

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

**July 13, 2020**

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

**STAFF:** Russell Bridges  
Lynn Trabue  
Billy Wooten  
John Leffler  
Caity Hamilton

**CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 3:38 P.M. by **Tom Mahoney** who gave an Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CHAIR ADDRESS** **Mr. Mahoney** thanked those assembled for participating in the meeting and noted that there was an extensive agenda for this meeting, including certification following the recount, beginning the August 11 runoff, and identifying solutions to known problems in the June election. He thanked the public for their patience and reminded them that while there would not be opportunity for public comment during the meeting, they could send their questions to the office at any time, as always. **Mr. Mahoney** also noted that several comments and questions had been received by the office prior to the meeting and stated that they would appreciate and welcome more.

**MINUTES** **June 1 2020**  
**Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes**, that the Minutes of the June 1, 2020 meeting be approved. Motion passed, there was no discussion.

**June 19 2020**  
**Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes**, that the Minutes of the June 19, 2020 meeting be approved. **Ms. Rauers** made a motion, which was not seconded. Motion to approve minutes passed, **Ms. Rauers dissented**.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** **May 2020**  
**Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes**, that the May Treasurer's Report be accepted as information. Motion passed, there was no discussion.

**June 2020**  
**Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Heimes**, that the June Treasurer's Report be accepted as information.

**Ms. Hodge** commented that she remembered that the Clerk of Court for the City of Savannah had an outstanding balance, and asked if we satisfied that balance. **Mr. Bridges** replied he was not aware of what that was but would follow up on it.

**Ms. Rauers** asked for clarification on the amount paid to Lee Wright for the June election and asked how much he receives per hour. **Mr. Bridges** explained that it took an extra week, extra equipment, and extra employees to prepare for the election and that Mr. Wright is paid by location. **Ms. Rauers** requested to see the invoice Mr. Wright sent for payment, and **Mr. Bridges** stated he would provide that. **Ms. Hodge** clarified with **Mr. Bridges** that the issue of increasing Mr. Wright's pay had been brought before the board in previous meetings; **Mr. Bridges** confirmed that the logistics of transportation had changed with the addition of three times the equipment and PPE. **Ms. Hodge** also asked if his contract would change again due to potential future fluctuations in transportation needs, and **Mr. Bridges** replied in the affirmative.

**Ms. Rauers** referred to the amount paid to Tattall Printers and asked what they had printed for us. **Mr. Bridges** stated that they printed ballots for us because we had to order 10% of our voter base in emergency ballots for Election Day, Provisional ballots for early voting, and ballots to be distributed for Absentee voting. This was in addition to the ballots the State printed for us via Runbeck. **Ms. Rauers** asked how much we paid per ballot; **Mr. Bridges** stated the cost was around \$.35 per ballot.

Mr. Mahoney called for the vote and the June Treasurer's Report was accepted as information. **Ms. Rauers dissented.**

## OLD BUSINESS

### 2020 - 2021 Budget: *Operating Budget*

**Mr. Bridges** gave a brief post-approval report, stating that the budget survived from initial request to approval with the only cut made by the executive committee being to the Board Training category.

**Mr. Lang** asked if we were likely to have training expenses. Mr. Bridges replied that no 2020 training had been planned, but if necessary they could reach out and see if these funds could be secured if such a situation arose. **Mr. Lang** also asked to clarify that the pay increase for poll workers was shown in this budget, which **Mr. Bridges** confirmed.

**Ms. Hodge** motioned to accept changes made to the budget, and **Mr. Lang** seconded the motion. **Ms. Rauers** requested the location of the Transportation category, which **Mr. Bridges** directed her to, and asked if we hold a contract with Mr. Wright. **Mr. Bridges** confirmed that we do hold a contract and stated that the terms of the contract are subject to renegotiation due to change in the contract on our part. **Mr. Mahoney** reminded the Board that they have already voted to approve the budget and called for a vote to accept the change made to Board Training.

Motion was approved.

**Mr. Bridges** commented that with the new voting system and COVID-19 the Board may have to look into expanding the budget in the future. He also pointed out that the cost of the PPE purchased for the elections will be underwritten by both the State and the County through the Health and Safety Department and CEMA, so none of that will be passed on to the department as expenses.

### June 9 General Primary: *Recertification*

**Mr. Bridges** explained that during the requested recount we discovered a variance, which was presented to the Board on July 6, 2020. A report was distributed to the Board preceding today's meeting detailing where the variation occurred and how much it was. **Mr. Bridges** also explained that the recertification is really to certify the recount, as the outcome of the election did not change, but the variation that was traced back to precinct 2-12 caused the totals to change.

**Mr. Mahoney** asked for all reports relevant to the June 9 election to be presented before calling for the Board to complete recertification.

