

**COBB COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION
FEBRUARY 25, 2021
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Video Conference via WebEx
1:00 p.m.

Board Members Present

Phil Daniell (Remote)
Pat Gartland
Fred Aiken
Jessica Brooks
Darryl Wilson Jr.
Pat Gartland

Board Members Absent

Others Present: The following individuals were also present in person: Janine Eveler and Crista Watson. Daniel White participated remotely.

Chairman Daniell called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS (JANINE EVELER)

Director Eveler provided an overview of **HB531** detailing the following proposed legislation:

1. Prohibits election superintendents or registrars from accepting any funding, grants or gifts from anyone except the county, state or federal government.
2. A provision for appointing an election superintendent when the Probate Judge is incapacitated, in counties where elections run by the probate Judge.
3. Allows poll workers to work in counties other than where they reside.
4. In a nonpartisan election, when a candidate dies, the name remains on the ballot. Includes provisions for if that candidate gains the most votes or makes it to a runoff.
5. If a precinct with 2,000 voters or more has a line longer than one hour in the last General election, it must be split or more equipment added to resolve those lines. Includes instructions for measuring the line three times in the day.
6. Adds “advance voting locations” to provision requiring public buildings be made available for elections unless it substantially interferes with the primary purpose of the building.

7. Prohibits the use of buses and other readily movable facilities from being used as polling places except in an emergency to supplement an existing facility.
8. Relaxes the requirement to provide 1 voting booth or enclosure for each 250 voters in the precinct to only general elections. In other elections it will be up to the superintendent to determine the number of units that is sufficient.
9. Provides for more extensive advertising of logic and accuracy testing and directs the notice requirements.
10. Absentee mail applications can only be accepted between 78 and 11 days before the election.
11. Absentee mail applications must include the name, date of birth, address as registered, address where the elector wishes the ballot to be mailed, and the number of his or her Georgia driver's license or identification card. If the voter does not have a Georgia driver's license or ID card, they must enclose a copy of one of the items in 21-2-417(c).
12. Third party entities cannot send absentee mail applications without prominently identifying their organization and they must use the State application form.
13. When we receive the application from the voter, we will compare the personal information including the DL# or ID# or the copy of the item from 21-2-417(c).
14. If there is an apparent mismatch on the identifying numbers or documents, we will issue the absentee ballot as provisional. The voter must submit a cure affidavit with the identifying information in order to cure that provisional ballot.
15. Secure drop boxes must be established inside advance voting locations and be open only while voting is occurring. An amendment was made in the last hearing to determine the number of boxes allowed by number of registered voters.
16. Except for UOCAVA ballots, absentee mail ballots will not be mailed until 29 days before the election and must be mailed at least 25 days before, for all applications received up to that date.
17. Voters confined to hospital may apply for an absentee mail ballots within the 10 days prior to the election.
18. The absentee mail ballot outer envelopes will be changed to require the voter's name, signature, DL# or ID#, date of birth, and last 4 digits of the SSN (to be completed if the voter does not have a GA DL# or ID#). The envelope will be designed so that this information is hidden until revealed by the election official validating the ballot. The election officials will compare the data to the information on the registration record to verify

the ballot. The path on the ballot envelope must be signed. Non-matching information can be cured by affidavit.

19. The Overseas and Military voters will receive two ballots and on the second ballot, they will be able to rank their choices for each race. If there is a need for a runoff in one of those races, the elections officials will open the second ballot and create a duplicate that reflects the voter's intent for the runoff. The highest ranked candidate that is in the runoff will be marked on the duplicate ballot.
20. Allow advance voting starting on the fourth Monday prior to all primaries and elections and as soon as possible prior to a runoff. Mandated for Monday-Friday and second Saturday and the first Saturday or the first Sunday in the period, 9-5, other than state holidays. Allows for extended hours 7a – 7pm.
21. Advance voting locations cannot be changed with 14 days of the voting period except for an emergency renders the facility unusable. Non-emergency changes prior to the 14-day mark must be published in the legal organ for two consecutive weeks.
22. Election officials may begin early processing of absentee mail ballots on the third Monday prior to the election and must begin by the second Monday prior. Tabulation can begin by 7am on election day, but those doing tabulation before polls close must be sequestered. Monitors will be designated and rules for behavior are stated in the bill.
23. Poll watchers shall receive training by their designating party or candidate with materials provided by the SOS.
24. No person shall give, offer to give, participate in the giving of any money or gifts, including, but not limited to, food and drink, to an elector.
25. Provisional ballots will only be counted if the voter was eligible to vote in the precinct in which the ballot was cast.
26. Ballot duplication will be done by people designated by the parties or, if a nonpartisan election, by the chief judge of the superior court.
27. Election certification required by 5PM on the Monday after the election.
28. Schedule for all runoffs will be 4 weeks after the original primary of election.
29. For Governor appointed vacancies, there will be a special primary held prior to the special election held with the next general election.

