

SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION
Regular Monthly Meeting
May 9, 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 6:00 p.m. on May 9, 2023. Attending were Chair Ben Johnson, presiding; James Newland; Jim O'Brien; Roy McClain; and Dexter Wimbish (arriving late). Also present were Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter, Attorney Stephanie Windham, and Teresa Watson to record minutes.

Invocation/Moment of Silence - Invocation was given by Chairman Johnson.

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

Citizen Comment

Chairman Johnson read the guidelines for Citizen Comment, as noted on the agenda.

The only resident signed to speak, Chuck Clark, opted to wait and address the Board later.

Adoption of the Agenda

Motion/second by Roy McClain to amend the agenda to add an item under New Business to allow a resident to speak regarding a proposed challenge. The motion was seconded by Jim O'Brien and carried unanimously. Motion/second to adopt the agenda as amended by Jim O'Brien/Roy McClain carried unanimously.

Minutes

After noting that the agenda for today should reflect that the word "February" from this item for consideration, the minutes of the April 14, 2023, regular monthly meeting were approved on motion/second by James Newland/Jim O'Brien.

Report of Elections Supervisor

Ms. Slaughter reported that Billie Preston, Voter Registration Coordinator, has resigned effective April 28. Her knowledge and experience will be sorely missed, and she was grateful for her tenure here. She announced that Sandra Hardy will move into this position, and we will seek to fill the position vacated by Ms. Hardy. The job has already been posted and a few applications received. Ms. Hardy will be a positive addition with her attention to detail and helpful demeanor.

She reported on GARVIS, noting that it continues to evolve on a daily basis. It has been some time since the last update; hopefully, GARVIS will be considered complete in the not-too-distant future. Felon reports have not been received since January but, as noted in the webinar attended last Friday, we should be receiving an update to include February, March, April and May felon reports.

We are now able to process voter registration applications which come through the Department of Driver's Services. Issues are being resolved regarding duplication of street suffixes. Updates here continue.

Online Voter Registration application are able to be processed and the Secretary of State's Office informed that this portion of the program is about to receive an overhaul.

Challenged Voters and Pending Voters Tile – represent two separate tiles which consist of voters who are "challenged" or "pending" due to various information. These tiles consist of old and new information which GARVIS captures as it evolves. Ms. Slaughter has requested that the State provide detail information so that we have clarity and can ensure that all data is up to date. Pending could refer to 17-1/2-year-olds who are

registering for the first time with their 18th birthday approaching. Some are also pending due to citizenship, verification, etc.

Precinct cards are generated when a new voter is entered, a voter moves into our County, or when a change is made to their voter registration records. The cards are mailed to our office, and we then mail the cards to the voters. We have not received precinct cards since converting to GARVIS in January of this year. Voters can, however, get a card generated with an in-person visit to the office.

The audit information in GARVIS for a voter allows us to see a history of a voter, but although we have seen improvement in this data, this system is not allowing us to see specific historical information of a voter as we have been able to do in the past. Specifics are still not correct, and there is no target date currently for the completion of GARVIS. We continue to work through some issues, such as duplications. Spalding County is not the only county experiencing these issues which complicate and slow the process.

The Secretary of State has announced that the Presidential Preference Primary will take place March 12, 2024. This is a primary in which voters will vote on the candidate of their preference by party affiliation.

Sandra Hardy and Ms. Slaughter will take advantage of training opportunities in Coweta County on Thursday on the E-Pulse Portal which will eventually allow us to view our poll pads in read time, thereby minimizing down time and problems with the poll pads. This will help us resolve poll pad issues more quickly and is a good thing. Also, they will travel next week to Henry County to view their new Election and Voter Registration facility to gather ideas for office reconfiguration here.

The Voter Registration Audit continues for 2023 and has proven to be beneficial in maintaining an up-to-date voter registration file.

SB129 will be effective July 1, 2023, and she detailed several sections of interest for Board members.

She met with County Manager Steve Ledbetter regarding the reconfiguration of the office and relocation of Early Voting prior to the Presidential Preference Primary. They are working within a very tight fiscal budget year. She reminded that in 2020 the Office received \$110,034.25 in grants from the State and the Center for Technology and Civic Life in Chicago. We do not and cannot receive private grants, and there are additional elections within this budget cycle, both of which adversely impact the upcoming budget for this Office.

On December 12, 2023, Ms. Slaughter will be attending GAVREO in Athens since there will not be a conference held in 2024. We may need to consider changing November's meeting date, as well, to provide for certification.

Old Business

Amending of Bylaws – Mr. O'Brien provided the Board with the following edits that were made since the April 11, 2023, meeting of the Board:

- Made edits "according to the law" as suggested by the County Attorney Stephanie Windham.
- Made edits about providing self service water made by Election Supervisor Kim Slaughter.
- Removed "track changes" and yellow shading edits.
- Requested additional input and edits on May 2.
- Reconfigured the table of content in light of amendments.

