

SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION
Regular Meeting
March 14, 2023

The regular meeting of the Spalding County Board of Elections and Registration was held at the County Courthouse Annex, 109 East Solomon Street at 5:00 p.m. on March 14, 2023. Attending were Chair Ben Johnson, presiding; Roy McClain; James Newland; Jim O'Brien; and Dexter Wimbish. Also present were Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter, Attorney Karl Broder, and Teresa Watson to record minutes. Chairman Johnson welcomed Attorney Broder and extended sympathies to Attorney Stephanie Windham on the recent death of her father.

Invocation/Moment of Silence - Invocation was given by James Newland.

Pledge to the Flag - Pledge was led by Jim O'Brien.

Citizen Comment

No one was signed up to speak, and on motion /second by Mr. Newland/Mr. O'Brien, approved by a unanimous vote, Chairman Johnson waived the reading of guidelines for Citizen Comment.

Adoption of the Agenda

Motion by Jim O'Brien to postpone the agenda item under Old Business dealing with the Bylaws revision until Attorney Windham could be present, seconded by Mr. Newland, carried unanimously. Agenda was accepted as amended.

Minutes

Motion/second by Jim O'Brien/Dexter Wimbish to approve minutes for the February 7, 2023, regular meeting carried unanimously.

Report of Elections Supervisor

A special recognition was held for Poll Workers/Managers Christine Napier and Oscar Zellner. They were honored for celebrating 20 years and 30 years respectively in these vital roles for the Office of Elections and Voter Registration. Pictures were made and gifts presented with much gratitude for their dedicated service.

Report of Elections Supervisor – Kim Slaughter noted that FY 2024 Budget had been submitted last week and is scheduled for review on March 21 at 2:00 p.m. by Commissioners.

She provided an update GARVIS and noted the system was working through issues. While adequate reports cannot yet be produced and street maintenance has issues, we are able to process voter registration records.

A visit is planned for tomorrow to Troup County to view how the new cellular poll pads function, along with stands, printers and EPULSE software.

Ms. Slaughter noted she had provided a copy of the letter sent by State Senator Marty Harbin to Secretary of State Brad Rafensberger regarding the fake ballot found in October 2022 during Early Voting, along with other concerns.

An email has been sent to County Manager Steve Ledbetter outlining a list of needs for the Elections and Voter Registration Office, such as: relocation for Early Voting, added security for Election Management Systems and Absentee processing, and establishment of individual employee workspace in the Office.

Old Business

Discussion of the Bylaws revision has been postponed.

Evaluation of Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter – Extensive discussion followed with Chairman Johnson noting he had contact Miles Neville, Human Resources Director for Spalding County. Mr. Neville advised Ms. Slaughter is not a typical Department Head in that she reports to five members of the Board rather than to a single entity. This presents logistical issues. Chairman Johnson said he would send the standard form for individual evaluations to all board members and then gather the performance evaluations. The form provides for qualitative and quantitative aspects, as well as open-ended information. Some discussion followed regarding whether to turn the process over to the Chairman or perhaps a representative from each of the parties, being careful not to meet with three members of the Board so as not to constitute a meeting. Members wondered how to funnel the feedback from evaluations in a proper, accurate manner with transparency in the process. Mr. Wimbish wondered if there were some way to incorporate public comment in the evaluation, but most felt that public comment could be provided through Board members as conduit. Chairman Johnson concluded by saying he would get an email out to Board members with the standard evaluation form which they could complete and return. This process cannot be handled in Executive Session since it does not involve a disciplinary component but rather just performance evaluation. He will reach out to Miles Neville again for additional instruction, and Ms. Slaughter was tasked with contacting other County Elections Offices to determine how they handle Supervisor evaluations. Mr. O'Brien requested that a copy of the position's job description be included for reference. Mr. Newland agreed and said it would be better to have one point of contact for gathering information and thoughts.

Board Member Comments

Mr. McClain reported that the moving of files to 825 Memorial for scanning will be scheduled with the Beck, Owen & Murray staff, and we should be getting records online as soon as possible. We are receiving remodeling proposals for the office, noting that we have 30% more “stuff” than we have space for that stuff.

Mr. Wimbish had no further comment.

Mr. O'Brien enjoyed the recent tour and the architectural rendering, noting security issues are paramount.

Mr. Newland thanked the dedicated office staff and the poll workers/managers.

Chairman Johnson noted the upcoming changes appear to be the best option for improving security, efficiency, and equipment. It will be better for Early Voting to be away from the Hall of Fame facility where it would be easy to damage some of their contents in the normal operation of elections. He concluded by thanking Christine Napier and Oscar Zellner for their long-standing dedication and service to the County.

Executive Session

None

Adjournment

Motion/second to adjourn by Mr. Wimbish/Mr. Newland at 6:47 p.m. carried unanimously.

Ben Johnson, Chair, Presiding

Teresa A. Watson, Recording Secretary