### Training

**Mr. Bridges** reported that we began this year knowing we would need to train the poll workers on a brand new voting system and began by receiving training through Dominion and the State in late 2019. At the start of the year we only had one complete system with which to train. Class sizes previous to the pandemic averaged about 20 people, and it took around 45 classes to train the clerks, assistant managers, and managers on the new voting system. With limited equipment, one BMD, one scanner, and one Poll Pad, it was difficult to give all workers all workers hands-on training. In late January we received our second training system and then began to receive our allocated equipment. The State began issuing new guidelines in January as well, which were being developed while we were training. As we received the information we were incorporating it into training. When the March election was rescheduled, we had intended to provide extra training, but with the threat of COVID, the Board felt it was prudent that we not continue

training and it was suspended. **Mr. Bridges** then explained that the Southwest Library had accommodated us in allowing us to train our managers there while they were closed to the public, but that the bulk of this training had been geared towards PPE and social distancing; he then introduced Billy Wooten to report on training.

**Mr. Mahoney** thanked **Mr. Wooten** for his efforts to train the poll workers on a new system during a pandemic and **Mr. Wooten** then presented a report.

**Mr. Wooten** stated that it was a difficult environment to train in due to the fear of COVID-19, and that it did provide a great learning experience, both from a training aspect and from what we learned in the polls on June 9. In a typical election there will be 4-5 new managers and in this one there were about 15 new managers, which is unusual and contributed to some of the difficulties experienced in the polls. Going into August, we know that the runoff will be a simpler election, but the problems experienced must be resolved before the November election. **Mr. Wooten** thanked the Board members who visited training for their feedback and welcomed suggestions and questions.

**Ms. Heimes** expressed her gratitude to Mr. Wooten and reminded the Board that the election had barely been completed before he had brought together 21 managers to discuss the successes and pitfalls of the June 9 election in order to improve processes before the runoff.

**Mr. Lang** asked if **Mr. Wooten** could speak to some of the things that could have been done differently regarding training and what changes would be made going into future elections. **Mr. Wooten** stated he could provide a hand-out listing those things. **Mr. Bridges** stated that several changes based on feedback have already been incorporated into training and new training has already been scheduled for before the runoff, which we typically do not provide unless there are new workers. **Mr. Wooten** informed the Board that training for the runoff has been scheduled for the last week of July and the first week of August, to be held at the Southwest Library. As an example of changes being made going forward, he spoke about the small envelope that has been used to hold the managers card. With the previous system, this card was used only to close the poll, which was printed on the outside of the envelope. With the new system, this card is used to open and close, but the original envelope was reused and caused confusion during opening on Election Day. This envelope will not be reused going forward. **Mr. Lang** asked if specific training would be provided on opening and closing the polls, including codes and passwords. **Mr. Wooten** stated that this training is already provided, but there were 15 or 16 new managers, some of whom had trouble finding their manager's notes that contained their codes and passwords. This, along with the stress of new machines and the pandemic, caused anxiety and **Mr. Wooten** stated that he does not anticipate to see this issue going forward.

**Ms. Hodge** stated that she saw issues with the comfort level of setting up machines and asked if the machines could be set up before the workers arrive at the polls. **Mr. Wooten** replied that about 50% of the poll managers choose to set up the night before, but because of issues with downloading on the Poll Pads, the workers were not able to pick up their equipment until Monday around 8pm as opposed to early afternoon as usual. **Mr. Wooten** also informed the Board that the technicians were actually instructed to visit polls with new managers first to help them set up, but if a tech had several new managers to visit it was difficult for them to make it to all of them in a timely fashion.

**Ms. Heimes** asked if there was training planned that would walk workers through every step of opening, running the poll, and closing. **Mr. Wooten** replied that there would be several stations set up in the library for training that would do this.

**Ms. Rauers** recommended that we live stream a training session to have as a refresher and send it via email to each poll worker. She also stated that she has searched on the Secretary of State's website for training videos and asked Dominion if they have any, but has not found any such resources. **Ms. Rauers** also recommended similar video resources for Absentee training. **Mr. Wooten** replied that the State does have training videos, but they are generic subjects such as campaigning and poll watchers, but they do not have videos tailored to subjects like setting up the Poll Pads. He also advised the Board that he had taken a Poll Pad home to experiment filming short how-to videos.

**Ms. Heimes** advised the Board to remember that Mr. Wooten works directly with our poll workers and knows their average age and technological savvy and that hands-on training is where the focus and resources should be spent.

**Mr. Lang** asked for clarification of policies on staff taking equipment home. **Mr. Mahoney** replied that he is not aware of any such Board policy but it can be looked into. **Mr. Lang** asked if there would be any laws against this and Mr. Mahoney stated that the county attorney could look into this if necessary. **Mr. Wooten** stated that he had signed it out with a member of the warehouse staff noting the serial numbers on the equipment. **Ms. Hodge** advised that it would likely be akin to how equipment would be transported on Election Day and would be covered under insurance.

