MACON-BIBB COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING

2525 PIO NONO AVE., STE 1200 MACON, GA 31206

*(HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM)*

DECEMBER 17, 2020

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Board Members Present: Mr. Mike Kaplan, Dr. Henry Ficklin, Mr. Herbert Spangler, Mrs. Rinda Wilson, and Ms. Cassandra Powell

Staff Present: Mrs. Jeanetta Watson, Elections Supervisor, Mrs. Veronica Seals, Chief Registrar, Ms. Charlene Maynard, Administrative Assistant, Mr. Thomas Gillon, Elections Officer

Board of Elections’ Attorney: Mr. William Noland

Visitors: Sandy Tharpe, Georgia Women, Maria Bryant, Macon-Bibb NAACP, Janice Davis, Darius Maynard, Carolyn Hargrove, LWV, Claudia Kirkwood, LWV, Seth Clark, County Commissioner Elect for District 5, Peter Taylor, Liz Fabian, Elaine Johnson, Carol Spain, Mary Katz

CALL TO ORDER:

Mike Kaplan, Chairperson, called the Special Call meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Dr. Ficklin made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held Thursday, September 17, 2020. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Dr. Ficklin made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held Thursday, October 22, 2020. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Dr. Ficklin made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held Thursday, November 19, 2020. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Dr. Ficklin made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held Thursday, December 3, 2020. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. According to O.C.G.A. 21-2-497, Dr. Ficklin made a motion to approve the consolidated certification of returns for the recount of the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election race only as a permanent record of the December 17, 2020 meeting minutes. Dr. Ficklin made a motion to approve the consolidated certification of returns for the recount of the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election race only as a permanent record of the December 17, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Dr. Ficklin requested the Board to approve the request to reschedule the January 21, 2021 Board meeting to Friday, January 8, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. for the Board to conduct any potential challenges from the General and Special Runoff Election, if needed. If there are no voter challenges, the meeting will be cancelled and held on the regular meeting date on January 21, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed.
3. Mrs. Watson provided the Board with information concerning the Macon-Bibb County Legislative Listening Day which will be held on December 21, 2020. The 2020 Legislative Listening Day is designed for the Macon-Bibb County Legislative Delegation to hear from key community organizations and leaders about issues and concerns that may potentially be addressed in the 2021 Legislative Session.
4. Mrs. Rinda Wilson informed the Board that she is retiring from her post as a member of the Board of Elections where she has served for more than twenty years. The Bibb County Republican Party has submitted the names of their 2 Republican Party appointees to serve on the Board of Elections for the 2021 – 2023 2-year term. The names of the appointees are Mr. Herbert Spangler and Mr. Joel Hazard.
5. Mr. William Noland, Attorney, for the Board of Elections provided the Board with an update concerning an Emergency Hearing Request - Civ. Act. No. 2020CV073305, by the New Georgia Project. The civil suite also called for elections offices to consider Saturday voting.

After discussion, Dr. Ficklin made a motion to approve Saturday voting to be held on December 19, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at all three advance voting locations. Mrs. Wilson seconded. Mr. Kaplan and Ms. Powell agreed. Mr. Spangler opposed. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Mrs. Watson informed the Board that the high-speed letter opener has been delivered to this office and it has proved to be a vast improvement over manually opening bulks of mail.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Items from the Chief Registrar, Veronica Seals
	1. Voter registration deadline for the January 5, 2020 General/Special Election Runoff Election was Monday, December 7, 2020
	2. Absentee Ballot mailing – Urge voters to follow up on absentee ballot request
	3. All Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes will officially close at 7:00 p.m. at the close of the polls

Absentee Ballot Drop Locations:

* + - 1. Macon-Bibb County Board of Elections
			2. Bibb County Courthouse (Mulberry Street)

**In addition, during the early voting period “only”, voters may return their absentee ballots using absentee ballot boxes stationed inside the early voting locations during normal business hours from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. at:**

* + - 1. The Elaine Lucas Senior Center
			2. Theron Ussery Recreation Center
	1. **The Online Absentee Ballot Application Portal** public access link listed below: [https://ballotrequest.sos.ga.gov](https://ballotrequest.sos.ga.gov/) Upon completion, the voter’s absentee ballot application will be submitted to the board of elections office electronically.
	2. Absentee in-person – Early Voting Began Monday, December 14, 2020
		+ 1. Board of Elections main office
			2. Elaine Lucas Senior Center
			3. Theron Ussery Recreation Center
		1. Returned Ballots – as of 12/17/2020
		2. Active – **109,998** Inactive – **7,100** - Combined Total – **117,097**

as of date: **12/17/2020**

* 1. Mailing absentee ballots – began **November 18, 2020.**
	2. ElectioNet Voter Registration Dashboard Report
		1. DDS Department Driver Services Applications – **859** as of 12/17/2020 @ 13:47
		2. OLVR – Online Voter Registration Applications– **131**
		3. Verification of Pending Voters – **17**
		4. Online Absentee Ballot Application Portal – **2**
	3. Early processing and tabulation of absentee ballots will begin Monday, December 21 at 9:00 a.m.
1. Items from the Board Members
	1. For the record, Dr. Ficklin thanked the Mayor and the Commissioners for approving the hazard pay grant for employees and elections workers while working through a global pandemic.
	2. Dr. Ficklin requested Mr. Noland, County Attorney, to render legal opinion concerning performing temperature checks at the Board of Elections office. Mr. Noland will research and advise the Board on implementing temperature checks for staff and the public.
2. Items from the Supervisor
	1. Preparation for the January 5, 2021 General & Special Runoff Election
	2. 2021 State Elections & Voter Registration Calendar
	3. Open Records Request (15 requests pending) Averaging approximately 5 requests weekly
	4. Ongoing virtual poll worker training and meetings
	5. The Board of Elections office will be closed December 24th, and 25th in observance of the Christmas Holiday.
	6. The Board of Elections office will be closed December 31st, and January 1st, in observance of the New Year’s Holiday
3. Items from the County Attorney – Mr. William Noland
	1. New Georgia Project – Emergency Injunctive and Declaratory Relief concerning advance voting.

After much discussion, Dr. Ficklin made a motion to the recommend Mr. William Noland, County Attorney, to research implementation for policy in place for checking temperatures; and for Mrs. Watson to apply for additional grant funds for hazard pay for the January 5, 2021 General and Special Election Runoff. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed.

1. Correspondence: (Copies for Board meeting files)
	1. Certification of Returns – General & Special Election Recount from November 3, 2020
	2. Budget Performance Report for December 17, 2020
	3. New Georgia Project – Emergency Injunctive and Declaratory Relief
	4. 2021 State Elections & Voter Registration Calendar

ADJOURNMENT:

Dr. Ficklin made a motion for adjournment at 4:45 p.m. Mr. Spangler seconded. Mr. Kaplan, Mrs. Wilson, and Ms. Powell agreed. The motion passed unanimously.

***Minutes transcribed by Jeanetta Watson***