

BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY, GEORGIA  
ELECTION CERTIFICATION MEETING  
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom  
August 19, 2020

Item #1 – Call the meeting to order.

Chairman McFalls called the meeting to order and state that the purpose of the meeting was to certify the election results from the August 11, 2020 Nonpartisan Runoff. Present were Board Members Bob Finnegan, Sherry Barnes, Marcia Brown and Terence Dicks. Also present were Executive Director, Lynn Bailey, Assistant Director Travis Doss and Board attorney Rachel Mack.

Item #2 – Consider Provisional or Challenged ballots cast during the August 11, 2020 Nonpartisan Runoff.

Chairman McFalls called on Mr. Doss for a report. Mr. Doss disseminated a report and provided explanations as follows:

Group A – 6 voters cast a provisional ballot out of precinct either because they thought they were at their correct precinct or did not have time to get to their correct precinct. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the ballots be accepted, but duplicated onto a ballot card for the voter's correct precinct. Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Group B – 1 voter was properly registered and at their correct polling place, but could not be located by poll workers on the electronic poll book. Mr. Dicks made a motion to accept and count the ballot. Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Group C – 1 voter cast a provisional ballot on Election Day because they were indicated as having been issued an absentee ballot by mail and a determination on whether or not the voted ballot had yet been returned to the Board of Elections Office could not be made. A subsequent investigation following the election revealed that the voted absentee ballot for this voter had been received and counted. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the provisional ballot be rejected. Mr. Dicks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Group D – 3 ballots placed into a provisional status due to a missing or mismatched signature provided the required documentation thereby providing a cure for their ballot deficiency. Mr. Dicks made a motion that the ballots be accepted and counted. Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The final tally was 11 provisional ballots cast with 10 ballots accepted and 1 ballot rejected. Mr. Doss also presented a statistical report showing from which precinct each provisional ballot was issued and the reason for issuance of the ballot. Chairman McFalls then excused Mr. Doss from the meeting to prepare the final reports for certification.

Item #3 – Recap of the August 11, 2020 Nonpartisan Runoff

Ms. Bailey disseminated an Election Recap report. She explained Election Day points of interest as follows:

### Election Events

The opening and closing the polls worked much better in August than in June. All polling locations were open and ready for voting at 7:00 AM

### Complaints/Issues

- Election Day basically went well. The biggest problem continued to be voters who had previously been issued an absentee ballot by mail appearing at the polls to vote in person. This will be one of the biggest issue that we face moving into November.
- A learning curve still exists for poll workers with operating the new electronic poll books. BOE staff member Jennifer Baker has developed very intuitive training materials that were used for the first time in August. They worked well and we will continue training in this area.
- Continued reminders to the public about the new paper based voting system is still needed
- Continued reminders that if you have received a ballot by mail and decide to vote in person instead that you should bring your absentee ballot with you to turn in at the polls. It makes the process flow much more efficiently.

Mr. Dicks inquired if there had been any ADA concerns expressed on Election Day. Ms. Bailey reported that one voter desiring to vote using an audio was unable to do so due to poll worker inability to create the ballot for the voter. Continuing, Ms. Bailey stated that the voter received assistance by a companion and successfully voted their ballot. She also stated that training on this matter would be ongoing.

A discussion then ensued regarding if we would be able to resume public demonstrations of the voting system. Ms. Bailey stated that there were no plans to re-establish demonstrations where staff traveled to sites to demonstrate the equipment, but that a voting system would be on periodic display in the lobby of the Municipal Building leading up to November.

### What Went Right

- 5 technicians strategically placed on Election Morning and 2 technicians stationed in the office to be deployed as needed
- There were no reported lines on Election Day
- There were no complaints from voters about wearing a mask
- The Cure affidavits for absentee ballot with either a missing or mismatched signatures continues to work well. 62 affidavits were mailed and emailed to voters. 31 were properly executed and returned
- Having only key poll workers reporting at 5:30 AM to open up the voting equipment with other poll workers serving in non-technical positions reporting at 6:00 AM
- The stellar assistance of the Recreation and Parks, Environmental Services, Augusta Utilities, and especially, the Central Services Departments

By the Numbers

- 84,502 persons were eligible to vote
- 1,647 persons voted during Advance Voting
- 5,280 persons voted using a mail in absentee ballot
- 5,280 persons voted at the polls on Election Day
- 11,336 voters participated for a 32.58% voter turnout
- 8 provisional ballots were cast
- 31 absentee ballots were rejected due to missing or mismatched signatures – 31 were cured by the voter

Item #4 – Certify the results of the August 11, 2020 Nonpartisan Runoff.