**Mr. Bridges** reported that until staff training on the new equipment began, we were not aware how much equipment would be involved in this new system and when the vendor began to deliver it we had about a week to arrange for the old equipment to be picked up and removed from the warehouse to make space for the new equipment. Warehouse staff had to come in to work night and day and through the weekend to make space for the delivery of 72 pallets of equipment. **Mr. Bridges** commended warehouse staff for making the current warehouse space workable and constantly improving while waiting for new warehouse space to be confirmed. He then asked **John Leffler** to present his report. **Mr. Mahoney** thanked **Mr. Leffler** and commended him on the praise he and his team received from the delivery team for their organization and hard work.

### Warehouse

**Mr. Leffler** presented a report on the work done in the warehouse previous to, during, and after the election. He stated that when delivery began the warehouse was overrun and a warehouse space across the parking lot was then annexed to house the overflow. He listed the amount of equipment, lack of staffing, sudden transition of the staff from a temporary status with the County to a staffing agency, the pandemic, and the changing election dates as roadblocks to progress. **Mr. Leffler** advised the Board that many issues have been overcome to improve the workings of the warehouse even since the June 9<sup>th</sup> election, stating that many of them have already been addressed and remedied, including the delays in updating the Poll Pads, assigning and tracking the BMDs to each poll, tracking and numbering previously unnumbered printers, and tape roll malfunctions. A full inventory has been taken and needs for extra equipment are being addressed currently. He also informed the Board that delivery of equipment to the polls took an extra 4-5 days due to the amount of equipment needed and the amount of time it took to stage this equipment for pick-up and delivery; this was also reflected in pick-up from the polls and delivery back to the warehouse. Both space issues and manpower are also being addressed. Warehouse staff has isolated 3 nonfunctioning printers and fixed another 18 that malfunctioned due to paper jams. **Mr. Leffler** identified a number of equipment malfunctions that were fixed in poll or immediately replaced with surplus equipment. They anticipate adjusting the amount of equipment in the field to reflect potential malfunctions and allow for more surplus for potential replacements.

**Mr. Lang** asked what is being done to secure more warehouse space. **Mr. Mahoney** reminded the Board that this had been previously discussed in board meetings and **Mr. Bridges** advised that we are still working with the County attorney to secure two warehouse spaces nearby and they are studying the spaces to determine what needs to be done to adjust them to best accommodate our needs. HVAC is a concern, as it is currently not sufficient to keep the buildings between 50 and 80 degrees and keep humidity down for the equipment. **Mr. Bridges** stated that some office space will be removed to allow for more warehouse space so that at least three teams of people will be able to work concurrently to set up equipment for elections. He advised that each polling location would always have at least 2 extra machines sitting in the warehouse to be used as potential replacements, further increasing the need for more space.

**Mr. Lang** asked if we have a cost estimate and timeframe for acquiring these two facilities and **Mr. Mahoney** requested that this question and any further questions concerning real estate be tabled for an executive session and a future agenda.

**Ms. Heimes** commented that space is also crucial for the Absentee team and stated that ballots must be secure, which must be kept in mind when considering changing facilities.

**Mr. Bridges** reviewed that with the former system they would load the data in half a day on the Saturday preceding the election, but with this election the data was not available until Wednesday or Thursday before the election and staff was only able to load about 150 machines before Saturday due to the constraints of the downloading speed. Staff worked Saturday, Sunday, and Monday to load the machines, and County IT was brought in the check downloading speed. A representative from KnowInk came in on Sunday, to help expedite the process. **Mr. Bridges** has been in contact with KnowInk to acquire a piece of equipment that can be installed in our site that will improve downloading speed. He has asked for one to be provided to us on a trial basis. The State has also been working with KnowInk to resolve some of the issues experienced.

**Mr. Lang** asked if we had reached out to other counties to see if they have experienced the same issues and what they did to resolve them. **Mr. Bridges** advised that we have spoken to other counties and the only ones that did not experience this issue were much smaller counties that had fewer Poll Pads. All of the large counties had this problem and in particular, Fulton county could only prepare 10 Poll Pads at a time and had crews working around the clock to complete the min time.

**Ms. Hodge** asked when we would be able to acquire the equipment from KnowInk and how long would the trial period be. **Mr. Bridges** expressed that he intends to purchase the equipment if it works as intended, and he has asked for it from the State and from KnowInk multiple times and will issue a conditional purchase order if necessary to get it. **Ms. Hodge** also clarified that the time issue cited earlier was referencing the fact not only was it taking longer than expected in-house, but it was also taking a long time for many other counties as all of us pulled from this system at the same time. **Mr. Bridges** confirmed that all counties were pulling at the same time from KnowInk's system and took about 55 minutes per every 15 devices.

