

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

June 1, 2020

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

STAFF: Russell Bridges
Lynn Trabue
Caity Hamilton
Billy Wooten

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 3:33 P.M. by **Tom Mahoney** who gave an Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHAIR ADDRESS **Mr. Mahoney** thanked those assembled for their patience, staff for working diligently to put on an election during a pandemic, and our poll workers for stepping up to staff polls in a difficult time. **Mr. Mahoney** thanked the public for attending as well, and noted that due to the meeting taking place via Zoom, there would be no Public Comment period, but the public would be welcome, as in the past, to send their questions to the elections@chathamcounty.org address.

MINUTES **May 2020**
Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Hodge, that the Minutes of the May 11, 2020 meeting be approved. There was some discussion and **Ms. Rauers** put forward two motions to amend the minutes. Neither motion was seconded. Motion to accept the May 11, 2020 Minutes passed, **Ms. Rauers** dissented.

TREASURER’S REPORT **May 2020**
As this meeting took place on the first of the month there was no Treasurer’s Report to be reviewed.

OLD BUSINESS **2020 - 2021 Budget **REPORT** Operating Budget**
Mr. Bridges informed the Board that the past reports given still stand, but informed the Board that the County Manager announced that there would be changes to all budgets due to the effects of COVID-19 on the County’s revenue. He stated that he did not know what changes would be made, but would put together a report for the board as soon as he has information. **Mr. Mahoney** asked if there would be an opportunity to go before the commission and appeal any changes. **Mr. Bridges** replied that the Board does have the right to appeal a decision and going before the Commission was certainly possible. **Ms. Heimes** asked when the Commission could be contacted and met with and **Mr. Bridges** stated that the Commission would need to announce the dates for that and he would get their calendar to set an appointment as soon as the impact of any changes are known. **Mr. Mahoney** agreed that he would like to have the Board meet with the Commission, as we are in a unique situation regarding the added expenses for this election and upcoming elections.

June 9 General Primary/NP General/PPP: March 24 PPP May 19 General Primary / PPP

Mr. Bridges reported that all 92 precincts have set polling places; he noted that it was a difficult undertaking and that 11 out of the 92 had to be relocated to different sites. The last 2 were put in place Friday evening and Monday morning. **Mr. Bridges** stated that on Friday a press release containing an address error was brought to his attention by the poll manager of that location. As a result, the poll manager, Ms. Overton, visited the correct alternative location and was worried about the parking and size of the alternative. She was able to identify Skidaway Island Baptist Church as a more viable option and they will be replacing 4-14 Skidaway Island Methodist

Church for the June 9 election. **Mr. Bridges** went on to clarify that there are 90 locations and 92 precincts, as Eli Whitney has traditionally been a split poll and 7-12 Pooler Church and 7-16 Legacy at Savannah Quarters have been combined in the temporary location of Pooler Recreation Center's gymnasium. **Mr. Bridges** also informed the Board that Royal Cinemas in Pooler was identified as a replacement and confirmed on Friday evening for 8-16 The Oaks.

Mr. Mahoney asked if a press release had been put out listing all the polls – **Mr. Bridges** stated that a press release detailing all polling locations including changes was planned for Tuesday, the day after the board meeting, and would be focused on getting as wide a distribution as possible. **Ms. Hodge** made a motion to hold a press conference, seconded by **Mr. Lang**. **Ms. Rauers** asked when it would be held and all Board members agreed on 12pm Wednesday, June 3. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Rauers expressed concern with parking for Temple Mickve, the alternative poll for Rose of Sharon, and **Mr. Bridges** replied that he would look into blocking off extra parking for poll workers, confirm ADA parking, and see if the City would consider waiving parking fees for the day. **Ms. Rauers** asked if the alternative poll for Georgetown Elementary, Station 3 on Grove Point Rd, had been made aware of the need for a locked room for equipment. **Mr. Bridges** stated that all polls, new and old, were told that the equipment would need to be stored before and after the election in a locked room.

