

THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS OF CHATHAM COUNTY
MINUTES

June 14, 2021

**virtual meeting*

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

STAFF: Billy Wooten
Caity Hamilton

CALL TO ORDER: **Tom Mahoney** called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M. He gave an Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHAIR ADDRESS: **Mr. Mahoney** introduced the Board and staff. He reminded the public that discussion was for the Board only and thanked them for attending.

MINUTES: **May, 2021**
Motion by Ms. Heimes, seconded by Mr. Hall, that the Minutes of the May meeting be approved. **There was no discussion, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.**

FINANCIAL REPORT: **May, 2021**
Mr. Wooten presented the May Financial Report for information. He stated that we are currently projected to end the fiscal year in the black and thanked the County for helping us to re-class and reorganize to make that happen. **Mr. Mahoney** also thanked the Board of Commissioners and the County staff that assisted us. While the BOE is an independent body, we are still dependent on the County for funding, and we are thankful they have never turned us down.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: **Mr. Wooten** attended the regional elections and registration supervisor event this morning in Springfield, GA. The Secretary of State spoke in person and Mr. Wooten met with several other local election officials.
Dominion is providing training next month; we are deciding which staff will attend relevant classes. Emerging Managers training will be starting soon for assistant managers who are interested in taking over a poll.
The Board package included the official letter from the auditor; there have been no issues or questions yet. A report will be issued when the audit is complete; the Board can consider having the auditor come to speak in a meeting. **Mr. Wooten** has also been certified as an elections official.
Ms. Heimes asked how far along the Annex is. **Mr. Wooten** replied it is about 80% finished. He now estimates it will be complete before August 1. Ballot boxes will be brought to the small warehouse next door, as maintenance just cleaned it. The electrician is coming to look at the Annex tomorrow to ensure adequate electricity. Purchasing will sell surplus items from the old warehouse for us.
Mr. Mahoney clarified that we are not selling election equipment, only shelving units and other similar materials. **Mr. Hall** asked if we are selling election equipment back to the State and **Mr. Wooten** further clarified that we are not selling any election equipment. There are two obsolete items that the State will pick them up.

OLD BUSINESS: *Media and Public Photography Policies*
Mr. Wooten brought the Media Policy back to the Board with a new Public Policy attached as well as a report from the County Attorney approving its use and declaring that it did not limit access in any way and only provided a control process. **Mr. Mahoney** called for a motion. **Motion by Ms. Hodge** to approve both policies, **seconded by Mr. Hall**. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: *6-03/6-09 Precinct Lines*

Mr. Wooten explained to the Board that several houses in a complex down Coffee Bluff Rd were cut off from their correct precinct by a mistake in the precinct lines. A voter brought to our attention in 2020 that six homes at the top of a cul-de-sac in Coffee Pointe were included in 6-09 when they should be in 6-03; they do not have an outlet or any direct access to their poll. Voters have to drive through three other precincts. Voter Registration has confirmed that the lines need to be shifted to include those homes in precinct 6-03 and that there will be no ballot change for the 11 voters affected. He mentioned that we have a temporary worker included in this change. **Mr. Mahoney** called for a vote to approve trueing the lines of precincts 6-03 and 6-09. **Motion by Mr. Lang** to approve, **seconded by Ms. Heimes**. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lang suggested the Board could create a committee to look at all the precinct lines to check that there were no other issues like this one. He then asked if we will have to redraw the precinct lines anyway after redistricting. **Mr. Mahoney** stated that it is unlikely we will have to change any precinct lines, but the districts will almost certainly change, causing split ballots like we already have in many precincts. **Mr. Wooten** added that with so many different district lines, redrawing the precincts along any of them could result in 200-300 precincts, so we keep them the same. **Mr. Lang** asked if we could cut down the size of any precincts. **Mr. Mahoney** said that was next on the agenda.

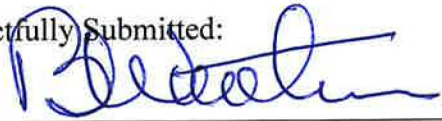
Precinct 7-11 Split

Mr. Wooten transitioned into a discussion of the Savannah precinct 7-11, which staff is studying with Voter Registration. There has been a dramatic growth in the last year from 5000 voters to 7000. We first looked at splitting this precinct in half, but VR director Sabrina German found it is best to split it into three. She will propose two new precincts in District 8 at the Board of Registrars meeting next week. Once they have voted, the Board of Elections will vote on the proposal at the July meeting. One new poll will be at Georgia Tech, very close to the block of voters they will be serving. Staff was able to tour the facility and were impressed; we are very grateful for their help. We are still searching for a space for the second poll but have several in mind. The Savannah First Seventh Day Adventist Church will continue to serve as the poll for 7-11. **Mr. Lang** asked what the threshold was to split a precinct and if we have any data to prove that 7-11 has grown because of new housing. **Mr. Wooten** replied that our data shows an area of rapid growth near Highlands Blvd. He addressed Mr. Lang's first question, saying the answer was complicated as several factors play into whether or not a precinct needs to be split. He gave the example of Coastal Cathedral, which can accommodate 20 machines easily, has ample parking, and an efficient flow. The location rarely has lines despite being the largest precinct after 7-11 because it can support the number of voters in the precinct. Other polls in growing precincts such as 7-11 are not as able to handle that growth.

Mr. Mahoney pointed out that the Board would not be voting today on this change, and Mr. Wooten added that the Board of Registrars had to vote first before it could come to them to vote.

ADJOURNMENT: **Motion by Ms. Heimes, seconded by Mr. Lang** to adjourn the meeting.
ALL APPROVED. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:




Billy Wooten
Interim Supervisor, Secretary to the Board

7-12-21

Date Approved



Notary Signature



Thomas J. Mahoney, III
Chair

8/18/21

Date Notarized

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