**Ms. Rauers** expressed her surprise that a large company like KnowInk would be overwhelmed by all the counties pulling data at once.

### Polls

**Mr. Bridges** reviewed this year's issues with polling locations in regards to COVID-19; when the pandemic hit we lost all our senior residences and were in the process of replacing them when the election was moved from March to May. We restarted the process of confirming and as we approached May, more and more locations were dropping out of the election. While this was occurring, many people were working from office. Coming into June we were down 22 polling sites, but were able to regain the majority of these by contracting with SERVPRO to have polling locations sanitized after the election at the County's cost. **Mr. Bridges** asked **Caity Hamilton** to present her report.

**Ms. Hamilton** confirmed **Mr. Bridges** information and stated that 10 locations had to be temporarily replaced for the June 9 election. SERVPRO was responsible for several of the sites agreeing to be used at the last minute, particularly churches, as they were worried about the effects of COVID-19 on their congregations. Going into August we have 4 polls remaining closed that will need to be replaced. Our main area of focus is Pooler, as we are not able to use Royal Cinemas since they have opened for business.

**Mr. Lang** asked for a list of polls that need to be replaced. **Ms. Hamilton** replied that Skidway Island Methodist, Oaks at Pooler, the First Seventh Day Adventist Church, and Savannah Christian School will all need to be replaced. **Mr. Lang** also asked for clarification on which locations were the same as in the June election. **Ms. Hamilton** clarified that most of those were able to reopen and currently there were only 3 others that needed to be replaced and all had alternates secured – Legacy, Savannah Commons, and Rose of Sharon all have alternates.

**Mr. Lang** asked how many locations had signs for the June election, whether notification had been sent to citizens, and if there is currently a plan in place for citizens to be notified and signs

to be put in the closed locations for August.

**Mr. Bridges** stated that we were not able to send postcards for June because we still securing sites within a week of the election and postcards are only effective with a minimum of two weeks of lead time to ensure they arrive at a household in sufficient time. Media releases were used instead, as well as the Facebook page and website. **Mr. Lang** asked whether there is a legal obligation to send postcards, and **Mr. Bridges** replied there is not. He assured the Board that we will have the time for this election to produce and send postcards and print signs with our vendor to place at polling locations. **Mr. Lang** asked if we had checked with other vendors to see if they had time to deliver signs. **Mr. Bridges** stated that we did not have the time or notice to work with any vendor to produce or deliver signs. **Mr. Lang** asked if we have analysis to show how citizens' ability to vote were affected by this and **Mr. Bridges** answered that there is no feedback mechanism to provide the data for such an analysis.

**Ms. Hodge** asked if we were able to capture information on which polls had insufficient outlets or similar issues. **Mr. Bridges** responded that we were able to get feedback from both polls and technicians to determine what additional equipment would be needed to support polls with these issues and we are currently working with Purchasing to provide this equipment.

**Ms. Heimes** asked if the issue she experienced with the heat in the poll at New Generations has been resolved. **Mr. Bridges** confirmed that they had moved us without notice from their social hall to a gymnasium with no AC. They were the only poll that experienced true problems with the BMD system, which was traced to the heat causing the BMDs in that poll to shut down. We contacted them the day after the election and they assured us that we would be moved back to our typical space in the social hall with AC.

**Mr. Lang** asked if there is a written agreement between our Board and our polling locations that would hold the location responsible for making sure that AC, restrooms, running water, etc. are provided, and if an agreement or contract could be created.

**Mr. Bridges** reported that there is not one in place, although there used to be a memorandum of understanding, but was advised by the county legal department not to enter into a legally binding contract. He advised that something could be developed by working with the legal department and would be welcome.

**Mr. Mahoney** also advised that it is up to the Board and department to ensure that locations are suitable, but to keep in mind that the situation surrounding the June election was considered an emergency situation and typically ensuring these things would be an ongoing process.

### **Staffing**

**Mr. Bridges** reviewed with the Board that about 700 poll workers had been scheduled to work but as the election moved and the pandemic more people decided not to work and poll staff diminished. **Mr. Bridges** asked **Lynn Trabue** to present her report and Mr. Mahoney thanked her for her and her team's efforts in staying in contact with poll workers throughout the difficult circumstances.

**Ms. Trabue** stated that they were able to secure 555 poll workers for the June election despite the fear that many had regarding working during the pandemic. She explained the structure of the polls and reported that many workers are still not willing to work but they have hired many new poll workers and have many more applicants.

**Ms. Heimes** asked **Ms. Trabue** and **Mr. Wooten** if after managers an assistant managers can be required to take a test and score above a certain percentage to ascertain where more training may be required and identify which workers may need a review.

