

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

April 8, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS: **Thomas J. Mahoney - Chairman**
Malinda Hodge – Vice Chair
Marianne Heimes
Antwan Lang – On Military Deployment
Debbie Rauers

STAFF: Russell Bridges
Lynn Trabue
Robert Carney

GUESTS Tia Brightwell – Former Board Member
Mr. Cohen
Mr. Haden

CALL TO ORDER **THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 3:30 P.M. by Thomas J. Mahoney, Chair,** who then pronounced an Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHAIR ADDRESS **Mr. Mahoney** voiced thanks for the confidence expressed by returning him as Board Chair, and he especially thanked **Ms. Hodge** for her service as Vice Chair during the selection process.

Mr. Mahoney additionally recognized the passing of **Marie Brazille** and her 30 years of faithful service as a Board Member. He requested a motion during the Business section of this meeting to approve a \$200 contribution to a charity named in her obituary (St. Vincent’s Academy and The Humane Society), or some other fitting recognition that the Board finds appropriate. He further noted that the visitation is today, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Fox and Weeks Memorial, and requested that this meeting be finished in time to participate in the visitation.

Mr. Mahoney announced that **Mr. Lang**, although still on military deployment, should be able to attend the May 2019 meeting.

Mr. Mahoney advised that it might be necessary to move the May meeting to a time to be announced. This is an effort to have a joint meeting with the Board of Registrars. He asked that this be taken up in the Business section of this meeting. The dual meeting would be a good time to discuss ideas for working together on various things that are coming up such as new voting machines, exploring new precincts, and other subjects that are of interest.

MINUTES **March 2019**

Motion by Ms. Rauers to include a verbatim transcript of Tia Brightwell’s comments to the Board and surrounding discussion in the Minutes. **Motion failed due to lack of a second.**

Ms. Rauers then stated that **Ms. Hodge** called for a vote and asked that each Board Member vote for two candidates for Board Chair.

Mr. Mahoney surmised that to the sentence on Page 4 of the Minutes where it reads, “**Ms. Hodge** called for a vote,” to add “and asked for each Board Member to vote for two candidates for Chairman”.

Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Malinda Hodge to accept the Minutes with that amendment. **APPROVED**, with **Ms. Rauers** casting a **NAY** vote.

March 25, 2019

Motion by Malinda Hodge, seconded by Marianne Heimes that the Minutes for the meeting on March 25, 2019 to certify the election results for the Skidaway Island Incorporation Vote be approved. **ALL APPROVED**

TREASURER’S REPORT **Treasurer’s Report from March/April 2019**

Ms. Rauers asked for clarification of “Payments to Others”.

Russell stated that the account covered numerous monies, primarily to pay the poll rental fee and the installation of the hurricane shutters.

Motion by Malinda Hodge, seconded by Debbie Rauers to accept the Treasurer’s Report as information. **ALL APPROVED.**

Special Election on March 29, 2019

Russell reported that this election utilized only four voting polls and 45 workers. Because of the small number of participating polls, an opportunity was provided to use additional workers so that they could gain extra training. There was a Technician at each poll. Because of the close proximity of these polls to each other, the Technicians and Managers were able to visit each facility. The Lead Trainer functioned as a floating Technician, providing support where needed. The feedback was positive.

Ms. Rauers asked if additional training could be provided for Assistant Managers, allowing them to lead or teach portions of the training process to enhance their personal confidence. She suggested establishment of a training component that would address that issue. She further proposed developing ideas for facilitating “in-line” voters with line management.

Russell indicated that these ideas have not yet been developed, but training for the November election would take place in September/October frame.

Lynn suggested using some of the Managers and Assistants to help in the training process by involving one or two of these folks into the classes to help. This should enhance their skills, experience and leadership abilities, making them more valuable as Poll Workers and providing positive development in their levels of self-reliance. Hopefully, this effort would cultivate an interest in Assistant Managers and Committed Assistant Managers moving into the next level of responsibility.

