

BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY, GEORGIA
CERTIFICATION MEETING FOR
THE NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION
Lee Beard Commission Chambers in the Municipal Building
November 10, 2020
6:00 PM

Item #1 – Call the meeting to order.

Chairman McFalls called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Present were Board Members Bob Finnegan, Sherry Barnes, Marcia Brown, and Terence Dicks. Also present were Executive Director, Lynn Bailey, Assistant Director Travis Doss, Board attorney Rachel Mack, members of the public and media.

Item #2– Recap of the November 3, 2020 General and Special Election.

Chairman McFalls began the recap by thanking the Mayor and Augusta Commission and the Richmond County Coliseum Authority for authorizing and providing financial support for the use of the Bell Auditorium during Advance Voting for the November election. Continuing, he stated that using the Bell Auditorium provided a space for voters that was large enough to ensure quick and easy ballot access in a safe and secure manner. Chairman McFalls stated that the site was a very popular choice for thousands of voters helping to alleviate overcrowding on Election Day. He thanked Director Bailey, elections office staff and Richmond County poll workers for their diligent preparation and execution of the election process and other contributions made to provide a fair, secure, and safe election.

Board member Dicks called for a moment of silence prior to the beginning of the meeting in a show of thanksgiving and acknowledgement of those who have been and were currently suffering during these times.

Chairman McFalls then called on Ms. Bailey for a recap of the Election. Ms. Bailey stated that 326 provisional ballots had been cast and 189 provisional ballots had been approved by the Board. She then disseminated reports showing how many provisional ballots were cast by precinct and how many were cast in each precinct.

Ms. Bailey then gave an Election Recap, as follows:

- *Election Day points of interest -*
 - The most prevalent issue in this election was the large number of voters receiving an absentee ballot by mail and subsequently cancelling those ballots in order to vote in person. The Spoiled Ballot hotline was very effective in helping us to mitigate this issue for voters and poll workers. The 8 operators working the hotline were engaged with voters/poll workers constantly for the first 5 hours of voting. Sporadic phone calls persisted for the remainder of the day.

- *Absentee ballots by mail hit historic numbers –*

	Number of Ballots
Ballots issued by mail	37,876
Ballots cancelled/spoiled	6,540
Ballots received back and counted	28,099
Ballots received after the deadline	87
Missing or mismatched signatures	145
Cured signature issues	82
Rejected signature issues	63

- *Polling location at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church* was not able to begin processing voters until 7:15 AM on Election morning. Because of the delay, Judge Wade Padgett issued a court order that the polling location remain open for 15 minutes past the normal closing time, or until 7:15 PM. No voters cast a ballot during the extended time period.
- *Election Profile:*

Number of Active registered voters	134,749
Voters Voting Election Day	21,023
Voters Voting by Mail	28,099
Voters Voting During Advance Voting	38,219
Unofficial Total Number of Voters Voting	87,530
Unofficial Turnout Percentage	64.96
Provisional Ballots Cast	326
Provisional Ballots Counted	189
Number of Election Day Polling Sites	42
Number of Advance Voting Sites	4
Number of Election Day Poll Workers Used	475
Number of Advance Voting Workers – Last Week Only	75
Number of Voting Units Deployed Election Day	511
Number of Voting Units Deployed Adv. Voting	95
Approximate Cost of Election	TBD

- *December 1, 2020 Runoff for Public Service Commission –*

Voter Registration Deadline	Same as for the November 3 rd election – October 5, 2020
Absentee Mail out	Begin as soon as possible Last day for mailing – Wed., 11/25
Advance Voting	Mon., 11/23 through Wed., 11/25
Location for Advance Voting	Beazley Room is reserved and recommended
Satellite Sites Open	Not recommended

Regarding the opening of the Advance Voting satellite sites, Ms. Bailey stated that the Board’s current policy for opening the Satellite Sites would require opening all sites since the runoff was county-wide. Continuing, Ms. Bailey stated that because of the nature of the election, the holiday schedule and the light turnout expected the staff recommendation was for the Board to use its discretion and deviate from the policy for this runoff. After some discussion, Mrs. Barnes made a motion that due to the expected low turnout the Board deviate from the Advance Voting Satellite Site Policy for the county-wide runoff and not open up the satellite sites for the election. Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Regarding absentee ballots by mail, Ms. Bailey stated that any counties would be responsible for the packaging and mailing of all absentee ballots for the runoff including any voter on the roll over list of voters over 65, disabled, and active duty military and that the Secretary of State’s online absentee ballot portal would not be available to voters during the December 1st runoff.