**Mr. Wooten** stated that a test was given to all workers after training in January and February; as a general rule all clerks receive a test and all managers are required to fill out from memory the necessary forms using mock election information which will continue for future training.

**Ms. Hodge** asked if all polls had been filled; **Ms. Trabue** answered that the polls are divided in half between her staff and each is responsible for filling their polls, but she checks and finalizes all polls and staff is currently working to fill their polls.

**Mr. Lang** asked what policies are in place to prevent personal conversation between poll workers and voters and to prohibit the congregation of voters in and outside the polling place. He went on to describe seeing an elderly gentleman waiting in line outside the polling place who was not brought inside by the workers. **Mr. Mahoney** stated that these things are handled in training and is the responsibility of the poll manager, but the primary concern should be what is happening inside the poll. **Mr. Mahoney** asked that **Mr. Wooten** address the questions. **Mr. Wooten** stated that polls are popular places in their neighborhoods that voters are proud of, making them a place that people enjoy socializing in, but managers are instructed to limit personal conversation within the active voting area. He also advised that Georgia rule on voters who are 75 years of age or older or infirm waiting in line at a poll states that they can go to the front of the line between 9:30am and 4:30pm; regardless of what time it is, these voters are encouraged to go to the front of the line by workers and signs are posted outside. Workers are trained on this and in this case must have been too busy inside.

### **Poll Technicians and Absentee**

**Mr. Bridges** reported 12 active technicians were in the field for this election and 2-3 new people have been placed into polls to be trained as technicians. The Secretary of State has said that he intends to place a tech in every poll and they plan to collaborate with KnowInk and Dominion to provide training for new techs; if this comes to fruition this could be the help that we need to increase our tech staff. **Mr. Bridges** addressed the suggestion that the techs set up the polls for the workers, saying that it is a time and resource issue for current staff, but with a tech for every poll it may be possible.

**Mr. Bridges** reported that the largest number of absentee ballots that has ever been seen in this county was processed for the June election by a factor of 6. With 31,000 absentee ballots in our county alone, the State made the decision three weeks before the election to allow early counting of the ballots. Absentee was planned to start at 7am on Election Day and run in shifts until complete; the plan was adjusted when we were given the leeway to begin early. It took time to hone the process, but there are now 40 absentee workers that have created a meticulous system and worked long hours to complete counting and tabulation. **Mr. Bridges** reminded the Board of the database error that they had to reconcile as well, which slowed progress. In the future, with a standard election, many of these issues will not be present and we know that in August we have the latitude to again begin early counting. The same team that processed the absentee ballots also processed the recount and will return for August.

**Ms. Hodge** clarified that there are roughly 7-8 polls per technician and asked if we can reduce the number of polls per technician. **Mr. Bridges** stated that he is working to hire more technicians and hoped that the State's intentions will help with this as well. **Ms. Hodge** also commented on poll workers' access to their technician, saying that she witnessed a poll manager struggle to locate her technician's number. **Mr. Bridges** replied that this information was placed in the manager's notes in their binders, but taking into account all the extraneous issues they were dealing with it is understandable that this is something that they struggled with. He also stated that they will go through the binder in training and **Mr. Wooten** added that manager's notes will now be printed on colored paper and will be stressed in training.

**Ms. Heimes** pointed out that the phone lines to the office were busy for most of the day and managers could not get through to the office for assistance; she stated that she is aware that **Mr. Bridges** had intended to work out a resource for this. **Mr. Bridges** confirmed that we had spoken to a call service that would have allowed us to push rollover calls to support staff to answer basic questions and return the ones that needed to be addressed by a member of staff. The set-up for this was considerably more involved than expected and it was not possible to have it in place for June; when implemented it will also provide 24/7 phone support outside of Election Day. **Mr. Bridges** also detailed the text system we tested on June 9<sup>th</sup> to reach the techs in a group text; this allowed the techs to talk to one another and be contacted as a group about an issue at a poll so that if the tech assigned was unable to respond another tech who was free could take the call.

**Ms. Hodge** acknowledged how labor intensive the absentee process was and asked why there was a delay; **Mr. Bridges** responded that there was a disruption at the beginning that delayed starting, but once this issue was resolved the delay was in the learning process and honing the procedure. He also reminded the Board that the March election had to be completed at the same time as June; the team began with the March election and moved on to June once they had completed it.

**Ms. Hodge** requested that we provide updates on processing absentee ballots on the website in future elections beginning with when we start to count. **Mr. Bridges** stated that because we cannot tabulate the ballots we count it would not be a good idea to present numbers to the public, but on Election Day it would be a great idea to report numbers as we continue. This could have been done for June, but the website Election Night Results encountered several errors over a few days and we were unable to update it. In the past, results were regularly published throughout the day and typically nearly complete at the end of the night. **Mr. Mahoney** asserted that most are aware that because the process of counting and tabulating the absentee was much more complicated we were unable to complete their tabulation quickly. He stated that the in-poll votes for June 9<sup>th</sup> were mostly complete on election night. **Mr. Bridges** replied that only 4 polls did not have posted results on election night because the manager had not brought the necessary memory card in after the election had been completed. The results for these were produced first with scanned paper ballots then updated with the memory cards. **Mr. Bridges** detailed the process of risk limiting audits, which will be introduced in the future.