Mr. O'Brien felt we were way down the road and in a good place with this revision. After a brief discussion, noting that we were still working with Attorney Windham and others, Roy made a motion to table this to a future date. James Newland seconded the motion which was carried by a vote of three for (Johnson, McClain, and Newland) and two against (Wimbish and O'Brien). Ms. Windham noted we can leave it on the agenda and just carry it forward for action. Mr. O'Brien said he was opposed to this action, feeling like it was

becoming like an endless process with few responses received. Chairman Johnson did not want Mr. O'Brien and this Committee to feel as if their efforts were not appreciated. They have spent countless hours on this project, but he noted that tracking the changes and responses has proven difficult with challenging time management issues, as well. Chairman Johnson commended this Committee and noted we need the bylaws revision.

Chairman Johnson advised that he had not gotten the information regarding Kim Slaughter's evaluation to Board members in a timely fashion. He said he expects to get the information that was discussed previously out to members by Noon tomorrow (Wednesday) and hoped for a quick turnaround by members. There is an additional time constraint imposed by the resignation of the County's HR Director, Miles Neville, whose last day is May 16.

New Business

Roy McClain stated it has been brought to his attention that a resident desires to present to the Board a voter challenge. There was some confusion as to how he should present this voter challenge. Mr. Chuck Clark was given specific instructions by the Elections Office to make such a presentation to the Board. However, Attorney Windham noted that we provide for a written challenge to be filed with the Elections Office who will, in turn, do the necessary research for the Board so they can determine if probable cause exists for the challenge to go forward. There would need to be a notice and scheduling of a hearing. There was discussion regarding the "clock" that might be triggered by submission of the challenge. It was noted that the Office needs to adjust this written requirement to be more in line with State requirements for voter challenges. Even the State code, though, was somewhat confusing with conflicting requirements. Ms. Slaughter noted that she and Attorney Windham would need time to research and determine proper protocol. Discussion followed.

Motion/second by Dexter Wimbish/Roy McClain to receive the challenge and schedule hearing it for the next Board meeting, or possibly for a Special Called Meeting should time constraints require it. This would allow for time to read through the pertinent statutes.

Ms. Windham advised she was not comfortable with the Board accepting a voter challenge at this meeting.

Mr. McClain said he was not in disagreement but felt the process might be better played out at this meeting since Mr. Clark was following instructions he was given, and he is already here. The Board can hear Mr. Clark's comments to decide if we want to progress. Attorney Windham again reiterated that a paper filing is required, and there is no provision for an oral presentation of a voter challenge.

Motion/second to rescind the previous motion/second by Dexter Wimbish/Roy McClain.

Much discussion followed regarding the deviation in protocol. Mr. Wimbish asked if the Board could allow Mr. Clark to speak under Citizen Comment stipulations, so that he could state his circumstance. Then Mr. Clark could be advised as to the proper procedure for filing of the voter challenge. ***Motion/second by Dexter Wimbish/James Newland to reopen Citizens Comment portion of the meeting and allow Mr. Clark to speak to his voter challenge, noting that time limitations might apply. Motion carried unanimously.***

Chairman Johnson thanked Mr. Wimbish for his recommendation. With the Board's concurrence, Mr. Clark addressed the Board.

Citizens Comments

Mr. Clark noted he has lived in Spalding County for 50 years and was a retired Police Officer with the City of Griffin. He stated he was concerned about the voter list and had generated a list with voter ID numbers, rather than names. He detailed that some needed to be removed due to ineligibility because of moving to other states, such as Florida in a couple of instances. These voters have voted in Florida and are shown as active

there. These were generated from the January 2022 database. Mr. Clark concluded his comments and Chairman Johnson noted that Citizens Comments was closed.

Mr. Clark was instructed to submit his voter challenge in writing to Ms. Slaughter at the Elections Office during the regular business hours of 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. She will receive the challenge and start the process. Ms. Slaughter and the office staff will begin the necessary research for a presentation to the Board who can then decide if they choose to move forward. Mr. Clark advised he understood the process.

Board Member Comments

Roy McClain	Mr. McClain said he scheduled with Attorney Broder to move the files to the Elections Office where they will scan and shred as necessary. He suggested that another member attend this exercise on the 16 th and 19 th as it might be helpful. There are 77 boxes to move.
Dexter Wimbish	No Comment
James Newland	No Comment
Jim O'Brien	No Comment
Ben Johnson	He thanked the Bylaws Committee, the Board, Office Staff and Attorney Windham for all their hard work and dedication.

Adjournment

Motion/second to adjourn at 7:03 p.m. by Dexter Wimbish/James Newland carried unanimously.

Ben Johnson, Chair, Presiding

Teresa A. Watson, Recording Secretary