COBB COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION
NOVEMBER 8, 2021
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

100 Cherokee Street
3:00 p.m.

Board Members Present
Tori Silas, Chair
Jessica Brooks, Vice Chair
Jennifer Mosbacher, Secretary
Steve Bruning, Assistant Secretary
Pat Gartland

Board Members Absent


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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Salleigh Grubbs (virtual) expressed her opposition to the use of electronic ballots and urged the board to transition to the use of hand marked paper ballots.
- Lisa Campbell (virtual) spoke regarding the ongoing need to advocate for the expansion of voting by mail and expressed her opposition to the requirement that absentee voters must print and sign their ballot applications. She also commented that she served as a poll watcher for Kennesaw 5A. She witnessed no lines along with an efficient and competently run poll.
- Aileen Nakamura (virtual) urged the board to transition to hand marked paper ballots in place of electronic voting and requested the board conduct an audit following the November 30, 2021 Municipal/General Election Runoff.
- Cigdem Delano (in-person) is an IT Professional who advocated for the use of hand marked paper ballots citing the vulnerability of electronic voting systems, potential for identity theft, cybersecurity concerns, and the potential for data manipulation.
- Paul Daiber (in-person) addressed the board explaining his observations as a poll worker detailing the ability to view the selections made by citizens while recording their votes on the Ballot Marking Devices. He also expressed his concerns regarding the QR codes printed on ballots claiming there is no way to verify the information recorded accurately reflects the selection of the voter.
- Pam Reardon (in-person) is a poll watcher, East Cobb resident and voter. She explained that she conducted exit polling at Cooper 01 on November 2, 2021 between 10-11am and reported that out of the 20 voters she surveyed, only 1 person was opposed to the proposed
Cooper 01 precinct location change, because of the difficulty making a left turn at the traffic light when exiting the Police Training facility. Ms. Reardon expressed her opposition to holding 3 weeks of early voting for a runoff, advocated for the use of hand marked paper ballots in place of electronic voting, and requested an audit of the returns following the November 30, 2021 runoff.

- Betty Buran (in-person) is a 48year resident of Cobb county who advocated for the use of hand marked paper ballots, fair, transparent, and accurate election results, and voiced her concerns regarding how the units cannot be arranged in a way that guarantees privacy, technical issues relating to the use of digital voting equipment, the dependence on technicians to provide technical assistance, ballots being printed in duplicate, and hopes the use of hand marked paper ballots instead, will bring confidence back to the election process. She also stated that voter certificates and poll pad voter check in done on Tuesday, November 2nd was duplication.

- Debbie Fisher (in-person) voiced her opposition regarding moving Cooper 01 out of the Cobb County police training facility. Ms. Fisher also requested video surveillance of drop boxes within the county be livestreamed and available to the public to view to ensure chain of custody procedures are transparent.

- Boyd Parks (in-person) presented the board with a document citing election integrity, his opposition to voting electronically, stating there is no way to verify systems have not been hacked, would like ballots to be printed on-site and believes each voter should be required to fingerprint their ballot with India Ink. He also stated that the BMDs and Scanners needed to be melted down.

- Elyssa Goldclang (in-person) requested hand marked paper ballots be utilized for future elections and an audit following the November 30, 2021 runoff. She expressed privacy concerns resulting from the use of electronic voting equipment, the inability to verify the information contained within the QR codes, the potential for hacking of QR codes, and the potential for Bluetooth equipment to be hacked.

