

**SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**February 8, 2022**  
**Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Spalding County Board of Elections and Registration was held at the County Courthouse Annex, 109 East Solomon Street at 6 p.m. Attending were Chairman Ben Johnson, presiding and Board Members Roy McClain, Jim Newland, Jim O'Brien, and Alfred Jester. Also present were Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter, Attorney Stephanie Windham, and Teresa Watson to record minutes.

**Call to Order**

Chairman Ben Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He read a brief statement regarding meeting protocol.

**Invocation/Moment of Silence**

Mr. Jester provided the invocation.

**Pledge**

Mr. Newland led the pledge.

Chairman Johnson read the guidelines for Citizen Comment.

**Citizen Comment**

Signed to speak were the following:

Judy Baumann, 70 Terracedale Court, Griffin, GA

She worked the November 2021 election at the UGA precinct, and she was concerned about a lack of Sunday voting, due primarily to cost. Other dollars are spent in much less desirable areas. She pointed to what John Lewis did at 25 years old on the Edmund Pettis Bridge. He did it for voting rights. He worked, not just for African Americans, but for all, for his 64 years. He wrote the Prelude to the Book about our Rosenwald School. As he and others have advocated, when we see injustice, we are to speak about it. She urged the Board to please reconsider their decision on Sunday voting.

Stanley Washington, 709 E. McIntosh Road, Griffin, GA

He cited issues in the 2020 election – after 4-1/2 hours in line, he was told he had voted by mail-in ballot. He then talked with Ms. Ridley, signed an affidavit, and was told it would be handled by the Secretary of State's Office. Once he voted and got home, he and his wife had mail-in ballots that day and 2 more the next day, along with an absentee ballot for his mother who died in 2014. He has had no response from the Secretary of State's Office. He encouraged Board members to please ensure integrity and transparency and thanked them for their time.

Michelle Knight, 11 Spalding Drive, Griffin, GA

She, too, encouraged election integrity. In November 2020 she served as observer and noticed a clear red labeled box with passwords and other documents. She questioned the integrity that Rafensberger assured us exists. Some are said to harvest ballots. She has worked with non-profit organizations. To say there is no evidence of widespread election fraud with unsecured devices and passwords, along with other issues and Dominion equipment problems, is hard to believe. She urged the Board to restore faith in the system, noting that surveillance can be made available, and she asked for a full forensic audit.

Bob Beyer, 516 Orchid Lights Court, Griffin, GA

HB 760 brought to light many issues, and the national attention will not go away. The 2020 Presidential election was one of the largest in history. Over 60 lawsuits have been filed but voter fraud controversy

continues under a national microscope. He felt that eliminating Sunday voting will be viewed as ammunition by some. He encouraged Sunday voting and support of the elections process.

Carmen Torres, 416 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Griffin, GA

Our world has changed with ever-increasing difficulties. Taking away Sunday voting is not fair, honest, and transparent as has been stated. Many citizens have that as their day off.

Pingke duBignon, 622 Melrose Avenue, Griffin, GA

Many Spalding residents are hard-working with regular voting hours not available to them. She hoped the Board would reconsider Sunday voting. Please recognize there are working folks who cannot leave their jobs and stand in line for hours. Do not make it look as if the Board is about anything other than wanting us to be able to vote.

Buster Dockins, 2655 Teamon Road, Griffin, GA

Mr. Dockins said politics notwithstanding, he sought to defend what Sunday should be for ... a House of Prayer. Souls to the Polls should consider that we are God's people. Mr. Dockins said he was more afraid of Him than cameras. He was saved in 1964 and has been silent for too long. We have taken God out of government and everything else that we can. He urged taking a day to rest, worship and keep the day holy.

Keegan Prescott, 808 Carver Road, Griffin, GA

Some are unhappy with recent changes and the current officials. Essentially, they rewrote procedural and voting laws. Founders expected and encouraged respectful disagreement to ensure all voices are heard and not just the loudest. This Board of Elections has had some of the most disrespectful treatment and comments made to them in recent months. The oath of office for each, he noted, ensures upholding the state and national constitution, guaranteeing equal protection for all under the law. He questioned what the motives might be for making defaming comments.

Zachery Fuller, 1708 West Poplar Street, Griffin, GA

He is an advocate for Sunday voting. Souls to the Polls, a movement in traditional black, faith-based organizations, encouraged everyone to go to the polls right after church with a prayerful attitude. Racist attacks still occur, but beyond racial issues, voting on the weekend will help many folks who work. It would help working class voters who may have that as their only day off. If you must cut a day, he asked that it not be on the weekend.

David Graves, 439 Beacon Court, Griffin, GA

He acknowledged board members' hard jobs and difficult positions and thanked them. Voter integrity is important, and Spalding County has had problems; However, the Board seeks to resolve these problems.

