

**SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**March 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 Vice Chairman James Newland, presiding and Board Members Roy McClain, Jim O'Brien, and Alfred Jester. Absent was Chairman Ben Johnson. Also present were Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter, Attorney Stephanie Windham, and Teresa Watson to record minutes.

**I. Call to Order**

Vice Chairman James Newland called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He read a brief statement regarding meeting protocol.

**II. Invocation/Moment of Silence**

Mr. Jim O'Brien provided the invocation.

**III. Pledge**

Mr. Roy McClain led the pledge.

**IV. Citizen Comment**

Vice Chairman Newland read the guidelines for Citizen Comment. Signed to speak were the following:

Ron Hoffman, 130 Milner Avenue

In November 2020, he served on an election audit here. Notes have never been shared but are disturbing. Many computers in the office were open with no password security. Scanner passwords were readily available. The Elections Supervisor said she was the final authority for tallying. Another team audited Dominion machines but took only 10 minutes, really just turning them on. One of the members of voter review board admitted they were counting ballots before the November 3 election day in the back room. He witnessed Precinct 18 of election day recount votes. Numbers recorded were off by 119 votes, and 97 off for the official recount votes given to the Secretary of State's Office. Peeling back these curtains showed unfavorable methods and, as a consequence, he is totally against early voting.

Summer Clackum, 1959 Williams Mill Road, Pike County

She has family in Griffin and favors Sunday voting. Voters want Sunday voting, but the Board cut out due to the \$1000 estimated cost. Citizens can donate to government entities, she has learned, as long as they do not benefit. She will give contact info to Attorney Windham for this information.

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

Sunday voting is necessary. She has spent much time since the last meeting discussing thoughts and feelings. She met a great many people in line last year in their Sunday clothes. She had an enjoyable time standing in line. Many have different work situations and personal issues. She feels that if the County can spend \$10,000 for an attorney, they should be able to find \$1000 for Sunday voting.

Dr. Yoshunda Jones

She reminded the Board of their word for Sunday voting. We will keep revisiting 16 months ago, and a long-ago Sunday, on March 7, 1965, when a group led by John Lewis and others crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge on their way to the state capital of Montgomery. They were ordered to turn around, but did not, and

were accosted by police with tear gas and billie clubs. They tore protestors' clothes, ripped skin, and hospitalized 50 folks. Youth leader Jimmie Lee Jackson was also violently murdered. So, she requests that Sunday voting be reinstated. She yielded the rest of her time to commemorate bloody Sunday with a minute of silence.

Zachery Fuller, 1708 W. Poplar Street, Griffin, GA

He felt that the removal of Sunday voting is disenfranchising the working class. Many work more than 40 hours; many are parents with not a lot of time to go and vote, particularly with long lines. Sunday is a weekend day when many are off. There is tradition in many Black churches to go to the polls after church, so they get dressed up and after church when there is much time left in the day, this is a perfect opportunity. If money is issue, cut another day from voting but not Sunday. The median income here is only \$34,000 so allowing as much time to vote as possible is important. He asked that they bring back Sunday voting.

## **V. Adoption of Agenda**

*Motion/second by Mr. Jester/Mr. McClain to adopt the agenda carried by a unanimous 4-0 vote.*

## **VI. Minutes**

*Motion/second by Mr. O'Brien/Mr. Jester to approve the January 11, 2022, minutes carried 4-0.*

As for Minutes of February 8, 2022, Mr. O'Brien noted that at the end of the second paragraph on page 5, it was stated Mr. Newland withdrew his motion, but the original motion was not identified and needed to be so.

*Motion/second by Mr. McClain/Mr. Jester to approve Minutes of 2-8-22 with correction carried 4-0.*

## **VII. Old Business**

### **a. Update from Ad Hoc Committee Regarding Facilities/Security**

Mr. McClain stated he had gone to the new storage facility and reviewed costs. It will take Spalding County some time to move in that direction. Security is good, it is climate controlled, and offers a good option. We are still waiting to get in to do an inventory. We are waiting on a judge to give approval by court order. We can be observers to watch the process. Once inventoried, we have a file plan with naming protocols. This will be a big job and will take some time. We cannot determine contents by box; each will need to be inventoried.

Mr. Jester noted that not all records are in disarray but rather mostly the last couple of years, particularly with regard to ORAs. Mr. McClain said this was not known for sure until all boxes are opened and inventoried. We will know more later. Ms. Windham was not sure about a timeframe; affidavits will be filed from the Elections Supervisor and County Manager. They are custodians of the records; hopefully, it can be next week.

### **b. Discussion of Sunday voting.**

Mr. O'Brien said he had done some 2022 Elections Office budget requests with regard to Sunday voting. The \$1000 estimate needs clarification and resources specified. An email from Mr. Newland clarified somewhat. He referenced a quote he had encountered, "In God We Trust. Everyone Else, Bring Data." He presented:

- In the 2018 general election, 823 people participated in early voting on Sunday.
- In the 2020 general election, 712 people participated in early voting on Sunday.
- In 2020 Georgia state general election, 38% of voters were African American and people of color.
- Gwinnett and Macon/Bibb counties average between \$2000 and \$4000 for Sunday voting in 2020.
- Spalding County spent \$680 for 2020 Sunday voting (\$.85 each), not including ancillary expenses.
- Recently the state and Spalding County have come under local, state, and national scrutiny.
- Hiring a PR firm to assist with Elections Board public relations has been proposed to help.
- Offering Sunday voting would go a long way to foster a positive image for Spalding County.

