

**THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS OF CHATHAM COUNTY  
MINUTES**

**March 11, 2019**

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Malinda Hodge – Vice Chair  
Marianne Heimes  
Antwan Lang – Available by telephone from 5:38 PM through adjournment  
Debbie Rauers

**STAFF:** Russell Bridges  
Lynn Trabue  
Robert Carney

**GUESTS** Tia Brightwell, Former Member, Board of Elections, Candidate for Chair  
Mr. Cohen, From Pooler, GA  
Rick Ellison, President R.U.F.F.  
Carl Murray, Candidate for Chair

**CALL TO ORDER** **The meeting was called to order by Malinda Hodge, Vice-Chair, at 3:30 P.M.** She then pronounced the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CHAIR ADDRESS** **Ms. Hodge** took the opportunity to thank the staff for their efforts.

**MINUTES** **Minutes for February 11, 2019 – Regular Board Meeting**  
**Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers** that the Minutes for February 11, 2019 be accepted. **ALL APPROVED.**

**Minutes for February 15, 2019 – Special Board Meeting** to interview three candidates for Chairperson  
**Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers** that the Minutes for February 15, 2019 be accepted. **ALL APPROVED.**

**Minutes for February 19, 2019 – Special Board Meeting** to interview two candidates for Chairperson.  
**Motion by Debbie Rauers, seconded by Marianne Heimes** that the Minutes for February 19, 2019 be accepted. **ALL APPROVED.**

**Minutes for February 20, 2019 – Special Board Meeting** to interview one candidate for Chairperson.  
**Motion by Debbie Rauers, seconded by Marianne Heimes** that the Minutes for February 20, 2019 be accepted. **ALL APPROVED**

**Minutes for February 21, 2019 – Special Board Meeting** to interview three candidates for Chairperson.  
**Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers** that the Minutes for February 21, 2019 be accepted. **ALL APPROVED.**

**Minutes for February 26, 2019 – Special Board Meeting**  
**Motion by Debbie Rauers, seconded by Marianne Heimes** that the Minutes for February 26, 2019 be accepted. **ALL APPROVED.**

**TREASURER’S REPORT** **Treasurer’s Report, February 2019**  
**Russell** indicated there was very little activity on this report.  
**Ms. Rauers** asked how used vacation time is reflected in the report.  
**Russell** explained that the time accumulated is identified by the number of hours.reflected. This information is shown in arrears. He stated that when he takes leave, he reports it to the Chair or Vice Chair.  
**Ms. Rauers** asked about figures reported under Account Number 511200 showing a negative \$ 8,453.29.  
**Russell** shared that this is the result of the budget cuts, but elections have to be funded so they can be expected to meet the needs/  
**Ms. Rauers’** next concern covered the Petty Cash Box. She learned that the box was just audited, today, which occurs about every six months. **Ms. Rauers** suggested adding a Petty Cash Box line to the Treasurer’s Report.

**Russell** stated that the Petty Cash Box is included in Account Number 573000, Payments to Others. He related that this budget category contains about \$50,000 to cover miscellaneous

**Ms. Rauers** shared that the Payments to Others account shows \$26,227.91 expended this year. She suggested detailing these outlays in the Treasurer's Report. She then asked about accounting for P-Card transactions. She also asked whether the polls have been paid for the use of their facilities.

**Russell** said that all of the P-Card expenses are attributed to their individually appropriate accounts. Also, all polls have been paid.

**Ms. Hodges** noted that the entry reflecting **Russell's** annual leave time should be changed to show six hours used.

**Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers** to accept the Treasurer's Report, with the above-mentioned correction for February 2019 as information. **ALL APPROVED.**

**Ms. Heimes** suggested that staff prepare a written explanation of expenditures covered under "Payments to Others".

**Russell** agreed to assimilate the requested information.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

**Russell** stated that there was no correspondence of substance. However, the response to the District Court Filing was completed by the due date, February 27<sup>th</sup>. The response was also forwarded to the Registrar's Office because most of the items were about Provisional and Absentee Ballot handling, and things that reflected on voter registration. We responded in the negative to all of the questions because the bulk of the detail was out of the scope of our responsibilities.

**Ms. Rauers** asked if public comment button had been placed on our web site allowing for input from the public.

**Russell** indicated that a shell of a button is in place but it is not yet activated. There is a button on our home page that is regularly used for public comment.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### Chair Selection Process

**Russell** shared that all eight candidates have signed the requested Affidavit. The selection process is under way. We have until March 30<sup>th</sup> to complete this process, after which time it falls to the County Commission and local delegation. Each Board Member was to bring to the next Executive Session a list of his/her top candidates. Once a final selection has been made, the successful candidate's continuing interest will be verified, and a background investigation will be completed.

**Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers,** to add Chairman Selection Discussion to the Agenda, just prior to the Executive Session. **ALL APPROVED.**

##### Special Election, March 19, 2019

**Russell** detailed that early voting began two weeks ago and will conclude this Friday at 5:00 PM. A second early voting location has been opened at the County Police Department, on Whitefield Avenue. By early this morning, they had approximately 1,800 early votes. Also, there have been about 150 Absentee Ballots. There are nearly 7,800 active voters involved in this Election. This is a very tense situation for this community, and the Sheriff's department will be available for assistance. There are four Technicians available for the Election, and each has a spare DRE. There are 12 shelf spares. There are six Touch Screens for each poll, and each has two Express Polls. Including Technicians, there are 30 workers projected to be utilized.

**Lynn** shared that there are six workers per poll plus a stand-by list. Most of the workers are residents of the Landings, and they are supplemented by experienced workers from other polls. All of the workers for this Election are in the system to be paid, and the report has been provided to **Russell** for submission to the County Payroll Department.