- Christine Rozman (in-person) is a Cobb and Marietta voter who detailed her observations as a poll watcher on election day including poll pad devices showing as cancelled, unnecessary complexities, lack of consistency among polls, and advocated for the use of hand marked paper ballots to replace electronic voting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Mr. Bruning made a motion to approve the October 11, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Mosbacher SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

ELECTION NIGHT REPORT

- Director Eveler provided the board with the election night report, detailing wait times at the precincts which was a new practice that 35 of 145 polls did not complete, wait time tracking procedures, equipment malfunctions, the factors that contributed to 7 precincts failing to open on time resulting in extended closing times per court order, staffing issues, ballot boxes being left behind at 4 polls, voter turnout numbers, discrepancies identified within 9 polls, and reconciliation report requirements.
• Mr. Gartland visited 5 polls and detailed his observations and concerns regarding privacy of voters at the polls.
• Chairperson Silas asked Director Eveler about recruitment, retention, and poll worker training. Director Eveler explained this is an ongoing issue and is at a loss on how to address the staffing problems.
• Chairwoman Silas asked why 35 polls failed to report their wait times. Director Eveler explained that this is only required during even year elections, but for the sake of consistency, the Poll Workers will be asked to record wait times for all elections. Because this was the first time, and there was no line in most places, these polls simply forgot to report.

Mr. Gartland made a motion to certify the November 2, 2021 Municipal General/Special election. Ms. Brooks SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

• Approval of the 2022 Board Meeting Calendar (Janine Eveler)
• Chairwoman Silas asked about alternative meeting times. Director Eveler said that moving the time is not possible because of the broadcasting.

Mr. Gartland made a motion to approve. Mr. Bruning SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

• Review activity schedule for November 30, 2021 Runoff (Janine Eveler)

Director Eveler informed the board 6 absentee applications had been received at this time.

Chairperson Silas asked Director Eveler if any staffing problems have been identified concerning the runoff election for precincts Marietta 5A and Marietta 5B. Director Eveler responded no issues are anticipated and that senior poll managers and assistant managers have been assigned to the precincts in order to step in and fill any voids as well as provide additional training to the new poll managers and poll workers during this runoff.

• Approve Advance Voting Schedule for November 30, 2021 Runoff (Beau Gunn)

Registration Manager Beau Gunn informed the Board that Advance Voting will begin on November 15, 2021, one day of Saturday voting will be conducted on November 20, 2021, and the cost to conduct Advance Voting for this election will be incurred by the City of Marietta.

Ms. Mosbacher requested that additional hours be added. Mr. Gunn suggested opening at 7am and closing at 5pm, allowing two additional hours in the morning when traffic is usually higher. The Board decided to add one additional hour in the morning and one in the evening, setting hours at 8am – 6pm on all days except for Wednesday, November 24, which would remain as proposed, at 8am – 1pm.
Mr. Bruning made a motion to APPROVE the advance voting plan as amended. Ms. Brooks SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

TORI SILAS (CHAIRPERSON)

- Chairwoman Silas addressed delayed precinct openings during the November 2, 2021 election and implemented a requirement that a written mitigation plan must be completed along with a Director’s report detailing the circumstances that occurred resulting in a delayed opening.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Mr. Gartland stated he supports the use of hand marked paper ballots in place of electronic voting. Attorney Gregg Litchfield informed the Board, transitioning to paper ballots would be illegal due to election law prohibiting voting method changes between a general election and a runoff election.

- Mr. Bruning detailed his observations in previous years where paper ballots were utilized and supports the use but recognizes the implementation at this time is not feasible as it would be a legal violation.

- Mr. Gartland made a motion to transition to paper ballots. Attorney Litchfield again explained the law prohibits changing voting methods between an election and runoff election. The motion failed with no SECOND.

- Ms. Mosbacher asked about the new absentee ballot envelopes. Director Eveler explained the department observed a 2.5% failure rate, due to missing information but the department did not have to issue many cures. Director Eveler also described the issues with the new flap on the envelope, used to protect voter’s private information. The issues have been forwarded to the Secretary of State’s office.

Chairperson Silas set the next Board Meetings:
- November 30, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
- December 6, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Regular Meeting (certification). This is a change to the previously scheduled date of December 13.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Ms. Brooks made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 4:15 p.m. for the purpose of discussing pending litigation. Mr. Bruning SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

- At 5:15 p.m., Mr. Gartland moved to come out of Executive Session and Ms. Brooks SECONDED. APPROVED 5/0.

Chairwoman Silas adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.