Mr. McClain moved to table consideration of Sunday voting and obtain greater detail that is not necessarily anecdotal. Mr. O'Brien asked for how long would they be willing to delay this vote. He asked about funding, resources, and staffing, and stated we need a firm date for provision of data. Mr. Newland seconded the motion to table. Motion did not carry as the vote was tied at 2-2 (O'Brien, Jester against; Newland, McClain for).

#### VIII. New Business

a. Virginia Gallaway, with Sonline, represented this company that creates software solutions. They saw a need for a solution just for elections. Hence, the product, **Ballot DA**, (Digital Assistance) was created. The founder of Sunline was in attendance tonight, as well, and they offered to answer questions after the Executive Session, provided it did not take too long, and they could remain. She highlighted the following:

- Absentee Ballots – must report status. A digital graph will show every ballot status. It verifies and pulls if not balanced and matches with data for a verified count.
- Online poll worker training – contains custom content and can add videos and assessment. Videos are short (3-5 minutes) and entertains questions at the end. The Election Manager can change assessments. Using the same portal to assign poll workers to specific locations will reduce phone calls on election day.
- They utilize a great process for poll worker notification via immediate emails or text messages.
- Asset Management – phone tracking of equipment with a spreadsheet monitors supplies, as well.
- FOIA Assistant – digitizes records and finds things electronically easily and quickly.

Cost would be based on the level of service desired.

b. MOA between Georgia Soil and Water Conservation commission and the Elections Superintendent of Spalding County. Ms. Windham noted this was being presented for Board approval rather than just approval of the Elections Superintendent.

**Motion/second by Mr. McClain/Mr. Jester to approve carried 4-0.**

#### IX. Elections Supervisor Report

Kim Slaughter, Elections Supervisor, noted two new employees have been hired: Perry Krahn, Election Systems Coordinator, and Sandra Hardy, Voter Registration Clerk.

Qualifying for the May 24, 2022, Election began on Monday, March 7 at 9 a.m. and will end on Friday, March 11 at 12 Noon. Qualifying is held at the Office of Elections & Voter Registration. The following seats available for qualifying include County Commission District 2 and District 5; Board of Education Districts 1, 3, and 5; and State Court Solicitor. Qualifying for the May 24, 2022, Special Election to fill the remainder of the term of County Commissioner District 5 will begin on Monday, March 14, and end at Noon on March 17, 2022.

The start date to begin receiving Requests for Absentee Applications began March 7 via email, phone, or in-person; they saw 67 requests for Absentee Applications.

The House Bill for Spalding County Redistricting has been signed by the Governor, and the redistricting process is nearing completion. She thanked Brian Haynes with the City's GIS Department and staff members for all of their help in this effort.

She noted new registrations for February 2022 were 52; transfers from other counties totaled 136; moved out of the county totaled 94; felons were 15; moved out of state were 38 and 82 were deceased.

Ms. Slaughter reported on the voter registration audit/review is underway. Files A-Z for over 46,000 voters are out of order, and work is ongoing to alphabetize them in order to speed up the audit process.

Nine alphabet letters have been processed to date, and many are being further reviewed due to issues such as registration dates not matching, name changes, address changes, more than one registration number, registration cards that have not been pulled and filed for deceased/MOC/MOS/and felons. One team member decided not to continue working on this task and we will be replacing this vacancy.

The Secretary of State's new voter registration system will roll out on March 15. Three employees have been trained, and there have been several webinars with more planned.

All Open Records Act requests have been responded to with either an answer or a date in which the recipient will receive requested materials.

The new Pitney Bowes postage machine has been installed and is operating well.

- She then presented facts related to Sunday voting for the May 24, 2022, Election:
- Sunday voting took place on May 31, 2020, and October 25, 2020.
- Sunday voting did not occur for the January 5, 2021 Runoff and February 9, 2021 Special Election.
- Sunday voting was not budgeted for the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.
- Percentage for Advance Voting turnout for the May 2018 General Primary was 6.79%.
- Please consider staff who will be working 13 days without a break with Sunday voting.
- Approximate cost for Sunday voting will be between \$1500 and \$2000.

#### **X. Board Member Comments**

There were no comments.

#### **Amend Agenda**

The County Attorney asked to amend the agenda to add a call for a Special Election on May 24, the same date as the General Primary in order to elect a County Commissioner for District 5 to fill the seat of former Commissioner Donald Hawbaker.

*Motion/second by Mr. McClain/Mr. Jester to add consideration of a call for Special Election carried 4-0. Motion/second to call for Special Election for unexpired term of Mr. Hawbaker by Mr. McClain/Mr. O'Brien carried 4-0.*

#### **XI. Executive Session**

To discuss pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the Spalding County Board of Elections and Registration or any officer or employee or in which the Board of Elections or any officer or employee may be directly involved as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1) as requested by County Attorney, and

To discuss or deliberate on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a Board of Elections and Registration member or employee as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(6) as requested by the Chair.

*Motion/second to enter Executive Session at 7:07 p.m., as requested by County Attorney and Chair, for purposes as stated above, by Mr. McClain/Mr. Jester carried 4-0.*

#### **XII Adjournment**

*Motion/second to adjourn Executive Session by Mr. Jester/Mr. McClain at 8:10 p.m. carried 4-0. Motion/second to adjourn by Mr. Jester/Mr. O'Brien at 8:10 p.m. carried 4-0.*

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James Newland, Vice Chairman

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Teresa A. Watson, Recording Secretary