**Ms. Rauers** spoke about the lack of training for the absentee team<sup>[CH1]</sup> and her concerns the process of adjudication. She also spoke about the issues she observed regarding votes in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> districts and her concern regarding the variance in precinct 2-12. **Ms. Rauers** asked if the hard copy of the ballots and the electronic record had been balanced against each other and the zero tape for each precinct. **Ms. Heimes** asked for clarification that the variance was found because a recount was requested, that the variation was found in the electronic calculations and not the absentee ballots, due to the memory card not being returned on election night. **Mr. Bridges** confirmed this was correct. **Ms. Heimes** requested further clarification that there were 3 precincts that had the potential for this variance, all in the second district, because the card had not been used in the calculations and the scanned ballots had to be hand counted instead. In hand counting the ballots there was the potential to have the results counted twice, so the other precincts were re-verified and found to be correct, with only 2-12 having this variance. **Mr. Bridges** confirmed that this was correct, and precincts 1-09, 2-12, and 8-03 all had the potential for the variance. Those three returned their ballots but not their memory cards; their ballots were retrieved and scanned. **Mr. Bridges** stated that it is not known when the ballots for 2-12 were scanned a second time, but he intends to go back and see if this information can be found. He explained that when the recount was balanced back to the original election, several options were reviewed to find where the variation occurred and it was traced back to precinct 2-12. When it was discovered that the number was too high because the results were scanned twice, the scanned ballots were removed from the results and the memory card was used instead to find the correct results. This information was then to produce the reports distributed to the Board to show where the variation occurred and the how the difference in precinct 2-12 balanced back to the difference in the entire election. **Mr. Bridges** also clarified that recertification was for the recount for the Second District Commission race.

**Ms. Heimes** made a motion that the June 9 election be recertified, seconded by **Mr. Lang**.

**Ms. Rauers** asked if the electronic votes for all precincts were balanced against their zero tapes; **Mr. Bridges** answered that the back-office staff balanced the zero tapes against the poll pads and those reports were checked against the Statement of Votes Cast to find and prove the error that was reported. **Ms. Rauers** asked for an explanation of the Statement of Votes Cast, which **Mr. Bridges** described as an 1800 pages document that details the ballots cast in each race in-poll and by absentee. **Ms. Rauers** asked if these results all equaled out and **Mr. Bridges** confirmed this.

**Mr. Mahoney** called for a vote to recertify; motion passed, **Ms. Rauers** dissented.



**Reschedule August Board Meeting**

**Mr. Mahoney** called for a vote to postpone the August Board meeting from August 10, the day before the runoff election, to August 17. **Mr. Lang** asked if a meeting could be held before the election to get a status update, and Mr. Mahoney stated that a special meeting could be scheduled but the Board should keep in mind that staff is trying to put on an election during that time. **Ms. Hodge** made a motion to move the Board meeting to August 17, seconded by **Ms. Heimes**. Motion passed, **Ms. Rauers** dissented.

**Mr. Lang** asked if that will also be the meeting in which the Board certifies the election. **Mr. Mahoney** replied that as long as the results are prepared at that time they would place certification on the agenda. **Mr. Bridges** agreed that this would be the goal.

**Review Poll Worker Pay**

**Mr. Bridges** reported that the budget increase for poll worker pay that had been approved previously had been implemented in the June election – all workers received a pay increase. All poll workers but 45 were paid on Election Day; those 45 were either new workers that had not been set up in time to be paid on Election Day or had been promoted to a higher position on Election Day and were due the difference in pay. These workers were issued checks the following week. Absentee workers were paid as seasonal workers through the poll worker system to expedite the process. Those 40 workers were paid within a week of their work ending, except for 3 who were new employees; they recently came in to fill out their paperwork so they can receive payment. Those that came in to process the recount received payment within 3 days of completing their work. Because of the long hours worked by the absentee team the traditional system of paying per shift was not applicable, and instead they were paid an hourly rate.

