

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

March 9, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS: Thomas J. Mahoney - Chairman
Malinda Hodge – Vice Chair
Marianne Heimes (left at 4:26)
Antwan Lang
Debbie Rauers

STAFF: Russell Bridges
Lynn Trabue
Billy Wooten

PREPARED BY: Caity Hamilton, Russell Bridges, Billy Wooten

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

MINUTES **March 2020**
Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes, that the Minutes of the February 10, 2019 meeting be approved. **Motion passed unanimously.**

TREASURER’S REPORT **March 2020**
Russell presented the February Treasurer’s Report for information.
Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes, that the February Treasurer’s Report be accepted as information. There was no additional discussion. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS New Voting System
Mr. Bridges presented a report on the progress of receiving new equipment for the new voting system. **Ms. Heimes** asked how many privacy shields we had received in our shipments, and **Mr. Bridges** replied that we had received the first 100 in the first shipment and the rest in the most recent one. **Ms. Hodge** asked if they are being used in early voting, and **Mr. Bridges** replied that they are. **Mr. Bridges** presented a list of active demonstrations being done to show the new equipment to the public and stated that all the demos have been well-received.
Mr. Bridges restated the trouble there has been in finding enough space to house all the new equipment and informed that we have taken over a building from purchasing out in the parking lot and are installing cameras and security; we also added two storage containers on the property to allow for staff to move and work in the warehouse to inventory and prep the equipment for the Presidential Preference Primary. **Mr. Bridges** has met with the county manager and made him aware of the situation so they can dovetail on a long-term solution.
Mr. Bridges advised that the new system went into service on March 2nd for early voting and as of the morning of March 9th, 1800 people had voted across both early voting sites. There have been no mechanical issues with the system and most voters have had positive feedback. He stated that since this is a paper based system paper is one of the higher expenses, and a recent shipment of 20,000 sheets of paper was received recently to serve through the PPP at \$.13 a sheet. Emergency ballots will be ordered as mandated through the state at a 10% allocation based on the number of voters – 20,000 ballots each of Democratic and Republican ballots so that 10% of each is available for the voter base. **Mr. Lang** asked how they would be allocated to each poll and **Mr. Bridges** replied it would be based on 10% of the active voters on record in that poll. **Mr. Lang** then asked what numbers this would be based on and **Mr. Bridges** stated it would be taken from the current voter registration list, clarifying that it would be active registered voters, not “throughput” based on those who voted in a past election.
Mr. Bridges touched on recent updates with COVID-19 and the precautions that we will try to take within polls during the election. He described some of the issues with finding the quantities of hand sanitizer, etc., necessary, and stated that we are working with the county Health and Safety department to source some of these things.
Mr. Lang asked if we will be using the Poll Pads to check voters in, as he noticed that Registrar has not been using them. **Mr. Bridges** stated that they use their voter registration system to

check people in and only use the Poll Pads to create the voter access cards; this is consistent with what they did with the DRE system as well. **Mr. Lang** asked how we can test the Poll Pads well enough before the Primary to know that there are no glitches if Registrar is not using them in early voting. **Mr. Bridges** stated that the only function they are not currently performing is looking up the voter in the database, and that they have been used by other counties for around 20-25 other elections and every time they are used every county receives updated and improved instructions.

Ms. Hodge asked if only one scanner is being put in each poll; **Mr. Bridges** stated that each poll will only receive 1 scanner because there are only 3 spare units allocated for our county and there are backup procedures to cover a poll if their scanner goes down.

Ms. Heimes commented that the demo she had been planning for Wilmington Island will not move forward due to the threat of COVID-19. **Mr. Bridges** stated that Tybee has a captive TV channel that could play the demo video on loop, and **Mr. Lang** asked if that would be possible to do for all the cities in Chatham County. **Mr. Bridges** stated it is and that the county has a channel as well.

Ms. Rauers said that she had witnessed some concern from early voters that their ballot was not being counted when scanned and asked if a sign could be placed in each poll that states that their ballot will be scanned and counted in any orientation. **Ms. Heimes** and **Mr. Lang** responded that in their experience there was an attendant stationed at the scanner to acknowledge receipt and **Mr. Bridges** said that it will be standard to have one poll worker stationed at the scanner and one at the exit to ensure that the ballots have been cast and counted. He also advised that we are waiting on signage to come from the state to this effect. He asked **Mr. Wooten** to bring up examples of the signage on the projector.

March 24 PPP

Mr. Bridges presented a staff report on the Presidential Preference Primary. We will be running all 92 polls, to include the 2 new polls. Absentee voting by mail began in the week of Feb. 4th and will end on March 20th. As of Friday they had sent out 1600 absentee ballots. Early voting began on March 2nd and will run through March 20th at 5pm. Registrar is running 2 voting sites and will open 4 more on March 16th for a total of 6. We are planning to employ a total of 675 poll workers for this election and training began Feb 22nd. Qualifying for this election was handled by the state several months ago, as there are no local races in this election. This is the first statewide rollout of the new voting system for Georgia.

