

Meeting Minutes
Chatham County Board of Registrars
January 27, 2021

The teleconference meeting began at 12:01 p.m. with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Board of Registrars members in attendance were Mr. McRae, Mr. Norse, Ms. Andrews and Mr. Slay. Mr. Pannell was absent. Staff members in attendance were Ms. German, Mrs. Bostick and Mr. Pflager.

Mr. McRae called for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 2020 meeting. Mr. Norse moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Slay seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Old Business

2020 General Election Runoff Debrief:

Ms. German provided a debriefing of the 2020 General Election Runoff held on January 5, 2021. She cited 39,510 advance in person (early) voters, there were 46,263 absentee by mail ballots issued of which 36,461 were returned by the 7:00 P.M. Election Day deadline.

The Main Office location was open until 7:00 p.m. on all early voting dates and Ms. German indicated that these extra business hours really helped with servicing as many voters as possible.

Ms. German also mentioned that the same issue of slowness with the ElectioNet voter registration system did not arise with this election as it had in November 2020. Ms. German did not receive any explanation on how the ElectioNet issues from November 2020 were resolved, but nonetheless it was very helpful to the staff to not have the same issue of slowness in the General Election Runoff.

January 2021 Special Called Meeting:

Ms. German provided a brief overview of the Special Called Meeting that was held earlier this month. The purpose of the meeting was to review voter registration challenges filed by a Chatham County voter. Mr. McRae led the meeting, which dismissed the challenges because the challenging party did not attend the meeting or provide specific documentation or reasoning as to why the voters should have been challenged.

New Business

Board of Registrars/Board of Elections Merger:

Mr. McRae spoke on this topic in order to review the current status of a possible merger between the two Boards and to solicit Board member input on the composition of the combined Board. Mr. McRae pointed out that a merger would require State legislation and that the State legislative delegation had met before on this topic and would likely meet again in the near future.

Mr. Norse indicated that there had been a prior meeting some years ago involving Board members and the legislative delegation. In terms of structuring a future combined Board, the consensus of the Board members present was that 1) the combined Board should ideally be nonpartisan as stated by Ms. Andrews and 2) a fair representation of the entirety of Chatham County as expressed by Mr. Slay.

Mr. Slay also mentioned that the County Attorney may need to be consulted regarding O.C.G.A. §21-2-75 which governs restrictions on Board membership by political officeholders or party leaders.

Registration Totals: Ms. German reported 208,020 active, 19,935 inactive and 296 pending voters.

Challenges – Felon, Deceased, Voter Requested: 332 felon and 15 voter requested. These individuals were sent letters notifying them of today's hearing. No responses were received. At 12:48 p.m., Mr. Norse moved to challenges these voters based on felon status or their request to be removed from the voter rolls. Ms. Andrews seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Public Discussion:

Ms. Shirley Wright asked about getting the meeting agenda before the meeting. Staff will ensure that the agenda is placed on our website at <https://voter.chathamcountyga.gov/MeetingInfo> before the upcoming meeting.

Ms. German informed the Board that staff is continuing to work with City of Pooler staff to obtain video footage of the drop box at Pooler City Hall from the January 5, 2021 election. The box was inadvertently damaged, apparently by a City of Pooler employee, and securing of this video footage will be helpful in determining what happened and when.

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.