**Mr. Lang** asked how our workers are recruited and hired, specifically techs. **Mr. Bridges** replied that new techs are typically referred by existing techs and have to work a few times in a poll before they are sent out into the field as a tech. They also need to have a technical background and the ability to work well under pressure. Several years ago we ran ads in the newspaper and on TV, and most of the applicants were looking for a full time job, while this position only provides hours during an election. **Mr. Bridges** added that we have considered reaching out to technical schools, civic organizations, and other entities with people interested in providing a civic service. **Mr. Lang** asked how much a technician makes and if they are hourly; and **Mr. Bridges** replied \$330 for the day. **Mr. Lang** then asked what the process is for hiring absentee workers and how much they make hourly. **Mr. Bridges** responded that each absentee worker makes \$13.50 per hour and those interested can come into the office to fill out an application.

**Mr. Lang** made a motion that the job descriptions and qualifications, application, and rate of pay for absentee, tech, check-in, and poll workers be posted to the website. Motion was seconded by **Ms. Hodge**, who acknowledged that we currently have applicants fill out their application in-office because in the past there have been questions about whether or not they were filling out their own applications if they could perform the tasks required of them. She added that historically the application process has also served as a vetting process for applicants and that there will need to be a different way to vet applicants if the application is placed online. **Ms. Heimes** asked if staff interviews applicants once they have filled out their paperwork and **Mr. Mahoney** stated that this question raises the issue of whether or not staff input should be included in this process as adopting a new procedure may be changing the entire process. **Mr. Bridges** specified that the current practice of in-office application was adopted after it was discovered that a certain percentage of applicants who filled out their paperwork offsite were later found to be unable to read or write, both of which of legal requirements to becoming a poll worker, as well as the ability to pass a background check. He agreed that the information needs to reach a larger audience but worried that the increased workload would be too much for staff to immediately handle, and requested that this be tabled for another board meeting to receive input from staff so a report could be presented. **Mr. Lang** declined to withdraw his motion and **Ms. Hodge** acknowledged that staff's workload would change and stated that the Board could pass the motion and then staff could come up with the best way to implement the change. **Ms. Heimes** stated that she agreed with **Mr. Lang's** intent but would prefer to hear staff's report

before voting in favor. **Mr. Mahoney** asked if **Mr. Lang** was open to **Ms. Heimes** conditional request; **Mr. Lang** stated he was not. **Ms. Rauers** agreed that the motion should move forward and staff will have the opportunity to decide how it is implemented.

**Mr. Lang** asked to amend his motion to include a date certain; **Ms. Heimes** stated that she was not comfortable with including a time constraint on the motion due to the current workload placed on a very small staff. **Ms. Heimes** asked if the motion could be amended to first include instructions on how to apply in-office rather than immediately including the application online. **Mr. Lang** indicated he was not open to this amendment.

**Mr. Mahoney** called for a vote; motion passed and **Ms. Heimes** dissented.

**Ms. Rauers** made a motion that all poll workers in the 35 polls who were ordered by Judge Bass to stay open until 9pm be paid an additional \$100, and that Check-in workers who stayed late be paid an additional \$75.

**Mr. Lang** asked **Ms. Rauers** to clarify her motion and then seconded the motion. **Mr. Lang** asked if she would consider lowering the requested amount for both poll workers and Check-in workers because the potential cost is unknown. **Mr. Mahoney** asked if **Mr. Bridges** could estimate a cost at the current amount requested. **Mr. Bridges** estimated the cost of paying \$100 to an estimated 175 poll workers to be about \$17,500, and \$75 for an estimated 20 Check-in workers to be \$1,500. **Ms. Hodge** stated that she supports an increase of pay for all poll workers, but not just for an isolated group. She further stated that it is not unusual for a poll to be open late, since it is required that anyone in line at 7pm when the polls close be allowed to continue through the voting process, and this motion would necessitate extra pay be the policy moving forward for any polls that are open late for any reason. **Ms. Heimes** stated that she sympathizes with the poll workers who stayed late but does not support the motion because of the cost. **Mr. Lang** expressed concern and cautioned the Board that if this group of workers receive extra pay now, it would have to become the policy moving forward should a judge order polls to stay open late again.

**Mr. Mahoney** called for a vote; **Ms. Rauers** and **Mr. Lang** voted in favor, **Ms. Hodge** and **Ms. Heimes** voted against. **Mr. Mahoney** also voted against. The motion did not pass.

### **August 11 Runoff**

**Mr. Bridges** reported that the runoff had already begun with absentee ballot mailing. The State has extended their absentee rulings for the June election to the August runoff and the State Election Board has also adopted those rules for the November General Election. Absentee ballot processing will take place the second Monday before the election. The State will not be mailing absentee ballot requests to all Georgia voters like they did before, but they have employed Runbeck to print and mail rollover ballots for those voters that meet certain criteria to automatically receive an absentee ballot for this election. They will be mailing about 17,000 rollover ballots. We have been ordering ballots from Tattnell for Registrar to begin mailing requested absentee ballots. This runoff is Democratic only, there are no Republican races included. Those who voted Republican for the Primary or General elections will not have a ballot in the August runoff. The races included are the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Commissioner, 5<sup>th</sup> District Commissioner, Coroner, 163<sup>rd</sup> House seat, and 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District. **Mr. Bridges** also noted that **Ms. Trabue's** staff is attempting to staff polls at the same level as the June election. All equipment will be programmed and all allotted machines plus and extra 2 will be shipped for each poll; more machines than last time will be held back to reduce the shipping burden and eliminate polls having extra equipment using up valuable space. **Mr. Bridges** stated again that he would be pressuring KnowInk for the piece of equipment to expedite downloading speeds. Logic and Accuracy testing is advertised to begin the week of this meeting and early voting will be starting soon.