Ms. Bailey presented the Board with the Official Election Results. The Board then compared the Unofficial Election Night Results to the Official Election Results.

Ms. Bailey explained that Georgia law requires each election superintendent to canvass, compute and announce the results for all elections. Mr. McFalls called on Ms. Bailey to commence with announcing the votes cast during the election. Ms. Bailey stated that the total number of ballots cast was 11,346 with all precincts reporting. At the conclusion of the announcement of the votes cast, Mr. Dicks made a motion that the results be certified by the Board as read and sent to the Secretary of State's Office. Ms. Barnes seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Staff circulated the certification documents for the election and each Board member present affixed their signature to the documents thereby completing the certification of the results of the August 11, 2020 Nonpartisan Runoff

Item #5 – Old Business.

Ms. Bailey stated that the pre filled absentee ballot applications would be mailed on September 4<sup>th</sup> to all voters who have not previously applied for an absentee ballot and the ballots would be mailed by September 19<sup>th</sup>. She stated that the roll over list for November contains 12,000 names and that approximately 4,000 additional absentee ballot requests had been received and processed.

Continuing, Ms. Bailey stated that with the volume of ballots going out on September 19<sup>th</sup> she would the Board of consider opening the absentee ballot drop boxes beginning Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the drop boxes be open and available to voters beginning Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Dicks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Bailey gave an update on the status of Advance Voting for the November Election. Regarding the Bell Auditorium Ms. Bailey stated that staff had begun meeting with the Coliseum staff to design set up. She stated that approximately 50 voting units, 8-10 check in stations, and 4 optical scanners/tabulators would be used at the mega site. Continuing, she stated that at all three satellite sites, the Recreation Department had agreed to permit advance voting to be conducted in the gymnasiums for the entire week instead of using a smaller room within the facilities where Advance Voting typically is set up. She

stated that by using the gymnasium each location could now hold 15 voting units instead of 10 using the former set up.

Chairman McFalls thanked staff for putting together and submitting the CARES Act Grant funding request and specifically thanked Mayor Hardie Davis for facilitating the waiving of utility costs at the Bell Auditorium. Ms. Bailey and the Board stated their appreciation to Coliseum Authority Chairman Cedric Johnson and Vice Chairman Brad Usry for their responsiveness to the request from the Board and the leadership demonstrated by both in ushering the matter through the Coliseum Authority Board.

Mrs. Barnes asked what plans were in the works for notifying the public of the move of the downtown Advance Voting center from the Municipal Building to the Bell Auditorium. Ms. Bailey stated that staff was currently using the Website and social media, press releases and media coverage. Continuing, she stated that beginning around October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Bell Auditorium marquee will be used to promote the change and other public notification strategies including printed notices will begin. Chairman McFalls suggested reaching out to the Transit Department regarding posting notices on buses and transfer stations.

Item #6 – New Business.

There was no New Business.

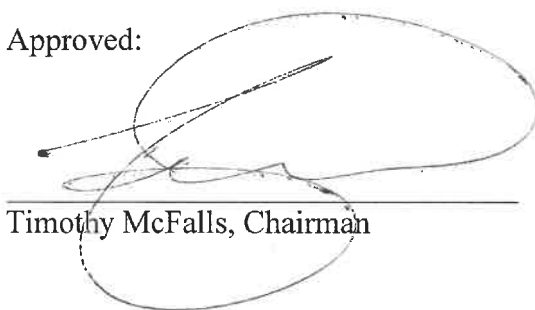
There being no further business to come before the Board, Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the meeting stand adjourned. Mr. Dicks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brown, Secretary for the Board

Approved:



Timothy McFalls, Chairman