Board Member Comments:

- **#5** Jessica Brooks asked Director Eveler if she believed this would create a need for additional staffing. Director Eveler stated she did not believe so, but additional instruction from the Secretary of State's Office. would be needed before a final determination could be made.
- **#6** Ms. Brooks pointed out that this provision would require each facility to be available for voting for 3 weeks and would shut the facility down for any other purpose during that time. Mr. Aiken asked if it would it be wise to notify each facility of the change in law that now mandates the use of the location for the entirety of the voting time frame. Director Eveler explained, if passed, the Elections office would obtain direction from the Cobb County Board of Commissioners if this were to pass.
- **#10** Ms. Brooks asked Director Eveler her thoughts regarding the proposed transition to 78 days from the current 180 days for acceptance of Absentee mail applications. Director Eveler stated she believed this to be beneficial, because many things can change in the 6 months before an election. Voters move or change their minds.
- **#11** Chairman Daniell asked what forms of Identification are included in 21-2-417(c). Director Eveler explained non-photo IDs such as utility bills, bank statement, or other government checks and documents identified in the Helping Americans Vote Act (HAVA).
- **#11** Ms. Brooks asked what would the procedure be if the required identification was not included? Director Eveler explained that we will have to contact the voter if information is missing, but for any mismatched information a provisional ballot would be issued until the mismatched information is verified.
- **#12** Ms. Brooks asked if the parties that issue Absentee Mail Applications would be restricted. Director Eveler explained they would not but they would be required to prominently identify the organization they are affiliated with on the mailing and would have to mail the standard form.
- **#15** Chairman Daniell expressed his concerns stating that secure drop boxes established inside advance voting locations may limit accessibility for elderly and disabled voters.
- **#15** Mr. Aiken asked if there were any discussions regarding the negative impact this provision may have on the elderly and disabled. Director Eveler explained this was discussed in the subcommittee meetings.
- **#15** Ms. Brooks inquired, if this provision were not adopted, would funding to provide security and transport of the ballots be an issue? Director Eveler indicated that we transported ballots previously and would continue to do so. In this case they are transported nightly from Advance Voting locations.
- **#15** Chairman Daniell asked if there were any limitations in place restricting the number

of ballots an individual is permitted to deposit into a secure drop box. Director Eveler detailed the law and stated there are currently no restrictions that limit the number of ballots an individual can submit, but the code dictates who can transport another person's ballot.

- **#15** Ms. Brooks expressed her concerns regarding the proposed changes relating to secure drop boxes and the potential for increased voting lines.
- **#18** Chairman Daniell suggested the area for required information be located on the outside of the inner secrecy envelope. Director Eveler explained that the voter's information must be validated before opening the outer envelope. The bill provides a secrecy flap on the outer envelope.
- **#20** Mr. Wilson asked what were the circumstances behind the proposal to modify the hours and dates indicated in item 20? Director Eveler explained the reasoning behind the modification is an attempt to foster a more uniform process throughout the state.
- **#24** Mr. Gartland and Ms. Brooks both expressed concerns over the restrictions identified in item 24 due to failure to include specific information.
- **#26** Ms. Brooks expressed concerns regarding the ability to recruit staff to participate in the ballot duplication process.
- **#26** Chairman Daniell asked Director Eveler if she believed her staff would be able to successfully process election results by the deadline due to the significant volume of ballots received. Director Eveler explained she did not feel there would be an issue based on the proposed changes allowing the the office to receive ballots earlier.

Director Eveler provided an overview of the Senate Bills passed to the House:

- **SB 40** – Early processing of absentee mail ballots required to start of the third Monday before the election, primary or runoff.
- **SB 67** – Requires a copy of the voter's allowable photo or non-photo ID be sent with the absentee mail ballot application, except for UOCAVA voters. Applications received through the SOS web portal will require just the GA DL# or ID#.
- **SB89**: Ms. Brooks expressed her concerns regarding the lack of clearly defined criteria she has observed.
- **SB 184** – Credit for voting must be entered no later than 30 days after the election. \$100/day fines to county for late entry.
- **SB 188** – Requires a new reporting site showing the number of ballots cast and/or issued and received. Data must be entered in this site before any results can be reported.

- **SB241:** Chairman Daniell asked if the Security Paper identified is sold by an out of state vendor

Board Member Comments:

- All members of the Board thanked Director Eveler for providing such a thorough and organized breakdown of HB531 and the Senate Bills.
- Ms. Brooks spoke regarding the challenges relating to educating voters and concerns seniors may face concerning their ability to access information relating to the proposed changes.
- Chairman Daniell suggested the addition of a search bar to the Elections website.

The Chairman set the next regular meeting for March 8, 2021 at 4:00pm.

Mr. Gartland moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Mr. Wilson SECONDED. APPROVED 5-0.