

SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS & VOTER REGISTRATION
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2023

This Regular Meeting of the Spalding County Board of Elections and Registration was held at the County Courthouse Annex, 119 East Solomon Street at 6:00 p.m. on September 12, 2023. Attending were Chair, Ben Johnson, presiding; Vice Chair, James Newland; Roy McClain; Jim O'Brien; and Dexter Wimbish.

Also present were Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter; Attorney Stephanie Windham; and Teresa Watson to record minutes.

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

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

Citizens Comments

Chairman Johnson read the guidelines for citizen comments.

Kristin Nabers spoke regarding the decision to implement a hand count to verify machine totals for elections. She maintained that machines are the most accurate and quickest method. If the Board persists, she wanted them to concentrate on several components, i.e., performing a test run before a total election, deciding to implement the hand count for only one race initially, to remember to account for human error, and to be cognizant of the responsibility and cost to taxpayers.

Adoption of the Agenda

The following items were desired to be added to the agenda: 1) Add approval of the minutes of the Special Called Meeting on 8-8-23 with motion/second by Roy McClain/Jim O'Brien. Motion carried unanimously. 2) A Proclamation submitted by Dexter Wimbish for discussion. Motion/second by James Newland/Roy McClain carried unanimously.

Motion/second by Roy McClain/Dexter Wimbish to approve agenda as amended carried unanimously.

Minutes

Motion/second to approve the Special Called Meeting and the Regular Monthly Meeting of August 8, 2023, by James Newland/Dexter Wimbish carried unanimously.

Report of Elections Supervisor

Mrs. Kim Slaughter detailed the IGAs being considered tonight, provided that qualifying was complete for the November 7, 2023, General Municipal Election (reading candidates' names), and reminded members of Rule 183-1-11-02 regarding the appearance of a candidate's name on the ballot. She provided an overview of voter registration activities through August, noting new voters, transferring voters, felons, deceased voters, those for whom no contact could be established, and mailing of precinct cards. She gave an update on GARVIS and reports, noting GARVIS is still a project in progress with inherent difficulties. List Maintenance was described, and general statistics were provided. She highlighted the City of Orchard Hill at-large council seat, the email pertaining to the recent injunction in the SB 202 litigation, the rescheduled state election board meeting (from Carrollton to Atlanta) for October 3, and precinct health checks which are ongoing.

Old Business

1) Approval of Bylaws for guidance.

Some discussion followed regarding House Bill 769, particularly with regard to the protocol established for the 5th member, which is to be appointed by Superior Court Judges, or in the instance of failure in that regard

the appointment would be made by the County Board of Commissioners. Mr. McClain said for the record, he was in favor of this process, but he noted the legislation is anything but clear and not easy to figure out.

Motion/second to approve the revised Bylaws as presented, by Roy McClain/Dexter Wimbish, carried unanimously.

New Business

- 1) Rescheduling of the November and December regular monthly meetings.
 - A. Due to certification, request to reschedule the November 14, 2023, 6:00 pm meeting to 10:00 am and to be located at the Office of Elections and Voter Registration, 825 Memorial Drive, Griffin, GA 30223. The public can certainly attend, noted Chairman Johnson.
 - B. Due to the scheduling of the Georgia Voter Registration and Election Officials Association training held in Athens, Georgia, request to reschedule the December 12, 2023, meeting to December 5, 2023, and to be held at 5:00 pm. The location will remain the same as regular meetings; the date change request was based on a conflict in our attorney's schedule. Some discussion followed.
Motion/second to approve: A) Rescheduling of the November 14, 2023, meeting from 6:00 pm to 10:00 am, with the location changed to the Elections Office rather than the Annex, and B) The rescheduling the December 12, 2023, date to December 5, 2023, because of a conflict with the attorney's schedule, by James Newland/Roy McClain carried unanimously.
- 2) Resolution (for duties delegated from the Board to the Election Supervisor).

The Resolution was read by Chairman Johnson. Item #4 in the Resolution had one correction: the phrase "minutes of all members" should read "minutes of all meetings." This will be an annual resolution as specified in the Bylaws. ***Motion/second by Jim O'Brien/Dexter Wimbish to approve the Resolution with the noted change to Item #4 carried unanimously.***
- 3) Approval of Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with the Spalding County Board of Education and the City of Griffin for conducting elections.

Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter thanked everyone involved in the development and implementation of these IGAs. They both needed the review and update. ***Motion/second by Dexter Wimbish/James Newland to approve both IGAs as presented carried unanimously.***
- 4) Supervisor Compensation
The feedback to our request for a comparison of Elections Supervisor compensation in other counties has been excellent. Members felt that additional compensation is needed for this position. Several variables factor into this decision, chief among them the Spalding County budgetary constraints. Discussion followed regarding how to provide data to the Board of Commissioners (percentage or dollar amount of increase desired). Mr. Wimbish pointed out that it might be beneficial to look at an overall compensation plan, as it makes no sense to give the Supervisor a raise when she is losing people due to the poor salaries on staff. The Board felt it could use the research data Ms. Slaughter had collected for presentation to the Commissioners. She will get this information to all members. ***Roy McClain moved to study such an increase in compensation as a recommendation for the Board of Commissioners, which can be an item for consideration on the next meeting agenda. James Newland seconded the motion. Chairman Johnson appointed Roy McClain and James Newland to gather pertinent data and perform the study, reporting back to the Board next month.***
- 5) Proclamation for National Voter Registration Recognition for 9-19-23 through 9-25-23. This is a non-partisan effort to encourage a positive culture change. Mr. Wimbish, who presented the Proclamation, spoke a few months ago about the culture of the Board of Elections, and activities of this nature would help to further that effort. Roy McClain commented that he agreed with the Proclamation except for four usages of the word "democracy," noting that a constitutional republic is the correct term. It occurs in the first line, first page and the last line of the first page. Also, the phrase occurred in the first paragraph of page two and the last paragraph of page 2. He felt we need to be accurate in referring to our form of

government as we are not a democracy. Mr. Wimbish felt that if we were polling America, we would find that most would not object to democracy and might even object to a constitutional republic. Democracy is an ideal, even if we are defined in the constitution as a republic. Dexter Wimbish did not want to see us sidelined on semantics but should look at the democratic ability to connect government to the people. We are talking about an ideal to promote democracy, he noted.

Chairman Johnson appealed to Attorney Windham. She noted it would actually be the Board of Commissioners who will present and sign; the Proclamation would not be from the Board of Elections and Registration. Typically involved parties come to the Board of Commissioners' meeting where they would provide a photo op. Some discussion continued, and James Newland suggested that the Board agree for the first noted line to refer to "republic" but the other mentions be allowed to remain since the first line does refer to the governmental status. Most agreed with the recommendation. Mr. McClain did not agree; he felt the document needs to be technically accurate but noted there were no hard feelings.

Motion/second by James Newland/Dexter Wimbish to approve with only one change in the first line of the first page ("democracy" to "constitutional republic") to recommend to the Spalding County Board of Commissioners carried 4-1 with Roy McClain opposing.

Board Member Comments

Roy McClain – He updated activities of the Ad Hoc Committee. Most scanning has been completed. They can determine electronic specifications to assess storage space, but the project is in good shape. There will be a discussion at a later date regarding some 2020 ballots.

Dexter Wimbish – He commended Kim Slaughter and staff on getting documentation to members for the meetings in a more timely fashion of late. He appreciated getting reports early and adequate communication.

Jim O'Brien – He advised he had neglected to note on the back end of the Bylaws that a date and appropriate signatures would be needed. Also, he realized he had given no thought as to where the Bylaws would be archived. Attorney Windham advised it will be put on the website and copy held in the office.

James – thanked Jim for work on Bylaws for a frustrating job. Good work of back-and-forth effort. Thanked Stephanie as well.

Ben Johnson – He was thankful for everyone who assisted and was glad to have the Bylaws, delegation of duties, IGAs and Resolution that were delineated tonight. He thanked Kim Slaughter and said that hopefully GARVIS will continue to improve.

Kim Slaughter also noted that she had provided a financial report for members in the interest of transparency.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. by Dexter Wimbish/Jim O'Brien carried unanimously.

Ben Johnson, Chair, Presiding

Teresa A. Watson, Recording Secretary