

Chatham County Board of Registrars
Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited to begin the meeting. Board members in attendance were Mr. McRae, Ms. Andrews and Mr. Slay. Mr. Norse and Mr. Pannell were absent. Staff present were Ms. German and Mr. Pflager.

Old Business:

State Election Board 2016 Case: Mr. McRae provided an update solely for informational purposes regarding a State Election Board case involving the Board of Registrars from 2016. Specifically, during the 2016 election cycle, approximately 43 voters were accidentally improperly placed in the wrong County Commission district. A hearing was to be held by the State Election Board yesterday, December 17, 2019, to resolve this case. The Board of Registrars did not have representation at the meeting (and none was needed). The Board will await word from the State Election Board about any sanction(s) that may be imposed due to this error.

Municipal Challenges Discussion & Guidance: Mr. McRae invited a discussion on procedures or guidance that will better assist municipal clerks going forward with municipal challenges to voter qualifications.

Ms. German provided an overview of an updated timeline and process for municipal challenges via a document that was provided to Board members as well as Ms. Jan LeViner, municipal clerk for Tybee Island, who is in attendance at this meeting.

The updated process calls for staff to issue electors lists to municipalities in the summertime, have clerks make updates, and return to registrar. Once registrar receives corrections or updates back, the registrar will review and again confirm the planned changes or updates with the municipal clerk. Once confirmed, the registrar will send challenge letters to voters being challenged that will tell them to contact the municipality to dispute a challenge brought by the municipality. This updated process should allow more time for a more thorough review of potential challenges and lead to clarity on which voters' challenges will necessitate Board of Registrars review.

New Business:

General Election Runoff Update: Ms. German reported 5,276 advance in person voters for the December 3, 2019 General Election Runoff. There were 4,711 voters who voted at the Main Office, 341 voters voted at the Civic Center and 224 voters voted at the Bull Street Library. 1,209 absentee by mail ballots were sent out and 898 were returned. The overall grand total for both advance in person and absentee by mail is 6,174 ballots accepted. There were 14 provisional ballots cast. Overall turnout including Election Day was 24,224 voters for a turnout percentage of 24.97% of eligible voters. The number of eligible voters was 97,007.

March 2020 Election Preparations: Ms. German indicated that an additional early voting site for the March 24, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary are still being explored since the Civic Center is not available due to police use for St. Patrick's Day festivities. Among the potential options are the West Broad Street YMCA (which has a fee to rent) and the Bull Street Library (free). A final decision on an additional location will probably be made by the end of January. Ms. German did note that the Southwest Chatham Library will be open for the entire three weeks of early voting in March 2020 to try to accommodate as many voters as possible.

Voter Totals: Ms. German reported 199,147 active; 12,482 inactive and 315 pending voters.

Challenges/Deletions: Ms. German asked the Board to approve challenging 5 voters who requested to be removed from the electors list; 29 who moved out of state, 6 who moved out of the county and 156 felons. At 1:15 p.m. Ms. Andrews made a motion to approve challenging these voters. The motion was seconded by Mr. Slay and carried unanimously.

Public Discussion:

None.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Slay made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2019 regular meeting. Ms. Andrews seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.