Ms. Rauers asked who was responsible for training Managers.

Lynn stated that the training was handled by Willie Wooten and two part-time Trainers.

Ms. Rauers also recommended looking into the on-line training program provided through the Secretary of State’s web site.

Ms. Heimes stated that the November election would be Municipal and contain a SPLOST for the entire County, providing extra training opportunities for new workers in preparation for the busy election year of 2020.

Lynn shared that she had discussed training options with some of the Managers and Assistant Managers, and has had enthusiastic feedback.

There was continued discussion covering reasons why Committed Assistants are reluctant to move into Manager positions and how to solve that problem, but no resolution.

Ms. Rauers suggested that when Managers and Committed Assistant Managers are asked to swap positions for training purposes, the Manager who is temporarily stepping down should not be cut in pay since that person is actually helping with additional training of the stand-in Manager.

Ms. Hodge asked about the process for becoming a Technician. She expressed that some of her contacts had voiced interest in there being more diversity among the Technicians.

Russell explained that generally, people considered as Technician have a background with computers or working in a poll and have depth of experience qualifying them in the Technical areas. They need a well-rounded scope of experience resolving equipment issues and other problems.

Operating Budget – 2019/2020

Russell reported that there has been concern about requested allowances being decreased by the County’s Executive Team. Adjusted requests are being turned in to the County, and they meet the projected needs for next year. There will be an opportunity to defend the requirements during the meeting with the County Commission. Assurances are that the Board of Elections will be funded with whatever is needed to get the job done.

Ms. Rauers asked about “Repairs and Maintenance” and whether the \$100,000 has to be paid, especially since we will likely be getting rid of the covered machines in the near future.

Mr. Mahoney inquired as to whether there is any money requested in this budget request to cover the purchase of new voting machines.

Russell said that the budget request contains maintenance money, but there is no anticipated target for that maintenance money because any new equipment purchased will be under warranty. The requests to be presented to and defended before the Commission will include consideration for projected expenditures. He reiterated that the County would meet our requirements.

GEOA Conference at Jekyll Island

Russell shared that he is working on getting the expense reports turned reconciled. Those who drove to the meeting will be reimbursed \$.58 per mile. Per-diem will be allocated for the periods when the

conference did not provide a meal.

He said that the next conference is in Savannah, in December 2019.

New Voting System - Legislation HB 316

Russell distributed the report from the SAFE Commission, which is composed of election officials, elected officials, and industry experts who completed a study and made recommendations to the General Assembly. Georgia voters are used to the touch screen voting machines. The new voting system will likely include a ballot marking station. The touch screens will allow for the voters' input, which will then print a ballot corresponding to the voters' selections. After review, the voter will feed his/her ballot into a scanning device, which reads and tabulates the votes. The counted ballots will be secured. If a recount is required after the election, it would be handled by recounting the paper ballots. The successful vendor will be required to provide sufficient training on the new system. Additionally, the State will provide training for the public.

Ms. Rauers asked **Russell** about other types of equipment that interested him as management tools.

Russell talked about a Poll Book System, which would be included in one, or two of the proposals made to the state. The Poll Book can help with handling Provisional and Supplemental Voters. It can provide information about the poll itself such as the time of the poll opening and a periodic report covering the actual voter turnout.

Ms. Rauers expressed interest in including monies in the budget to move forward by modernizing the equipment and tools available. She additionally expressed continued interest in Easy Vote regarding the Poll Worker/Management Systems. She suggested purchasing it and move forward.

Motion by Debbie Rauers, seconded by Marianne Heimes that we allow staff to evaluate and purchase the Easy Vote Poll Staffing component if it is determined to be useful, or report, in May that it has a problem or need further study. The Easy Vote Poll Staffing component for one year costs \$6,500.00, which was quoted to us, to see if its performance and support systems are accurate for our needs in management of Poll Workers. Discussion covered ways to test the system in an effective way. **Mr. Mahoney** called for the vote. **ALL APPROVED.**

Develop Public Participation Policies

Motion by Debbie Rauers to table this item for one month. **There was no second, therefore the motion failed.**

Russell stated the importance of allowing for public participation as well as the need for related policies. He defined three types of participation: Those who just wish to observe the meeting, some who may wish to make a comment, and others who may want to make a presentation.

Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers that the Development of Public Participation Policies be tabled until next month, but that it be discussed at that time. **ALL APPROVED.**

Plaque to Recognize Former and Current Board Members

Ms. Rauers reminded that the plaque displaying names of all of the Board Members be completed.

Mr. Mahoney stated that he proofread the information for the plaque, and he submitted his written proof to **Russell** with changes.

Ms. Hodge stated that she had submitted her proof.

Motion by Marianne Heimes, seconded by Debbie Rauers that the plaque be completed by the end of June 2019. **ALL APPROVED.**

NEW BUSINESS

Contribution in memory of Marie Brazille, former Board Member

Motion by Malinda Hodge, seconded by Ms. Heimes to make a \$200.00 contribution to the Humane Society in the name of **Marie Brazille** on behalf of the Board of Elections. **Ms. Rauers** suggested splitting the donation between St. Vincent's Academy and the Humane Society. **Ms. Hodge** did not accept the suggested change to her Motion. **Ms. Heimes withdrew her Second to the Motion, causing it to fail.**

Motion by Marianne Heimes seconded by Debbie Rauers that \$100.00 be contributed to the Humane Society and \$100.00 be contributed to St. Vincent's Academy. **ALL APPROVED**

Realignment of the Pooler Precincts, 2019

Russell reported that Pooler has been steadily growing for several years. The last poll was added in

2009. The voter number has grown from about 4,000 voters to 18,000 currently. Voter turnout in 2020 is expected to be heavy. Money has been included in the budget request for four additional polls. Hopefully there will be at least two new ones right away, and the search will continue for the other two polls. A detailed map of Pooler has been requested from the Metropolitan Planning Commission, and a list of voter address will be provided to them to enable viewing the geographic density of voters. Discussion has begun with Voter Registration, and there are a number of other steps involved. He expects to have two new polls open for the election in November 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tia Brightwell

Ms. Brightwell thanked **Ms. Rauers** for helping her deal with the situation in the last Board Meeting. She is confident that she (Ms. Brightwell) conducted herself professionally and nice, in spite of her interpretation of the response to her comments. She felt as though she was not being treated with respect, especially in light of the fact that she had actually served as a Board Member. She indicated that the community was told the Techs don't have to have any background in computers. Later it was said that Techs had to have computer experience. She stated that she would like to get more training for working in the polls.

Ms. Hodge addressed Ms. Brightwell that the Board was not trying to minimize her experience. The Minutes provide a record of what has taken place, but not detail. There was neither disrespect nor resentment intended toward her.

Mr. Cohen

Mr. Cohen stated that he intended to attend Board Meetings to keep a watchful eye on what is done.

Mr. Mahoney thanked him for his attendance and invited Mr. Cohen to return.

Mr. Haden


Mr. Haden expressed appreciation for the effort to help improve matters in Pooler. He asked permission to refer workers to our office.

Russell indicated that he was welcome to make referrals.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Debbie Rauers to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 PM

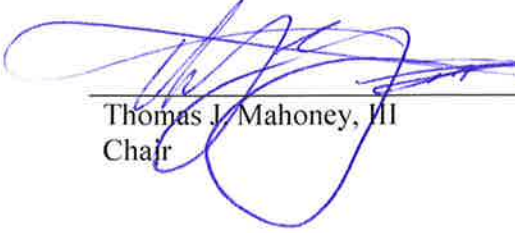
Respectfully Submitted:




Russell Bridges
Supervisor, Secretary to the Board

6/12/19

Date Approved



Thomas J. Mahoney, III
Chair



Notary Signature
6-12-19

Date Notarized