Mary Braun (no address given)

She thanked members for the board's commitment to ethical treatment and transparency. From the past two years, over 400 violations of past supervisor have been filed, so we desperately need change. Last month, one member called his constituents cyber bullies since they called for a full forensic audit. She felt we need to move forward with the 2000 requests (even if only 50 were from Spalding County) if there is nothing to hide. She also would like to ask for apology from this board member and a retraction of his statements.

Cindy Sanders, 206 Park Street, Griffin, GA

There are already 14 days of early voting, as well as absentee voting. She advocated spending Sunday as a day of rest and worship, and she thanked the Board for their efforts.

Isaac Melton, 515 N. Brookwood Terrace, Griffin, GA

Transparency is very important, as is an educated electorate. Multiple ballots being received have been noted but perhaps some are confusing other documents such as applications, mailers, etc., for ballots. We need to trust things will be handled with transparency. If the over 400 complaints are not followed up on,

he would like to see everyone informed as to why. If we can provide information, everyone will be better off. If we are being promised transparency, we will expect transparency.

Quimby Melton, III, 1121 Skyline Drive, Griffin, GA

What a mess we are in, stated Mr. Melton. He had the privilege of teaching for many years and has taught government. One way to get democracy to where it is no longer effective is to create confusion and misinformation. The last election did not please a whole lot of folks ... with presidential and runoff issues. We have not heard anything as to what has been decided from those issues. He hates to see conflicts, however they are received. Dominion equipment problems with electronics. Several things make things worse, and suppression of information is one. House Bills and Senate Bills revealed much about our illustrious officials. We do need more transparency. Officials diving in dumpsters trying to find fault after the last election is absurd. More diversity is needed on the Board of Elections. Yes, we need transparency, and we need to be satisfied that our vote is going to count.

Daryl Williams, 834 Dusky Sap Court, Griffin, GA

He had an "I Like Ike" button when he was young, but he realized not everyone votes and that it is a privilege. It is our right as Americans. It is your responsibility to vote has been drilled by teachers. He urged the Board to not put anything in the way of people participating in their civic duty. His granddaughter is a veterinary technician and works 6 days a week. So, some people need Sunday voting. Give those people a chance to exercise their civic right and responsibility.

Brittany Cobb, 1205 Coline Road, Griffin, GA

She is a poll worker herself and does not want to work on Sunday. It is hard enough for poll workers and the need is great. To make them work on Sunday would not be good. Better education is also needed for workers at the polls. There are lots of legalities and rules. We do not need continual changes and discrimination. We do need to find the underlying cause of what happened.

Jennifer Woods, 800 Peach Blossom Court, Griffin, GA

She has lived 8-1/2 years here and finds it to be more diverse than previous areas. Work schedules are different, as well. She felt it necessary to allow voting on Sunday. Many work more than one job or off hours and cannot go vote on a weekday. She encouraged an attitude of being inclusive. Perhaps it is not a question of money but rather of making it accessible to all voters. Also, we do not all celebrate the sabbath on Sunday but might have to go vote on our sabbath as may be dictated by our religion. However, religion aside, she would prefer to live in a community that is inclusive not exclusive.

Susan Swanson, 444 Goldenrod Court, Griffin

She said she was a proud Christian woman and in favor of Sunday voting. She urged the Board to work diligently to ensure transparency and integrity. If not voting on Sunday, perhaps they could close liquor stores, gun ranges, and football. She would be glad to volunteer as poll worker.

James Dutton, 508 Brook Circle, Griffin, GA

He is proud to see this turnout, and it is important to share. All boards would love to have this kind of attendance. Voting and jury duty are two of the most important duties in our republic. He agrees with Mr. Melton who supposed that some may mistake other documents for ballots, but he has evidence from one voter that most certainly involved 12 real ballots. Follow-up on the criminal complaints is happening right now. Diving in the dumpster was not something he did. A video went livestream to Facebook where you can see and hear everything. No torches, no locks and no door rattling occurred, but he wondered what other lies people might believe. Literal video evidence decries these falsehoods. When he attended there, a Georgia State University Dean was accused of embezzling, and an audit ensued at the demand of students. That Dean is no longer employed and hundreds of thousands of dollars that was taken has been returned. Why not have a forensic audit? He wondered if, to quote Shakespeare, they doth protest too much.

