

Chatham County Board of Registrars
Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2020

This month's meeting was held via telephone conference call due to social distancing measures necessitated by the COVID-19 virus outbreak. The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Board members in attendance were Mr. McRae, Ms. Andrews, Mr. Norse, Mr. Pannell and Mr. Slay. Staff present were Ms. German, Mrs. Bostick, and Mr. Pflager. Members of the media also dialed into the conference call meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. McRae requested a motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2020 meeting. Mr. Pannell made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as drafted. Mr. Slay seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Old Business:

Human Resources

Ms. German indicated that a meeting with the Human Resources Department was held on Friday, March 13, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss transitioning to a temporary labor agency from the current Chatham County Temporary Pool. Ms. German indicated that Human Resources will be working with two temporary staffing agencies, Express Personnel and Chatham Personnel in the future. Current Voter Registration temporary staff have transitioned from the County Temporary Pool to Express Personnel.

New Business:

Presidential Preference Primary Postponement

Ms. German stated that the Presidential Preference Primary scheduled for March 24, 2020 will be postponed and combined with the May 19, 2020 General Primary. This is due to the COVID-19 virus. Votes already cast for the original March 24, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary will be counted. Voters who have not returned an absentee ballot or did not vote early will receive a combined ballot for the May 19, 2020 election which will have the Presidential Preference Primary and the General Primary on the same ballot.

Increased Absentee by Mail Balloting

Due to current social distancing, which is expected to continue for some time, voters are being encouraged to vote by mail. To effect this, the Secretary of State's office will be mailing an absentee ballot request to all active, registered voters. Based on current projections, staff expects to see up to a ten-fold increase in absentee ballot requests (and returned absentee ballots) compared to normal. Ms. German indicated that she will be working with County leadership to amend the Departmental budget by at least \$65,000. This will allow for hiring of additional temporary staff and ensure enough supplies are on hand to meet expected demand.

In addition, since absentee ballot requests are only being sent to active voters, staff will publicize this information and remind inactive voters (who are still eligible to vote) that they can and should submit a request to vote absentee. Staff is also looking into additional work locations as the current office environment will not support an effort of this size.

Registered Voter Totals

Ms. German stated that there are presently 202,496 active, 12,507 inactive and 319 pending voters.

Voter Challenges

None.

Public Discussion:

None.

The meeting adjourned at 12:44 p.m.