

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

April 12, 2021
**virtual meeting*

- BOARD MEMBERS:** Thomas J. Mahoney - Chairman
Malinda Hodge – Vice Chair
Marianne Heimes
Antwan Lang (arrived in meeting at 4:00)
James Hall
- STAFF:** Billy Wooten
Caity Hamilton
- CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 3:35 P.M. by **Tom Mahoney** who gave an Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- CHAIR ADDRESS:** **Mr. Mahoney** thanked the Board and members of the public for attending the meeting and for their patience as we continue to use Zoom. He addressed the public, reminding them that these meetings are open for public viewing but discussion is for the Board only. **Mr. Lang** was not present for the start of the meeting. He arrived at 4:00 pm.
- MINUTES:** **March, 2021**
Motion by Ms. Heimes, seconded by Mr. Hall, that the Minutes of the March meeting be approved. **Ms. Heimes** thanked staff for sending the letter to the Secretary of State regarding election worker safety. **There was no discussion and the Minutes were unanimously approved.**
- FINANCIAL REPORT:** **March 2021**
Mr. Wooten presented the March Financial Report for information. He stated that the report gives a complete outlook on the budget to date. **Mr. Wooten** pointed out that we are over budget in several categories based on how much of the budget year remains, but he is confident that by the end of June we will be on target. He has been meeting with County Finance to get a better understanding and noted that the County is not concerned and we are up to date.
- SUPERVISOR’S REPORT:** **Mr. Wooten** briefly responded to a public inquiry saying that none of the office staff would appear on camera during these meetings as we do not have cameras included in our monitors. He then reported that he had passed 9 of the available certification modules required for election officials and would be working towards completing the rest. He also presented the November election timeline for information. **Ms. Hodge** thanked staff for producing the timeline.
- OLD BUSINESS:** **Bylaws and Mission Statement**
Mr. Wooten stated that this had been added to the agenda for information at a Board member’s request, but he had no further information to offer at this time. **Ms. Heimes** commented that she is on the bylaws committee and **Mr. Wooten** had furnished copies of bylaws to them from other counties. She added that while there is nothing overtly wrong with our board’s bylaws, they need an update and could be better defined and she would like to continue working with **Ms. Hodge** to update them. **Ms. Hodge** agreed and added that she would like a copy of the Board of Registrars’ bylaws.
- Employability Building/Annex**
Mr. Wooten reminded the Board that he had emailed an update on a recent meeting with the County regarding space needs; they are aware of the timeline and upcoming election prep. The changes needed to the Annex according the architect had a very high price tag and that project has been shelved. The Employability building is now being used entirely by DPH but the hope is for them to be finished with their work there by June or July so at least one half of the building can revert back to us. **Mr. Wooten** also stated that there would be a meeting this week with the County to

further discuss needs and plans. **Mr. Mahoney** asked if we can consult an architect to find out if we could transfer all of our operations to the Employability building and add a new warehouse on site. **Mr. Wooten** said that we could. **Ms. Heimes** reminded the Board that they had voted in favor of having an architect look at that space and the surrounding lot for that reason. **Mr. Wooten** added that it would be good to have Chairman Ellis in the discussion. **Mr. Mahoney** replied that we have left this to the County for 15 years and still there is no movement on a new building or project of any type and asked that Mr. Wooten discuss this with the County and their architect and bring the results to the May meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: Polls

Mr. Mahoney asked Mr. Wooten to briefly present the four polling locations to be voted on:

3-02 Temple Mickve Israel to replace Rose of Sharon; 6-08 Christ Memorial Baptist Church to replace Savannah Commons; 7-06 First Baptist Church of Pooler to replace Pooler Municipal Complex; 7-12 West Chatham Baptist Church to replace Pooler Church.

Mr. Wooten explained the reason for each recommended location change and **Mr. Mahoney** called for a motion. **Mr. Lang** made a motion to vote on all four of the proposed changes, seconded by **Ms. Heimes**. **Ms. Hodge** asked if there were back-up polls for 7-12 and 7-06, as the other two polling locations had official alternates. **Mr. Wooten** said that they did not have back-ups at this time, but that was part of the ongoing staff effort to update locations and shore up alternatives. **Mr. Mahoney** pointed out that these changes would be made well in advance of the 60 day requirement and that they extended to the polling location only and had nothing to do with the precinct. He asked Mr. Wooten if cards and other notices would be produced. **Mr. Wooten** replied that at the very least we would send cards to 7-12 as that location had never been used before and the others had been replacements previously. He added that signs would be set up before the next election and press would go out as well. **Mr. Lang** asked about the process for a location to become a poll and **Mr. Wooten** replied that they need only contact him to discuss the possibility. **Mr. Hall** stated his opinion that using religious institutions was beneficial as they rarely have Tuesday activities that need to be moved due to our presence. **Mr. Mahoney called for the vote, which passed unanimously.**

Mr. Wooten continued the poll location report, adding that 7-09 Holy Church of God would not be returning as a location due to growth in their school. As of this meeting, staff has contacted a few locations but none have replied. 7-16 Pooler Rec Center has served for Legacy in recent elections and the director had indicated that he would welcome future elections; **Mr. Wooten** stated that as far as he knows, the City of Pooler's decision to pull the municipal complex did not affect our ability to use the Rec Center and staff is waiting for a reply. 8-16 Oaks has requested to remain the permanent location and Mighty Eighth Museum is happy to stay on as an official alternate for use by Pooler precincts.

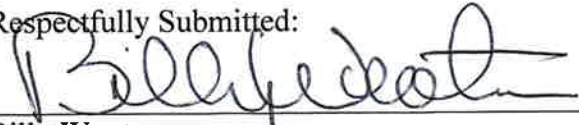
Precincts

Mr. Mahoney stated that we have 92 precincts, 2 of which were added fairly recently, and it is time to revisit the precincts based on population growth. **Mr. Wooten** presented a report on the 18 largest polls, focusing on those with the greatest increase in active voters. In particular, 7-11 First Seventh Day Adventist Church has had the largest amount of growth and will be studied – the current polling location has been under renovation and the contact there has been in touch with staff to say that it should be completed with plenty of time to be used again for the November election. The church wants to continue hosting, and has said since last year that the enlarged facility will better serve the voters in that precinct. **Mr. Wooten** stated that the polling location itself must be taken into account in these large precincts before a decision is made to split it or relocate the poll to a larger

facility. He used Coastal Cathedral as an example, a large precinct with a suitably large building to vote in. **Mr. Wooten** also cautioned against moving a poll to another location when it is well-established and well-loved in its current neighborhood and stated that in cases like that it may be best to split the precinct and add another poll location. **Ms. Heimes** agreed that voters like polls to be as close to home as possible and value a facility in their neighborhood over a larger one. She asked Billy to briefly explain a split poll for the benefit of the public; **Mr. Wooten** gave a brief description. **Mr. Hall** asked if we had a list of precincts we were looking at; **Mr. Wooten** replied that we do not as staff has just begun to study the matter. **Mr. Mahoney** directed staff to move to the next level of study and report back when they have more information. He added that a deciding factor would be in how we allocate resources based on early and absentee voting versus in-poll voting and asked that staff work with Voter Registration during this process. **Mr. Wooten** closed with an open invitation for suggestions on potential back-polling locations.

ADJOURNMENT: **Motion by Ms. Heimes** to adjourn the meeting.
ALL APPROVED. The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:



Billy Wooten
Interim Supervisor, Secretary to the Board

5/10/2021
Date Approved



Thomas J. Mahoney, III
Chair

Robert S. Carney
Notary Signature

5/20/21
Date Notarized

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