



GLYNN COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION

Meeting, Tuesday March 9, 2021

The March meeting of the Board of Elections and Registration was called to order by Chairman Gibson at 2:00 p.m.

Present were Patricia Gibson, Chairman; Patricia Featherstone, Vice Chairman; Keith Rustin, Secretary; Sandy Dean, Member; Tommy Clark, Member; Christopher Channell, Supervisor; Christina Redden, Assistant Supervisor; Taylor Cooper, The Brunswick News; Terry Starry

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the January 12, 2021 Work Session and the February 9, 2021 Meeting were approved as read.

Old Business

Status of Nursing Home Absentee Ballot Policy

Ms. Redden provided an update on the proposed policy. Legal counsel is still examining state and local code to better define the term hospital. This research will help determine if the term hospital is applicable to nursing homes under election law. Ms. Redden said legal counsel advised the policy cannot be an emergency rule and must be in effect at all times or not at all. Ms. Redden will continue to work with legal counsel and provide another update at the April meeting. There is no action at this time.

Review of SPLOST Election Preparation

Logic and accuracy testing is complete for the election. A delivery schedule has been developed to facilitate more efficient deliveries. Poll Pad updating continues and is hindered by slow internet inside the Office Park Building. The Poll Pad bulk update will be performed this weekend in preparation for Tuesday. Advanced voting and absentee ballot mailing ends Friday. Ballots, scanners, and memory cards will be collected Friday night after voting ends, the remaining equipment will be collected during election deliveries. Mr. Channell presented the early voting metrics to date. Each poll will have 4-5 people based on low turnout data from early voting.

Ms. Gibson stated members of the public have complained about the locked drop boxes. Mr. Channell state the Secretary of State's office sent an official communication stating the emergency rules which allowed for drop boxes in 2020 are no longer in effect. Statewide confusion arose when the second set of emergency rules were established without an expiration date. If the State lifts these instructions, the Board is ready to reopen the drop boxes. There are several bills currently before State legislature regarding drop boxes and legislation should be expected by 2022.

New Business

Election Day Assignments

Tabulation will begin at 5:00 p.m. Minimal duplication and adjudication is expected. Appointees from each party will serve as Observers and Voter Review Panel with Mr. Rustin to guide them. Ms. Dean will be at the Post Office at 7:00 p.m. to receive mailed ballots. Mr. Channell explained remaining Board member assignments for Tuesday morning and the Board agreed on a meeting time Tuesday evening. The Board will call a special meeting at 5:00 p.m. on March 19, 2021 for the canvassing of results.



Office Report

Mr. Channell presented the remaining FY21 Budget. Ms. Featherstone commented there is only \$94,000 remaining until July 1 and most of the upcoming election expenses are not yet accounted. Mr. Channell noted the budget includes \$18,000 in legal fees which the County is expected to assume. Ms. Dean inquired about the cost of the upcoming election. Mr. Channell estimated \$40-50,000. Mr. Rustin commented we can justify overages such as additional poll workers needed due to the unexpected State requirements which were not originally budgeted. Mr. Channell noted another unbudgeted expense was the increased seasonal absentee ballot staff. Mr. Channell commented legislation changing absentee voting and removing signature verification may reduce the workload. Mr. Rustin was concerned these changes may increase election day turnout and require more poll workers. Ms. Featherstone commented it will be important to examine all voting legislation to determine how it will impact future budgeting.

Mr. Channell explained a change to the proposed FY22 Budget. The State has announced the 2022 Elections Conference will be held in the Spring of 2022. This will place two conferences in the same budget year when only one had been expected. Ms. Featherstone inquired about the 2021 conference. Mr. Channell stated it will begin August 29 on Jekyll Island. Previous restrictions to two attendees per county have been expanded to five attendees. There will be other COVID restrictions but otherwise it will be a traditional conference. Ms. Redden noted the conference is offering virtual attendees to view the presentations and binder for a reduced fee. Ms. Featherstone commented the Chamber of Commerce should be made aware of the increased elections personnel expected in the county during the conference.

Mr. Channell presented a proposed design for the CVS building if the Board is granted access to that space. Existing concerns include securing interior areas and plumbing. Ms. Featherstone requested the design be sent to the State for advice. Ms. Gibson inquired about the timeline of a move. Mr. Channell stated there are still meetings to finalize costs and then the County Commissioners must approve the decision. Once approved, Mr. Channell expects work to begin quickly in time for 2022 elections.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Rustin inquired about which steps will be taken over the next year for voter outreach and education. The Board has previously agreed to publish an annual voter guide. Mr. Clark and Ms. Dean commented candidates and groups primarily advertise elections. Legally required notices will be the only paid election advertisements. Voter awareness efforts through social media and speaking engagements will continue. Ms. Featherstone inquired about the recent State Election Board hearing. Mr. Channell explained the case of potential voter fraud was dismissed. Ms. Featherstone and Ms. Dean commented on the status of poll worker background checks. Mr. Channell is researching why the decision was made to not perform checks in 2018 before proceeding. Ms. Dean commented on the County appointed Board seat currently held by Mr. Clark. This term expires in August instead of the traditional May date due to a past vacancy appointed mid-term. Ms. Gibson is working with County legal counsel to formally request the new term length be adjusted in order to resume the traditional restructuring timeline.

Executive Session

There was no motion for Executive Session.

Adjournment

Mr. Clark made the motion to adjourn, Ms. Dean seconded. The motion was approved 5-0.