

**COBB COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION
SEPTEMBER 13, 2021
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

100 Cherokee Street
3:00 p.m.

Board Members Present

Tori Silas
Jessica Brooks
Steve Bruning
Pat Gartland
Jennifer Mosbacher

Board Members Absent

Others Present: Gregg Litchfield, Janine Eveler, Beau Gunn, Brenda Jemison, Tara Crisp, and Crista Watson.

Chairperson Silas called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Pam Reardon spoke regarding her opposition to the hand-delivery of absentee ballots and would like to see enhanced chain of custody procedures. She also requested spoiled ballots procedures be uniform across the county and election day printers not be connected to Wi-Fi.
- Rahul Garabadu, a voting rights staff attorney for the ACLU of Georgia, asked the board to reverse the decision to move Cooper 01 from Cooper Middle School to the Cobb Police Academy training facility. He presented three reasons for his request. The first being this will deter voters of color from casting a ballot. The second is that this may violate Federal Law regarding voter intimidation in Section 2b of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. And the third reason cited is that this could confuse voters due to changes stemming from SB202 and redistricting changes.
- Lisa Campbell spoke regarding the importance of drop boxes for voter accessibility, convenience, record-setting use, and requested use be continued to encourage voter participation.
- Caroline Holko asked the board to consider the addition of Sunday voting and requested more absentee ballot drop boxes be placed throughout the county.
- Baron Doss expressed his opposition to the police academy training center being utilized as a polling location due to feelings of intimidation as a minority and feels it suppresses black voters.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Ms. Mosbacher made a motion to approve the August 25, 2021 minutes. Ms. Brooks SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

To request approval to temporarily change the location of the polling place for Smyrna 3B (SN3B) from Shiloh Seventh Day Adventist Church, 810 Church St. SE, Smyrna GA 30080 to Cumberland Community Church, 810 Church St. SE, Smyrna, GA 30080 beginning September 13, 2021 through November 30, 2021.

Shiloh Seventh Day Adventist Church notified the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration that the facility suffered structural damage due to a recent storm and will not be available to serve as a polling place.

Pat Gartland made a motion to approve the proposed temporary precinct change. Mr. Bruning SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Election Manager Brenda Jemison detailed the current poll worker training plan and schedule with classes beginning on September 27, 2021 through October 23, 2021 and if needed, emergency classes being held on October 25th and 26th.

- Mr. Gartland asked how the training was being publicized. Ms. Jemison detailed the database used by the department to identify those who have expressed interest in serving as an election day worker.
- Ms. Mosbacher also complimented the *Teachable* software the department is using to recruit staff members.

Registration Manager Beau Gunn announced to the Board, that Director Eveler was the recipient of the Ann Hicks Award of excellence at the annual Georgia Association of Voter Registration and Election Officials (GAVREO) 2021 conference.

Mr. Gunn reviewed the status of preparations for absentee in-person and absentee by-mail voting for the November 2, 2021 General/Special Election. Mr. Gunn noted that several new advance voting clerks have been onboarded to assist with the November 2, 2021 advance voting plan. A draft absentee by-mail flyer was also presented to the board for review.

- Ms. Mosbacher asked who is responsible for responding to the absentee email address. Mr. Gunn explained members of the absentee staff share the role.
- Ms. Mosbacher asked if all Elections and Registration emails are sent to the absentee email address. Mr. Gunn responded that there are multiple addresses utilized by the department.

- Ms. Mosbacher expressed her concerns regarding the response turnaround time for the absentee email account. Mr. Gunn explained, there is a team that monitors that email, and staff is increased based on the volume of emails received.
- Mr. Bruning asked if the department has the new envelopes that will be used to return absentee ballots. Mr. Gunn explained that they had just been received.
- Mr. Bruning recommended a picture of the new envelopes be posted to the website for the public to view and asked what stamp quantity is required for postage. Mr. Gunn recommended the answer be provided by the Postal Service to ensure an accurate response.
- Chairwoman Silas recommended the implementation of a FAQ document be added to the website. Director Eveler explained the website currently features FAQs for several of the different areas on the site.
- Ms. Brooks recognized the department's continuous efforts to enhance and strengthen the communication plan for the public. She is excited about the registrar pilot program and likes the high quality videos.
- Ms. Brooks asked what the difference was between *enet* accepted and *enet* rejected on the *enet* report. Mr. Gunn stated this will be investigated further and more information will be provided at a later time.

Chairwoman Silas discussed the polling place location change for Cooper 01 (CO01), that was approved on July 19, 2021 to move from Cooper Middle School, 4605 Ewing Rd., Austell, GA 30106 to Cobb County Police Academy, 2435 East-West Connector, Austell, GA 30106, effective January 1, 2022.

- Mr. Gartland detailed his observations of the facility when visiting, noting the significant volume of space, volume of public nearby, and did not feel the presence of law enforcement appeared to be an issue.
- Ms. Brooks stated she had originally supported the decision but upon further consideration, is concerned about intimidation of voters and continuous changes to polling locations. She also noted the prominence of Police Academy Training Center signage as a concern.
- Mr. Bruning expressed his previous support of the facility being utilized as an advance voting location; however, he now recognizes some voters may feel intimidated and does not support approving anything if it makes voters feel uncomfortable.
- Ms. Mosbacher noted that section 18 of SB02 requiring the 5300 voters be split and expressed her concerns over redistricting and continuous changes. She explained if there is not an immediate need, she does not support making this change.
- Chairperson Silas stated she was not in favor of the location change before or now.
- Director Eveler provided additional details and explained the facility is not a police precinct, it is a training facility, recruits do not use the public entrance and are required to use the private entrance located on the back of the building. She also explained that it is common to receive grievances about voting in churches and for parents of school age children to complain about voting in schools, due to the safety concerns. In addition, there have been previous instances where school lockdowns have occurred during voting, preventing voters from entering the poll. She asked that the board take into consideration all of these issues as well.

Chairwoman Silas asked attorney Litchfield, what legal requirements must be implemented to have this matter reconsidered. Attorney Litchfield advised that this must be advertised as well as a public hearing before a vote can be held.

Ms. Mosbacher moved to have the polling location change reconsidered and to hold a new public hearing. Ms. Brooks SECONDED. Approved 4/1 with Mr. Gartland opposed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Ms. Brooks asked about feedback from poll workers after elections. Ms. Jemison explained that a new survey to gather feedback is currently being created to provide the department with areas for improvement.
- Ms. Mosbacher asked if early vote workers were required to be a Cobb County employee. Director Eveler explained that was not a requirement and that when an early vote worker is hired, they then become a Cobb County employee.

Chairperson Silas set the next Board Meeting:

- October 11, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Regular Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Mr. Gartland made a motion to enter executive session at 4:20pm to discuss pending litigation. Mr. Bruning SECONDED. Approved 5/0.
- At 4:43pm Mr. Gartland made a motion to come out of executive session. Ms. Brooks SECONDED. Approved 5/0.

In regular session, Ms. Brooks moved to approve a consent agreement in the matter of Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration, Director of Elections, Janine Eveler, and Craig Rogers with regard to SEB cases 2016-184, 2017-033 and 2020-044. Chairwoman Silas SECONDED. Approved 5/0.

Chairwoman Silas adjourned the meeting at 4:44pm.