##### 2019-2020 Budget

**Russell** reviewed a Budget List showing the dollar amounts requested, adjustments recommended by the County Budget Department, and "new" items, which are defined as money over what they recommend. When we meet with the County Manager and the Executive Team, there will be an opportunity to defend our requests. There are two, full-sized Elections in a Presidential Cycle, and if they follow the trend of the 2018 Elections, we will be busy and working with a brand new voting system

## **GEOA**

**Russell** announced that we would leave Savannah on Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, and the Conference concludes on March 27<sup>th</sup> (mid-day). The brochures have been distributed. Everyone has been registered for the Conference and has a hotel room allocated. Expenses will be reimbursed after the Conference. The rooms are covered by the P-Card.

### **Develop Public Participation Policies**

There was limited discussion regarding guidelines for comments and questions from the public and the Board's responses to those comments and questions.

**Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers** that the development of public participation policies be tabled until the next meeting. **ALL APPROVED.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **LEGISLATION HB 316, New Voting System**

**Russell** provided a copy of the Bill, which is the voting system bill. It has made it through the House and is presently in the Senate being reviewed. The proposed system is a paper ballot system, and it uses a marking device somewhat like the touch screen system we use today. Once the vote is entered into the machine, a paper ballot is printed showing the voter a readout of his/her selections. If satisfied, the voter will feed it into a scanning device where it will be tabulated. Apparently, once approved, the State will underwrite the initial cost of the system.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Input From and Discussions With Guests**

**Rick Ellison** expressed concern about Antwan Lang missing Board Meetings, concern about the method of Board Chair selection, the availability of new voting machines, Meeting Minutes not made available within a suitable timeframe, the web site not providing a way to make contact with the Board Members, and the need for additional polling places in Pooler.

Each of these concerns was addressed by the Board.

**Carl Murray** questioned why the former Chair was applying to be Chair for the next term after resigning from his position.

It was explained that the former Chairperson did not resign. His term in office expired.

**Mr. Cohen** questioned the level of representation he, as a voting citizen, has on the Board when one of the members is not at a meeting. He was also interested in the Minutes being more readily available to the public.

He was assured that each Board Member serves all of Chatham County, regardless of party affiliation or interests. It is fully expected that all of the Board Members will participate in the Chair selection process, with full access to candidate information. Any votes taken will be cast in a public forum.

Continued discussion encompassed the history of the Board of Elections with questions and answers consisting of when, how, and why the Board was structured as it is and functions as it does.

**Tia Brightwell** shared that she had been told of an effort by someone in the office to influence the upcoming vote for Board Chair. Comments from **Russell** and various Board Members stated that this had not happened.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **Chairman Selection Discussion**

**Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers**, to go into Executive Session for the purpose of Chairman Selection. **ALL APPROVED.**

Executive Session began at 5:38 PM

Mr. Lang joined the executive session by telephone at 6:12PM

**RECONVENE MEETING    The Regular Board Meeting was reconvened at 6:28 PM.**

**Antwan Lang** attended during the Executive Session and during the Reconvened meeting via telephone connection. There were no votes taken during the Executive Session.

**Ms. Hodge** announced that she would entertain nominations for any of the candidates for Chairman, and nominations would remain open as long as any of the Board Members wished to make nominations.

**Debbie Rauers** nominated Peter Muller.

**Marianne Heimes** nominated Tom Mahoney.

**Malinda Hodge** nominated Monifa Johnson.

**Ms. Hodge** called for a vote. *and asked for each board member to vote for two candidates for chairman*

**Debbie Rauers** voted for Mr. Muller.

**Marianne Heimes, Malinda Hodge, and Antwan Lang** voted for Mr. Mahoney.

**Debbie Rauers and Antwan Lang** voted for Monifa Johnson.

**Ms. Rauers** suggested that each Board Member should have only one vote. There was verbal agreement from the Board to follow this procedure.

**Ms. Rauers** cast her vote for Mr. Muller

**Mr. Lang** cast his vote for Mr. Mahoney.

**Ms. Heimes** cast her vote for Mr. Mahoney.

**Ms. Hodge** cast her vote for Mr. Mahoney.

**Ms. Hodge** confirmed that **Tom Mahoney is the new Chairman.**

**Russell** added that credentialing and notification to the State and the County Commission still have to be completed, and arrangements for the Oath of Office have to be made.

**Ms. Hodge** asked if a special meeting could be called while at the GEOA Conference, at Jekyll Island, to collectively develop a vision and directives.

**Russell** mentioned that the meeting would have to be called a Workshop. He said that he would advertise that a Workshop would be held at Jekyll Island. There can be no votes taken at the Workshop.


**Ms. Rauers** reminded about the recent meeting with Easy Vote, and suggested that while at Jekyll Island, we explore more about the poll worker software available through Easy Vote. Perhaps the Workshop can be scheduled within the same timeframe.

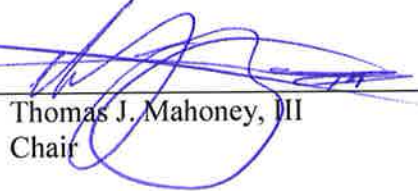
**ADJOURNMENT:**    **Ms. Hodge** asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion to adjourn** by Marianne Heimes.

**ALL APPROVED** and the meeting was adjourned

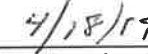
Respectfully Submitted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Russell Bridges  
Supervisor, Secretary to the Board

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas J. Mahoney, III  
Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Signature

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Notarized

**ROBERT S. CARNEY**  
Notary Public, Chatham County GA  
My Commission Expires 8/7/19