Sharon King, 143 Cumberland Road, Griffin, GA

She wondered if we were struggling with uncomfortable truths. She wanted to address the dissertation posted to Facebook by the Chair on behalf of the Board of Elections. There is flawed logic in that dissertation. It insults the intelligence of Spalding County voters. There are plenty of Black voices asking for Sunday voting, yet you are focusing on the white voices. This is not specific to one demographic and is insulting to Black voters. There is a logistical need for Sunday voting. She questioned if we are catering to white voters, if we consider it unnecessary, or are we truly worried that it might cost too much. The majority of the Board at its September meeting claimed it was too expensive in time and money at \$1,000. One of the Board members asked for the previous Board Chair's resignation when he claimed she went to the Board of Commissioners without approval of the Board of Elections. Citizens are watching to see that this Board maintains that same energy since the Chair released a statement on social media without Board input.

Dr. Yoshunda Jones, 509 N. 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Griffin, GA

She felt there are some cold, hard truths under all this propaganda. This Board is trying to undermine the will of the people. She witnessed a hostile takeover of the Board of Elections courtesy of Representatives Knight and Mathiak, as well as Senator Marty Harbin. Being against Sunday voting is a blatant, white supremacist move. The world is watching. We watch as most continue to thumb their noses at real truth and wipe their behinds with the Constitution. She understood at last month's meeting, it was stated there was a file on Chris Carr's desk for criminal charges against Marcia Ridley, but another said no. Which is it? Is it open to interpretation under Color of Law? Conspiracy to deprive a person of his/her civil rights while under Color of Law violates several statutes. False statements under false pretenses maybe a violation of one's oath of office and subject one to liability. Fantasies are seeping over into reality.

Points of order were called as personal attacks are not allowed, although Dr. Jones said she had not called anyone by name. Confusion ensued, and Dr. Jones continued to speak against advice of the Board and law enforcement personnel in attendance. Time expired for Dr. Jones to speak, but she noted that other people have been allowed by the Board to exceed their time, saying she wanted to complete her statement. Another call for order occurred. She concluded by asking Board members to remember that the same Trump voters they defended have called Elections staff and members black (expletive) and (racial epithets).

### **Adoption of Agenda**

The following additions to the agenda were suggested by the Chairperson:

Updates on Facilities.

Hiring of a Public Relations Firm.

Executive Session for pending/potential litigation – not aware of this need prior to this meeting.

***Motion/second by Mr. McClain/Mr. Jester to so amend carried by a unanimous 5-0 vote.***

The Board will handle consideration of the Dominion extended warranty first, followed by the issue of Sunday Voting, then be presented with the facilities report. Ms. Windham noted they were a day late with notice for a regular meeting, so this was more properly advertised as a Special Called Meeting.

### **Consideration of a Dominion Extended Warranty.**

The Board has a quote on record of Dominion offering an extended warranty. A history of the first 2 years between the state and Dominion was provided. A hardware extended warranty, if desired, had been offered in January 2022. 106 counties have obligated to join the offered extended warranty coverage for an expiration of December 31, 2021, for devices, touch screens, scanners, and printer, at a cost of \$31,045 per year. Toner for printers is expensive. They are putting together a plan to deliver toner to all counties. Scanners at \$146 each, includes \$30,000 of toner for no additional cost each year provided. Or we can buy additional toner at \$75 instead of the regular cost of \$155 each. So, there is an economic benefit to becoming a member.

Certification in place in Georgia is for Dominion only, and they are the only authorized provider. Someone questioned if Spalding County would own the equipment. The title may pass to individual counties but that was not a certainty. Kim Slaughter will make an effort to determine that. The program began January 1, 2022,

and was extended through January 31, 2022; however, if we can respond today, February 8, we would still be welcome to join.

Chairman Johnson appreciated their patience but was concerned about a lack of clarity on buying a warranty on equipment that may not actually be ours. Kim Slaughter, he noted for the Dominion representatives, will be in touch with results of the Board's discussion tonight. The drop-dead date is the end of February because they are negotiating with the providers of scanners and printers for all counties beginning in March noted the Dominion personnel. Logistically, this timeframe presents issues. Delivery of the toner incentive is time sensitive. We will need a calculation of toner value to obtain a much clearer picture than the quote page. More discussion followed.

Mr. McClain felt that until we have it in writing, it is just a salesperson making a statement. Until that happens, we are putting gas in someone else's car.

Mr. O'Brien felt the State has pushed unfunded mandates down to counties once again.

If the Board needs to take quicker action on the warranty than at the next regular meeting, perhaps they could call another special called meeting.

**Discussion of Sunday voting.**

Mr. O'Brien said he was the one who made comments about the cyber attack at the last meeting, and he was sorry for his choice of words. He wants to pay attention to folks, but 1940 people from all over the country made for a difficult situation. Sunday voting on 9-14-21 was presented as part of the bill. SB202 does not prohibit Sunday voting but rather permits it. The Registrar/election board can decide at their discretion whether or not to offer Sunday voting. This speaks to intent; legislators want to increase voting. Nothing in law speaks about a wait time and no specific ethnic group is cited. He advocated taking time to listen to those advocating for Sunday voting.