Mr. Lang asked if there was a written contract with the polling locations. **Mr. Mahoney** stated that there is no legal requirement to have contracts and we do not have those, although it is a possibility they can consider. He also stated that losing polling locations due to COVID-19 is a problem through all counties in Georgia and that we have put out 3 or 4 press releases regarding this issue already. **Mr. Mahoney** went on to describe other ways we could reach the public, including news coverage, signs at the locations, press conferences, etc., and welcomed any other creative solutions. **Mr. Bridges** reported that we will be issuing a press release detailing the polling locations and highlighting the changes made; he agreed that a press conference would be a great idea and stated that they could run legal notices and run the changes on the county's Channel 16, but this will not really hit the target audience. **Mr. Heimes** asked about a report from Judge Tottenburg regarding official monitors watching the absentee process and how well the room could be socially distanced with the addition of these monitors to the absentee staff. **Mr. Bridges** stated that absentee staff is separated into 3 separate areas in the warehouse and using PPE and there is a designated area for these monitors where they can socially distance. They are all offered hand sanitizer and masks. **Ms. Rauers** asked if they were planning to count ballots on Monday, and **Mr. Bridges** replied that as soon as they cleared the issue of missing the deadline to contact the state that they would begin ballot counting. **Ms. Rauers** also asked how social distancing would be performed the following week. **Mr. Mahoney** asked **Mr. Bridges** to continue his report and allow for questions to be answered within its content. **Ms. Heimes** asked if the training room could be used for absentee counting and **Mr. Mahoney** thanked her the recommendation. **Mr. Bridges** continued the report, saying that despite running a legal notice in the paper within the deadline, it was brought to his attention that the State had not been adequately notified that Chatham County would begin early counting of the absentee votes, so he was in the process of clearing this with the State. He described the process of bringing in the absentee team and training them as we learned the process of early counting. **Mr. Bridges** advised that they would be concentrating on March only to begin with, and specified that the process includes counting and not tabulating. He also described the adjudication system and the difference it will make in tabulation. **Mr. Bridges** also discussed using the training room and whether moving equipment there would have an effect on the adjudication process. He informed the Board that all the equipment is linked and that may be a roadblock to moving part of the equipment into a different location if it breaks that connection. **Ms. Rauers** asked what the process would be regarding duplications, especially regarding the problems with the 4th and 7th districts. **Mr. Mahoney** stated that the issue with those districts had been addressed and resolved. **Mr. Bridges** replied that part of the adjudication system's job is to eliminate the majority of the need for duplications. He also described the issue with the 4th and 7th districts again for clarification.

Mr. Bridges continued the report, describing the precautions that were being taking to prevent the spread of COVID. Enough styluses for every expected voter had arrived, about 70,000, for use on the Poll Pads and BMDs. The poll managers have been trained to go around and sanitize the machinery as often as possible throughout the day with the specified equipment provided by the State, and the county has provided 50 masks per polling location. While we cannot require

voters to wear masks, it has been encouraged and we could offer one if one was requested. Removable plexiglass sneezeguards will also be installed at each check-in table. The only item that will be shared among voters are the voter access cards to activate the BMDs; these will be sanitized between uses. Any returned styluses will be stored to be sanitized after the election. The State has also said they will be shipping 10,000 gloves and more sanitizing supplies and equipment. Ms. Heimes commented that she would like this information included in the press conference, which was supported by Ms. Hodges. Ms. Hodges added that the ballot box should be included as well as how to check the status of your absentee ballot. Ms. Heimes supported this and added that pushing the MVP website would be helpful. Mr. Bridges agreed and stated that we typically give the public the address to MVP at every chance.

New Voting System

Mr. Bridges stated that one machine per 250 voters would be deployed for this election, which revealed that we would need to buy more equipment. Ms. Rauers asked how many machines would be deployed for each polling place, and Mr. Bridges stated that he would not be able to answer without having those numbers in front of him. Ms. Rauers asked how many total machines would be deployed and how many we have. Mr. Bridges replied that 810 out of 876 would be deployed and the difference belonged to early voting, so all available machines would be in the field.

Building / Warehouse Expansion

Mr. Bridges gave a report regarding the two new warehouse spaces; there are still some issues to resolve before a contract is signed, such as adding AC and electrical support. If these issues can be solved the entire warehouse space would be moved to these locations. As soon as there is a resolution here the Board will be invited to visit.

NEW BUSINESS None.

PUBLIC COMMENT Several members of the public addressed the board.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Ms. Heimes, seconded by Ms. Hodge, to adjourn the meeting.
ALL APPROVED.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.

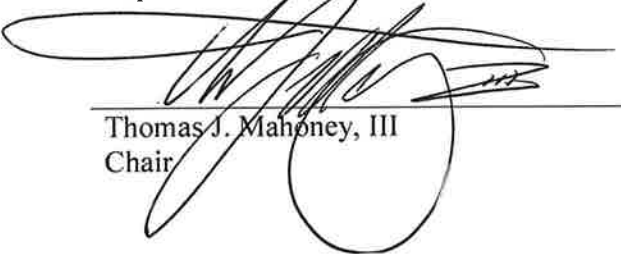
Respectfully Submitted:



Russell Bridges
Supervisor, Secretary to the Board



Date Approved



Thomas J. Mahoney, III
Chair



Notary Signature



Date Notarized

ROBERT S. CARNEY
Notary Public, Chatham County GA
My Commission Expires 5/31/23

