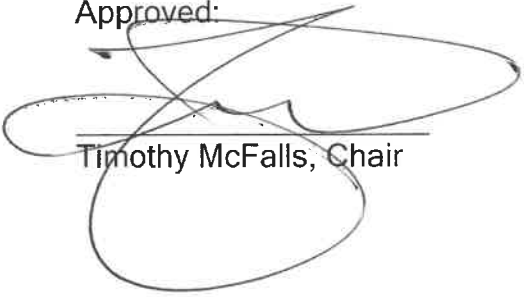
There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brown, Secretary for the Board

Approved:



Timothy McFalls, Chair