

THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS OF CHATHAM COUNTY
MINUTES

July 12, 2021

**virtual meeting*

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

STAFF: Billy Wooten
Caity Hamilton

CALL TO ORDER: **Chairman 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** thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said that he is pleased and excited that we have time this year to focus on important issues like the precinct and poll changes the Board will be discussing in the meeting.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT: **June, 2021**
Mr. Wooten presented the June Financial Report for information. He stated that we are past the end of the fiscal year now, but the County still has not voted to approve an overall budget for 2021-2022. They will vote on Friday. Currently, we are finishing paying expenses related to the last fiscal year while incurring expenses for this new fiscal year that we are unable to pay without an approved budget. Finance will advise us on handling the transition period.
The Board discussed and agreed that budget planning for 2022-2023 should start this fall. **Ms. Heimes** asked if they should be present for the vote on Friday. **Mr. Wooten** advised that it was not necessary, but the county could still make changes to our budget.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: **Mr. Wooten** presented a report on the polls with the highest number of voters in Chatham County. Staff surveyed the managers of these polls on parking, the building itself, lines in past elections, and general comments on the poll's performance. The report will help us document and resolve potential issues before they occur during an election. **Mr. Wooten** will continue this dialogue, especially in training, throughout the year to make sure that the gubernatorial election is successful next year. **Mr. Mahoney** emphasized to the public that the Board was very supportive of this effort and looked forward to seeing the improvements it would bring about. He also congratulated the warehouse on their work, saying that the Board had the chance to tour the newly renovated warehouse; the space is now adequate for its purpose and more organized and accessible than before. **Mr. Wooten** mentioned that we have already begun new manager training in the office warehouse and are now looking forward to some changes to the office layout. **Mr. Mahoney** asked if he could speak on some of the staff training opportunities. **Mr. Wooten** replied that staff would be taking part in several training sessions throughout August, starting with Dominion software training the first week of August in Atlanta and finishing with the State conference on Jekyll Island from August 29th to September 1st. We will take advantage of any training offered, as we can expect to be on the national stage again next year. **Mr. Hall** asked if the feedback in the poll report was from 2020 elections or past elections; **Mr. Wooten** answered that it went as far back as each manager's work history. **Ms. Heimes** about the difference in size between two Island polls. **Mr. Wooten** said there is a difference of about 700 people, which could be due to a newly built

community or changes in the boundaries from the last census. He also noted that they could not reach the poll manager at one of those polls for feedback and asked that **Ms. Heimes** reach out if she saw her out in the community. **Ms. Hodge** asked staff to focus on the issue of lines as ongoing and use knowledge of new builds and growth as an indicator of when changes are needed to get ahead of potential problems. **Mr. Wooten** and **Mr. Mahoney** both indicated that staff is already working with Voter Registration on this; they are aware of growth before we are. **Ms. Heimes** added that working with the Metropolitan Planning Commission may also be helpful. **Mr. Wooten** replied that one of the first steps is involving the MPC to acquire maps of the region and that we could not have completed this process without them.

OLD BUSINESS:

Precinct 7-11 Split

Mr. Wooten presented the proposed changes to precinct 7-11. The Board reviewed this in June; the Board of Registrars voted to accept it at their last meeting. He explained the proposal to split the precinct into three separate precincts due to its growth from less than 5,000 voters to almost 8,000 in less than four years. The new precincts will be 7-11, 8-17, and 8-18. The poll for 7-11 will be at Georgia Tech's Savannah Campus, 8-18 will remain with the Savannah First Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and 8-17 has yet to be determined. We would like to allow as much time as possible for both our office and Voter Registration to publicize the changes. The requirement in election code is to make changes outside of a 60-day window before the election. **Mr. Hall** asked what options we are looking at for 8-17; **Mr. Wooten** said we could combine 7-11 and 8-17 in the space at Georgia Tech for the small November election. The room is large enough to be distinctly split down the center for each location. Another option would be to go back to the Mighty Eighth since they were willing to serve as a back-up poll for the area. He added that there are other possibilities we do not wish to make public yet.

Ms. Heimes motioned to accept the proposed changes to precinct 7-11 and **Ms. Hodge** seconded. There was no discussion and the proposal was unanimously approved.

Mr. Wooten stated that staff would post the presentation online for the public as soon as possible.

Precinct 7-01/8-15

8-15: **Mr. Wooten** explained that several years ago, the poll location for 8-15 was slated for demolition, so staff has to move the poll. They could not find an adequate space within the precinct, so they moved it out of precinct into 7-01 to the First Baptist Church of Garden City. It was recently brought to **Mr. Wooten's** attention that there is now a suitable location in precinct 8-15, the Cooper Center, where the poll could be relocated. It is run by the City of Garden City and would be a neighborhood poll with parking, ADA accessibility, and water fountains. The poll manager lives in the neighborhood and is in favor of the change. Staff recommendation is to move the poll for 8-15 from First Baptist Church of Garden City to the Cooper Center.

Ms. Hodge motioned to accept staff recommendation, seconded by **Ms. Heimes** and **Mr. Hall** simultaneously. There was no discussion and the motion was unanimously approved.

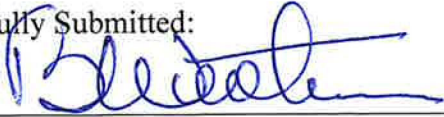
7-01: **Mr. Wooten** stated that the Garden City Senior Center has been a supportive polling location for many years but the precinct has recently begun to outgrow the location. For the past few large elections, the poll manager has had to set up machines in two rooms. Now that the Board has voted to move precinct 8-15's poll from the First Baptist Church of Garden City we can use it for precinct 7-01, where the church is actually located. Staff recommends moving the poll for 8-15 from the Garden City Senior Center to First Baptist Church of Garden City. **Mr. Hall** made a motion to accept staff recommendations, seconded by **Ms. Heimes**. **Ms. Hodge** stated that while she supports the move she is worried that it will lead to confusion and to voters crossing the highway between the polls on foot. She asked that special attention be paid to these voters. **Mr. Wooten** agreed that this could confuse voters and noted that staff has

already drafted press releases if the Board accepts this change and plans to run notices in Garden City newspapers, Savannah newspapers, our website, and social media. We will also post signs at both locations and nearby businesses as required by elections code. He mentioned that the Garden City Council is already aware of this proposal and they will likely include the information in their campaign material as they are up for reelection in November. **Mr. Mahoney called for the vote; there was no discussion and the proposal was unanimously approved.**

NEW BUSINESS: None.

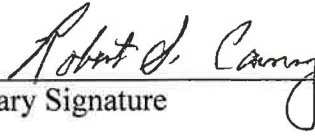
ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Ms. Heimes to adjourn the meeting.
ALL APPROVED. The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

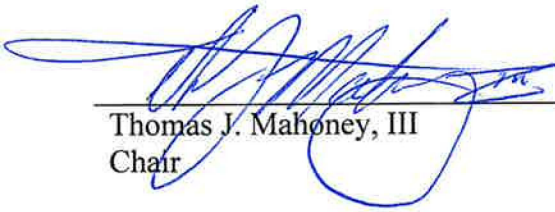


Billy Wooten
Interim Supervisor, Secretary to the Board

8-9-21
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