

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

**October 14, 2019**

- BOARD MEMBERS:** Thomas J. Mahoney - Chairman  
Malinda Hodge – Vice Chair (by telephone)  
Marianne Heimes  
Antwan Lang  
Debbie Rauers
- STAFF:** Russell Bridges  
Lynn Trabue  
Caity Hamilton
- GUEST:** Rep. Ron Stephens
- CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 3:34 P.M. by **Tom Mahoney** who gave an Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- CHAIR ADDRESS** **Mr. Mahoney** thanked those assembled for appearing at the meeting in spite of the location change, and thanked the Building and Safety Department for the use of their facilities while Dominion uses the usual room for training on the new machines. He noted that a sign-up sheet was available for the public who wish to speak during the Public Comment period. **Mr. Mahoney** also requested speakers during the Public Comment period keep their remarks to two minutes and to confine their statements to items on the current agenda. Discussion and deliberations are for the elected Board members. Questions from the public can be asked at the office during office hours.
- MINUTES** **September 19, 2019 Minutes.**  
**Mr. Mahoney** requested that the minutes reflect that **Ms. Rauers** and **Mr. Lange** stepped out of the meeting. Upon their return, motion by **Mr. Lang**, seconded by **Ms. Heimes**, that the Minutes of the September 19, 2019 meeting be approved. **Ms. Rauers** moved to amend the Minutes to reflect additional discussion and public comments. **Mr. Lange** asked to alter **Ms. Rauers'** amendment. **Ms. Rauers** indicated that this was not acceptable, and her amendment was not seconded and did not pass. Motion by **Mr. Lang**, seconded by **Ms. Heimes**, that the Minutes be approved as they stood. Motion passed. **Ms. Rauers** dissented.
- TREASURER'S REPORT** **September 2019:**  
**Mr. Bridges** presented the September 2019 Treasurer's Report for information.  
**Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes**, that the September 2019 Treasurer's Report be accepted as information. There was no additional discussion. **Motion passed, Ms. Rauers abstained.**
- OLD BUSINESS** **New Voting System**  
**Mr. Bridges** presented the new voting machines with assistance from **Art Garza**. **Rep. Stephens** and **Mr. Lange** cast test ballots on the machine. **Mr. Bridges** reported that the new machines would eliminate the weakness in the old DRE system of having no way to audit the process of voting by producing paper ballots and therefore a paper trail. He acknowledged that while the ballots would need to be scanned and may cause an issue for voters, the ballots would also be readable by the voter as the results are not coded, and will be tabulated via the scanner, locked in a secure box, and retained for two years after the election. **Mr. Bridges** also specified that the state would be implementing a risk limiting audit by using a formula to select certain ballots, tally those ballots by hand, and trigger a full audit of the election should there be a mismatch in results. No one can predict the random selection, the language would be read manually, and then manually compared to the election results. He also stated that in the event of a court case or similar occurrence, there would be a paper ballot saved to back up every vote.
- Ms. Hodge** requested clarification of what information would be compared in an audit. **Mr. Bridges** specified that the audits would prove the number of votes cast in a test set and prove the votes in that test set.
- Ms. Rauers** inquired about the cost of insuring and maintaining the machines per year. **Mr. Bridges** noted that the state will pay the cost through 2021 or 2022 and then make a decision whether to underwrite the cost or send it to the counties.

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**Mr. Lang** requested an idea of how many more machines would be purchased as well as the cost of more ink and paper. **Mr. Lang** also asked how many more scanners would be needed to place two in each precinct. **Mr. Bridges** indicated the amount of paper needed is unknown, and added that the paper being used is specific to the machines as a measure of security. **Mr. Bridges** also stated that the number of devices needed is currently unknown, but that state came in under budget and will be getting extra Balotar systems for each county; the extra money will also be allocated to purchase things that are found to be lacking as time goes on. The county is already looking into how many scanners can be purchased and had set aside \$4.8-5 million. There has already been a 200 unit increase in ballot marking devices over what the county had previously. **Mr. Lang** asked about a timeline regarding the above items, and **Mr. Bridges** replied they would know soon.

**Mr. Mahoney** advised all that this is the first look the state and county have had at this equipment and all are working to iron out details.

**Ms. Hodge** stated that she is concerned with the ballot scanning process and asked if an awareness campaign had been planned. **Mr. Mahoney** replied that the state has promised to take the initiative on this but the county is developing its own initiative as well.

**Mr. Bridges** added that the county has been planning a public demo of the machines and will film a mock poll with the county's videographer to show the process; a large graphic placard will introduce the machines at the polls during the Nov 5<sup>th</sup> election. **Mr. Bridges** also noted that the state team may come later this month to demo multiple machines, and that a member of an association for the blind had called requesting information, which led to a standing request for a demo dedicated to the visually impaired and an opportunity to train a representative and let them demonstrate.

