

SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION
Regular Meeting
October 11, 2022

The regular meeting of the Spalding County Board of Elections and Registration was held at the County Courthouse Annex, 109 East Solomon Street at 6:00 p.m. on September 20, 2022. Attending were Chair Ben Johnson, James Newland, Roy McClain, Jim O'Brien, and Dexter Wimbish. Also present were Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter, Attorney Karl Broder for Stephanie Windham, and Teresa Watson to record minutes.

Invocation/Moment of Silence - Invocation was given by Jim O'Brien.

Pledge to the Flag - Pledge was led by James Newland.

Citizen Comment

Chairman Ben Johnson read guidelines for citizens' comments.

Judith Baughman, 70 Terracedale Court, Griffin

She has been surprised at the article regarding Liberty Technology and a possible conflict with the Board of Elections. She wondered how someone so important to the Board can allow this to happen. When discussion about the Dominion contract was shelved by the Board, she felt it was not fair to all. Anyone who makes money or has financial gain in another system that is designed to protect our voting rights should not be a part of the process. With regard to Dominion, she urged the Board to not bow to that and voter suppression.

Adoption of the Agenda

Motion/second to amend the agenda to provide for an Executive Session to discuss pending or potential litigation by Mr. Newland/Mr. Wimbish after Board Member Comments carried unanimously.

Motion/second by to adopt the agenda as amended by Mr. McClain/Mr. O'Brien carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion/second to approve Minutes of September 20, 2022, by Mr. Newland/Mr. Wimbish

Report of Elections Supervisor

Mrs. Kim Slaughter reported on voter registration through October 10. Absentee ballot mailouts totaled 1248. EBD state processed totaled 22. The first day by law was today that we can mail out; we mailed out 1248. Voter registration processed including duplicates totaled 168. DDS totaled 461, also including duplicates. Felons processed were 22. Deadline for registration to vote is today. Voters may check on myvoterpage. 11:59 pm is the cutoff time today. L&A testing of equipment began September 14. We have completed for early and 18 precincts as well as devices. Remaining items for L&A for poll pads to be completed the Saturday before Election Day for final upload. The ICC station (scanning ballots) and the upload to ENR for summary files for election night will be completed.

Billie Preston, Kim Slaughter and DeAndre Smith from Spalding County released a video with pertinent information regarding the Office of Elections and Voter Registration, and we will continue to use this avenue. Advance voting begins Monday, 10-17-22 through 10-22-22 at 9 am thru 5 pm, 10-24 through 10-29, 10-31 through 11-04 from 9 to 5 each day. October 28 by 5 pm is the deadline to submit an absentee application. On Oct. 11 we can begin mailing out absentee ballots as allowed by law. November 8 will be Election Day for all 18 precincts from 7 am to 7 pm. If voters have voted by mail or during early voting, they do not vote in person on November 8, just as a reminder. The Office is open every weekday from 8 am to 5 pm for any questions/comments.

Dominion is the sole provider for election equipment, and we are mandated by the Secretary of State to use their equipment and software. If problems arise that we cannot handle, we will contact Dominion. Mrs.

Slaughter said she oversees the EMS election management system. Chairman Johnson at this time we are beyond getting any Dominion technician at \$4500. Mrs. Slaughter can move forward and contact them if necessary. To have trained staff but still use Dominion at their fee was the issue in question. Theirs is the only service that was on the table. If we have problems with machines, Kim Slaughter can handle and call Dominion contacts if necessary. The \$4500 is for a one-day service or early on the second day for replacing defective hardware. Mr. McClain noted that Dominion person also took a 2–3-hour lunch break the last time that Dominion staff was here. We do not need to spend the money for a service we are not getting. They are contract labor. Dominion made errors in their guidance to poll workers. Mrs. Slaughter is confident now that she can handle most issues and use Dominion contacts only if necessary.

New Business

- a. Amending the Elections Office By-laws (Jim O'Brien)
Mr. O'Brien noted this committee consisted of Mr. Wimbish, Mr. Newland, and himself. He sent them the suspended by-laws, HB 769 and SB202 for review. They are creating a draft version for committee review as a starting point. HB 769 identifies resident requirements for staff for comparison to old revisions. The committee will present a draft version to the full board and Kim Slaughter, since her role is addressed, as well as that of office staff. The conclusion will be amending the by-laws. A work session was definitely desired by the committee for the full board.
- b. Discussion on Board training by UGA (Dexter Wimbish)
He thought it might be a good idea for UGA to cover board responsibilities and he wants to seek permission from this Board to reach out to identify training before setting it up.

Chairman Johnson said in August 2021, they attended the GAVREO conference which is designed for elections board and staff. We also have had team building sessions by local leadership set up by Attorney Windham with Trudy Gill as facilitator.

Mr. Wimbish said he felt we need to provide training for everyone at the same time and promote camaraderie. Since the composition of the board has changed, it might be good to provide this for a non-partisan board working toward one common goal. It is an excellent idea for training and not just about elections, but also about how to operate as board and interact with each other.

Chairman Johnson asked Attorney Windham if the Board could do a retreat similar to what was done with Trudy Gill. She has done an all board training this year, as well, and an abbreviated version at the Georgia Recreation Association in November. She advised she will be happy to do board training for everyone and felt, too, that it was important to refresh. They can review the Sunshine law, Roberts Rules, agendas, notices, scope of work, etc. They can do one day or longer if more days are desired. Mrs. Slaughter added that the UGA Carl Vinson Institute will be doing GAVREO again February 12 through 15, but the registration portal not opened yet. All Board members are eligible. This training is offered in person, as well as virtual, or even a hybrid of the two. Mrs. Slaughter will relay all information as it becomes available for this training in Jekyll Island. Once registration opens up, she will contact Board members. All Board and two staff members are budgeted for attendance.

Chairman Johnson noted we can discuss this additional training via email further and decide on a desired format. Mr. Wimbish/Mr. McClain moved and seconded to set a date for a board retreat, and the motion carried unanimously.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Johnson Thanked Kim Slaughter, staff, and board for great ideas.
Mr. Wimbish He desired to see staff direction to engage young people in the voting process, using technology such as Tic Tok.
Mr. Newland Thanked Mr. O'Brien for the by-laws initiative. He appreciated his doing the heavy lifting on this issue.

Mr. McClain He saw the video from Attorney Windham and Billie Preston and felt it was a very good idea and well done.
Mr. O'Brien No comments.

Executive Session

The Board Attorney desires an 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 by O.C.G.A. 50, 14, 2(1).

Motion/second by Mr. Newland/Mr. O'Brien to go into Executive Session at 6:32 p.m. carried unanimously.

Motion/second to return to Open Session at 6:50 p.m. by Mr. McClain/Mr. O'Brien carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Motion/second by Mr. McClain/Mr. O'Brien to adjourn at 6:52 pm carried unanimously.

Ben Johnson, Chair, Presiding

Teresa A. Watson, Recording Secretary