Mr. Newland felt there was a great deal of emotion and politics involved in this topic, and he was not interested in either. He simply cared about doing the right thing, for both electors and staff. With 14 straight days of voting, we would need to ensure we have the resources. He wondered how many will vote in the primary. Last time we had an 8 percent turnout for the City and for the Countywide TSPLOST. He moved to table this matter until a cost and estimates can be determined. After discussion, he withdrew his motion.

The 2018 general primary files were pulled. It was in 2017 when we addressed advance voting. 2018 was not broken down by total percentage of advance voting. Ms. Slaughter said she was in the process of interviews on that day the files were requested, along with other issues. To get rid of something, it has to be established for a period of time. There has never been any intention to get rid of Sunday voting. Sunday voting was never even an option until 2014. We opted for it in 2017/18, but it is not used for every election, nor does it have to be. Those are facts. To say the Board is getting rid of Sunday voting is just not true. There are 17 days of advance voting. Beginning on March 7, voters can begin to request absentee ballots, although they are not ready yet. One can ask by phone, mail, etc. She is passionate about providing correct information, and she advocates facing decisions with knowledge. She would like to get further into 2018 for percentage statistics. No reason is needed to request absentee ballots. Interviews and a voter registration audit are ongoing now. Maybe by the end of next week she can complete the requested information.

***Motion/second by Mr. Newland/Mr. McClain to table until greater detail can be presented by the Elections Supervisor at the next meeting, whether that be a special called or regular meeting. Motion carried 4-1 with Mr. O'Brien opposing.***

**Contract with PR firm as recommended.**

It has been suggested that the Board ask the Spalding County Board of Commissioners for funding to contract with a PR firm to assist with optics and local perceptions. ***Motion/second to make this request by***

**Mr. McClain/Mr. Newland.** It was noted that the County has a Community Engagement Specialist, but this scope of work is not in his area of expertise. County Manager Steve Ledbetter has suggested this might be beneficial, but there is no guarantee it will be approved. Mr. McClain noted we are way over budget now, even without this being added to the budget. ***Motion carried 3-2 with Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Jester opposing.***

**Facilities Report.**

Mr. McClain said they met with the County Attorney and staff last week. Files and documents are currently in bankers boxes or on the floor in county storage areas. There is no file plan, no naming conventions, no cataloging of documents, and no accessible shelving. The County Attorney said her staff would perform the scanning of documents with witnesses but looking to get our own storage system requires a petition to the court. Some are sealed boxes, and we do not need to be unsealing anything that need to remain a sealed record. With a court order, we can move from shared space with the Clerk of Superior Court to a climate control storage space just for Elections. The Clerk of Court indicated she has no issue with designating our County Clerk (Kathy Gibson) as custodian of records. This would be available for grand jury review after 24 months. No process of this nature is expedient to processing ORAs (Open Records Act requests). We can establish a naming convention, dedicate and equip the necessary space and implement a file plan. This would make the process transparent and fair. Activity can be captured on camera. To improve facilities will help us get better, become more efficient in producing ORA responses, make progress, and satisfy legal parameters.

***Motion/second by Mr. McClain/Mr. O'Brien to establish our own storage and written protocols to inventory and store these files, documents, and products in a separate, climate-controlled facility with County funding. A filing system will be part of the naming convention, as will scanning, and file retrieval. It is our hope that we could become a model for others. Motion carried 5-0.***

**Report of Elections Supervisor –**

Kim Slaughter presented her report, a copy of which is attached to and becomes a part of these minutes.

**Board Member Comments**

- McClain – No comment
- O'Brien – No comment
- Jester – No comment
- Newland – In response to the call for an audit, we cannot audit ourselves. It must be a third party.
- Johnson – No comment
- Windham - On the ACCG (Association County Commissioners of Georgia) radar, a couple of things include funding for precinct cards and postage (asking for \$3,000,000 in funding) and confirmation that with regard to ORAs for poll officers, the law protects poll officers. There is pending legislation to authorize the public to view ballots, which would include HB 933.

**Executive Session to consider pending and/or potential litigation, as requested by the County Attorney.**

***Motion/second to enter Executive Session at 8:22 p.m., as requested by County Attorney, for pending and/or potential litigation by Mr. McClain/Mr. Newland carried 5-0.***

**Adjournment**

***Motion/second to adjourn by Mr. McClain/Mr. Newland at 8:58 p.m. carried 5-0.***

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Ben Johnson, Chairman

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Teresa A. Watson, Recording Secretary