#### **General Election – Nov 5th**

**Mr. Mahoney** stated that we would not be using the new machines for the upcoming election and that early voting started today, Oct. 14. **Mr. Bridges** added that in the case of a run-off, the old machines would still be used.

**Mr. Bridges** distributed a Report and noted that this election covers a county election, two referendum questions, a SPLOST vote, and the Freeport vote, and would include five municipalities. **Mr. Bridges** added that Vernonburg had not qualified any candidates and therefore had cancelled their election.

**Mr. Lange** asked where the sample ballots are and **Mr. Bridges** replied that they are not yet posted on the website but are on My Voter Page, which has been distributed to the press as it is state maintained and accurate. **Mr. Bridges** also noted that it is the first day of absentee voting and 2500 ballots have already been printed.

**Mr. Bridges** stated that a flyer was produced by Registrar and the information on it will be added to the website in a prominent location. The flyer details what polling places are open and when. There are 600 poll workers for this election who were in training classes from September 6<sup>th</sup> to October 10<sup>th</sup> and a few more make-up classes are scheduled for this week. **Mr. Bridges** also noted that Pooler and Tybee Island have challenged many voters and these voters will be flagged at the polls and will have to clear up their status or vote provisionally, which may increase the number of provisional voters. **Mr. Lange** asked how many challenges there are and **Mr. Bridges** said he would provide that information and that the polls will be compensating with extra ballots.

**Ms. Rauers** stated that she is concerned with the number of machines in polling places within the city and Pooler and would like those that have two machines to receive four, as well as extra yellow cards. **Mr. Lange** asked the standard for deciding how many machines are placed in each poll and asked if the machines can be increased. **Ms. Hodges** also asked if there are enough machines to increase to four. **Mr. Bridges** stated that the standard is 350 people per machine and that the number could easily be increased to three. **Mr. Mahoney** noted that there are early voting machines in use that cannot be reused during regular voting. **Mr. Lange** asked for the number of active and non-active voters and whether the formula can legally include both active

and non-active voters. **Mr. Bridges** stated that he would provide a combined list of all voters and send over the language of the statute that details the formula.

**Ms. Heimes** asked if newly registered voters are included in the active numbers. **Mr. Bridges** replied that they are. **Mr. Lange** inquired about the number of active voters currently, and **Mr. Bridges** stated that they have dropped. **Mr. Lange** and **Ms. Heimes** asked if we know why and **Mr. Bridges** replied that the Registrar could answer this.

#### **Regional Meeting**

**Mr. Bridges** distributed a Report on the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting attended by staff in Millen, Jenkins County. **Mr. Bridges** noted that the name of the organization has changed. This was the first time the machines had been seen by the county and the whole system was present. **Mr. Bridges** also advised that overseas voting was discussed.

**Mr. Lange** asked if we have a partnership with Hunter Army Airfield or the Georgia Guard. **Mr. Bridges** explained that the state handles overseas voting.

#### **Precinct Poll Changes**

**Mr. Bridges** distributed a Report on new poll changes and stated that advertisements have begun and he recommends that the changes be added to the November agenda to exceed the 30-day time window for advertisement as well as the 60-day limit for approval; he also recommended implementation to be set for December 6<sup>th</sup>. **Mr. Bridges** stated that one new poll for Pooler has been confirmed and another may soon be confirmed, and that one poll for Garden City is to change locations.

**Ms. Rauers** asked if the new poll in Pooler would help relieve the number of voters assigned to the Rothwell Baptist Church poll and **Mr. Bridges** stated that it would be poll 8-16 carved from Rothwell. **Ms. Rauers** asked about other options for polls in Pooler as well as what would be done if new polls were not found in time for the March 2020 primary. **Mr. Bridges** stated that as long as the decision is made and the process is begun within the legal time window that a poll could be added between the primary and the general election. **All board members** had comments regarding this and requested that the county attorney research the legality of adding a poll within this time frame.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

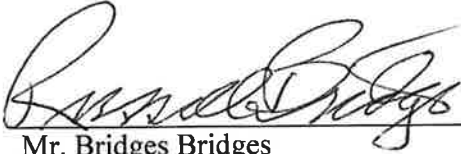
Several members of the public addressed the board.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes, to adjourn the meeting.**  
**ALL APPROVED.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 PM.

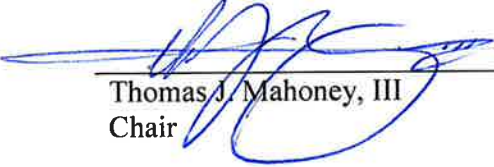
Respectfully Submitted:



Mr. Bridges Bridges  
Supervisor, Secretary to the Board

11-12-19

Date Approved



Thomas J. Mahoney, III  
Chair



Notary Signature

11/12/19

Date Notarized

**ROBERT S. CARNEY**  
Notary Public, Chatham County GA  
My Commission Expires 5/1/23