Mr. Lang requested clarification on why there are 12 people on the Democratic ballot despite some of them dropping from the race. **Mr. Bridges** explained that the ballot was produced in 2019 and they are not reprinted each time someone withdraws. He also explained that even though a number of candidates have suspended their campaign, none have officially withdrawn from the race.

Ms. Hodge asked if there will be any weekend dates for early voting and **Mr. Bridges** stated that Registrar will be open for voting this coming Saturday.

Mr. Wooten addressed some questions regarding training. He demonstrated generically how the polls will be laid out, with adjustments being made on a case-by-case basis for the differences in each poll. He advised that the certificate table will instead become a ballot review station where voters can go to check their printed ballot before scanning it. He addressed earlier questions regarding voter concern over whether their ballot had been counted by describing the screen on the scanner and how it will be used by the poll worker to provide visual proof of a ballot being scanned and counted.

Ms. Rauers asked if there will still be a count that is balanced throughout the day, and **Mr. Wooten** said that the numbers will still be balanced throughout the day but that the number of printed ballots will not necessarily match the Poll Pad or the scanner due to the possibility of Spoiled Ballots or other issues. She also asked about the process regarding Provisional ballots, which **Mr. Wooten** stated had not changed. **Ms. Rauers** then asked if there had been any feedback after the state team had inspected the polling places that would advise differently on set-up etc. **Mr. Bridges** stated that Beach High was the only polling place that needed remediation and steps had already been taken to adjust this location.

Mr. Lang asked who has the right to go to a polling place and ask how many ballots have been cast. **Mr. Bridges** stated that anyone can ask but the poll manager is not required to answer the question if they are busy and all members of the public are required to stay outside of the enclosed space. Poll watchers are allowed to be in the enclosed space, but it is not their job to

observe and provide that number. **Mr. Mahoney** observed that any number given by the poll worker would be incomplete and unofficial. **Mr. Wooten** presented an example of a new sign delineating the enclosed space.

Ms. Rauers asked if there will still be printed tapes to reconcile and post after the polls close. **Mr. Wooten** said that the only machine that will print a tape is the scanner, which will print a zero tape when the polls open and three results tapes that will be printed when the polls close, one of which will be posted on the door. **Mr. Wooten** and **Mr. Bridges** then presented the rest of the examples of new signage from the state.

2020 - 2021 Budget *Report*

Mr. Bridges presented a budget report. He stated that he is scheduled to meet with the county executive team on Tuesday afternoon and that the budget analyst has included the entire submitted budget to the executive team. **Mr. Mahoney** asked how much the printer cartridges cost and **Mr. Bridges** stated that they have found a very competitive company who is providing them at \$140 apiece when they are listed at \$220 apiece; enough will be ordered to have several spares. **Mr. Lang** asked if the vendor being used is mandated by the state; **Mr. Bridges** stated that the guidance given is that the cartridges have to be original HP brand, so several suppliers have become competitive in their pricing to try to capture county business. **Ms. Rauers** asked for clarification on the number of spares per polling place. **Mr. Bridges** stated that each polling place has a brand new cartridge installed in each BMD and a spare available, and each tech will be carrying a spare BMD with them with a spare cartridge. If a location has a more extensive failure he will pull equipment from the shelves, as they are not specifically designated to a poll the same way the DREs were and there should be around 175 spare BMDs – screens, printers, and cartridges included.

Ms. Heimes asked why the new building was not included in the budget, and **Mr. Bridges** stated that it will not be included, but is being considered behind the scenes as the need has been recognized; he will make it a point of discussion at his meeting on Tuesday to firm up some plans. **Mr. Mahoney** requested that an architect be contacted and several board members added comments regarding more information on location, architects, funding, etc.

Mr. Lang asked if the Temporary Employee/Seasonal Budget includes runoff elections, and **Mr. Bridges** clarified that it includes all seasonal staffing through the budget year.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Several members of the public addressed the board.

ADJOURNMENT:

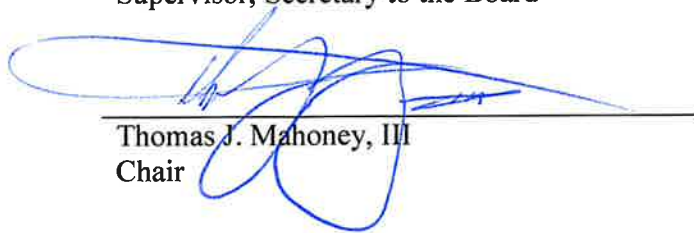
Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Hodge, to adjourn the meeting.

ALL APPROVED.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Russell Bridges
Supervisor, Secretary to the Board



Thomas J. Mahoney, III
Chair

Date Approved

Notary Signature

Date Notarized