- *January 5, 2020 Runoff for two US Senate Seats*

Voter Registration Deadline	December 7, 2020
Absentee Mail out	Will begin around 11/20
Advance Voting	12/14 – 12/31/2020
Location for Advance Voting	TBD
Satellite Sites Open	Recommended

Regarding absentee ballots by mail, Ms. Bailey stated that the Secretary of State’s Office would be packaging and mailing ballots to all voters on the roll over list of voters over 65, disabled, and active duty military and that county offices would be responsible for packaging and mailing all other ballot requests. Continuing, she stated that the Secretary of State’s Office online portal for requesting an absentee ballot was currently open and that more than 600 applications had been received through the portal to date.

Regarding Advance Voting, Ms. Bailey stated that the normal schedule for Advance Voting would be impacted by the Holiday schedule. The staff presented a recommendation for Advance Voting, as follows:

- The Coliseum Authority had made contact to say that the Bell Auditorium was available for use as an Advance Voting site, but it was not budgeted for the runoff. Staff recommended using the Bell Auditorium due to the anticipated high turnout of the January runoff
- Statutory opening date of December 14, 2020

- Opening the satellite sites was provided for in the AV Policy, so a special vote would not be required by the Board
- In order to accommodate the holiday schedule, the staff recommendation was to conduct Saturday voting on 12/19 – not mandatory in a runoff, but recommended by staff - at the Bell Auditorium only
- The 3 satellite sites to open Monday, 12/28 – Thursday, 12/31

Following a brief discussion, Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the Board follow staff recommendation for the Advance Voting schedule for the January 5, 2021 Runoff. Mrs. Brown seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

- *Risk Limiting Audit*
 - The Secretary of State will select the office to be audited on Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at a 1:00 PM Public Meeting. Counties will be notified later in the day which office is to be audited, how many ballots to audit and from which batch the ballot is to be collected.
 - The audit is set to begin on Thursday, 11/12/2020 at 9:00 AM at the Board of Elections Warehouse at 2029 Lumpkin Road
 - Audit teams will be appointed. Each team will consist of 2 people. The audit teams will retrieve the ballots for audit.
 - The amount of time to perform the audit will depend on the number of ballots that must be retrieved. It is estimated that each retrieval will take approximately 10 minutes. We have based our staffing on the retrieval of 500 ballots at 10 minutes each or 83 hours. Based on this, we plan to have 7 teams working 2 days to complete.
 - The public may observe, but may not touch any ballot
- *State-wide Recount*
 - There is a probability of a State-wide recount. We have not been officially notified at this time.

Item #3 – Comparison of the Unofficial Election Night Results with the new Unofficial Election Results following the addition of the approved provisional ballots and military and overseas ballots.

Following the addition of the approved provisional and military and overseas ballots, the Board compared the Unofficial Results from Election Night to the new update Complete Results to ensure that all approved ballots were accurately included in the Complete Returns.

Item #4 – Certify the results of the November 3, 2020 General Election

Mr. McFalls called on Ms. Bailey to commence with announcing the votes cast during the election. 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. Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the results as read be entered into the official record of the meeting. Mr. Dicks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Staff circulated the certification documents for both elections and each Board member present affixed their signature to the documents thereby completing the certification of the results of the November 3, 2020 General Election.

Item #5 - Adjourn

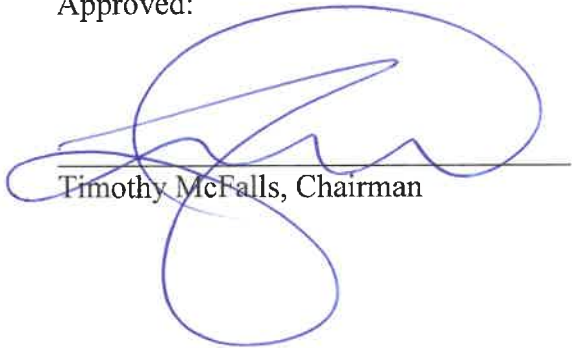
There being no further business to come before the Board, Mrs. Barnes made a motion that the meeting stand adjourned. Mr. Dicks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcia Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Marcia Brown, Secretary for the Board

Approved:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy McFalls". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Timothy McFalls, Chairman