**Mr. Bridges** added that there will be training before the runoff primarily focused at the management team and training staff will be working directly with warehouse staff to address some of the specific issues that were encountered during the June election and warehouse staff will walk them through specific troubleshooting aspects of the machines.

## November 3 General Election

**Mr. Bridges** stated that typical turnout for a Presidential election is around 70-80%; with 200,000 active voters in Chatham county, there will likely be around 160-180,000 voters for the November election. This will put strain on polls and all available equipment will be deployed. We will be looking for input on how to solve potential issues with a higher volume of voters, especially if the pandemic continues. With a higher volume of absentee ballots, we will need to grow our absentee staff and improve training. **Mr. Bridges** will be seeking a status report on the acquisition of the two new warehouse spaces and work towards having those in place for November.

**Mr. Mahoney** asked if an increased absentee staff would allow us to complete counting of all absentee ballots within one week of the November election. **Mr. Bridges** answered that it is difficult to predict the volume of ballots as well as how close to Election Day they will arrive, but the August runoff will be used to hone the absentee process and test how quickly the staff can process the ballots received. **Mr. Bridges** stated that the goal would be to complete in one day all ballots received the previous day in order to stay ahead of the curve. Mr. Mahoney confirmed that it took two weeks to count 31,000 ballots and extrapolated that if 60,000 are received in November it could take longer than two weeks; **Mr. Bridges** responded that this could be case, but the June election also had several unusual roadblocks that slowed progress that we do not expect to experience again. **Mr. Bridges** also advised the Board that we may need to acquire more equipment for the absentee team.

**Mr. Mahoney** stated that while the concept of having 92 techs is most likely unrealistic, we should at least make it a goal to possibly triple the number of techs in the field and should be a focus. **Mr. Bridges** stated that the recruitment solution poised earlier should be a help in that regard and that if the efforts put forth by the State are fruitful at all we could work towards having a tech for every two polls and that he has been in contact with the training director in Atlanta. **Ms. Heimes** suggested that we recruit from a younger demographic, such as students, to assist with opening the polls only. **Mr. Bridges** agreed that technical colleges would be a good pool to recruit from and it is something to explore.

**Ms. Hodge** made a motion to form an exploratory committee to restructure and expand the Board of Elections office, to include two members of staff, two Board members, four community members, and a representative from the County's Human Resources. **Mr. Lang** seconded the motion. **Ms. Heimes** and **Ms. Hodge** acknowledged that the staff is very small and overworked and **Ms. Hodge** added that there are many small details that **Mr. Bridges** should not have to focus on. **Ms. Heimes** added that someone needs to be placed in charge of the absentee team to make sure that only one person is responsible for absentee staff. **Mr. Lang** asked if **Ms. Hodge** would like a date certain and who would be heading up this committee. **Ms. Hodge** stated that she would be responsible for keeping the issue before the Board and taking the lead and requested that there be a Republican and Democratic representative from the Board, but she does not support a date certain. **Ms. Heimes** requested an amendment to the motion to have **Ms. Hodge** lead the committee, and **Ms. Hodge** responded that an amendment is not needed, as she agrees to lead. **Ms. Rauers** stated that time management seems to be an issue within the office that she would like to see policies implemented and information reported on what is needed before staff is added. **Mr. Lang** responded that the exploratory committee would actually be responsible for providing those things. **Ms. Hodge** restated her motion and clarified that her motion is that an exploratory committee be formed to research what is needed within the office, not directly to hire staff.

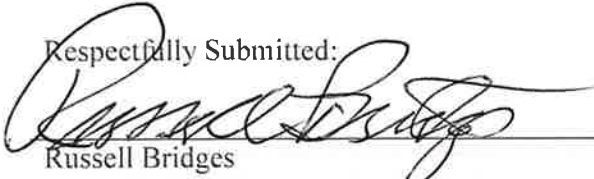
**Mr. Mahoney** called for the vote; motion passed and **Ms. Rauers** dissented.

**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 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Russell Bridges  
Supervisor, Secretary to the Board

8/17/2020  
Date Approved

  
Thomas J. Mahoney, III  
Chair

  
Notary Signature

1/20/21  
Date Notarized

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

Official Copy