

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF HENRY

The Henry County Board of Elections and Registration held a Regular Public Meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 1, in the Conference Room, of the Elections and Registration Building, 40 Atlanta Street, McDonough, Georgia. Notice of this meeting was posted in the entrance foyer of the Elections and Registration Building. The Daily Herald was notified of this meeting. Those present were:

Andy Callaway, Chairman and Republican Party Appointee
Arch Brown, Vice-Chairman and Board of Commissioners Appointee
Mildred Schmelz, Democratic Party Appointee
Marie Thomas, Democratic Party Appointee
Debbie Moon, Republican Party Appointee

Also attending was: Tina Lunsford, Elections and Registration Supervisor, and Shay Mathis.

Chairman Callaway called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to accept the agenda. Board Member Schmelz made a motion to approve the agenda; Board Member Moon seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Approval of the January Minutes

Board Member Thomas made the motion to approve the January minutes; Board Member Schmelz seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Update the Board on Office Workload

Tina stated we are down to approximately 7,000 applications to be processed. It cost \$.42 to mail the precinct cards from these applications so it will be a big hit to the budget.

She also stated she spoke with the City Clerk for the City of Stockbridge and they are planning on doing a huge annexation and will have a referendum with their city elections. Once their annexation is done they will have approximately 30,000 residents and will probably move ahead of McDonough (in population). A preliminary map should be available by the end of February. This annexation includes Rock Quarry and Eagle's Landing.

Board Member Moon asked if the referendum would be a county wide vote. Tina responded that the Board would have to decide, if a lot of county residents will be impacted, to open the county precincts; there will be a cost but the City of Stockbridge will have to fund it. If a resident is not used to voting in a city election, having them go to a city precinct to vote will cause confusion. It will be only the residents affected by the annexation that would vote on the referendum. This will affect the tax base for the county.

Board Member Thomas asked, if with the growth that's anticipated for our county, if our office would have to increase the number employees. Tina stated that the Board of Commissioners will wait until the increase happens and then react; they will review surrounding counties.

Chairman Callaway commented that this department is mandated by law and should be looked at differently than other departments.

Board Member Schmelz commented that she has concerns with the security of the office after visiting other counties and jurisdictions. Chairman Callaway asked had there been any incidents. Tina responded that in the current location we do have people that wander in. There is a lot of foot traffic from the apartments behind the building. During elections we have to park in the back of the parking lot and there are no lights.

Chairman Callaway suggested that when a County Manager is hired we should emphasis the importance of security for this building at this location.

There was more discussions regarding the office staff and responsibility of the office.

Board Member Brown asked about the next in charge if something happened to the Elections Supervisor. Board Member Schmelz asked if there has been a deputy in the past. Tina responded that we were lucky because there were people that had been in the office for a while. Unfortunately right now there's no one that's been here long enough to even come close. Luanne's been in the department the longest but she only does absentee voting and accounts payable. Paul's been here 10 years but has always done the voting equipment. He's slowly learning the registration part but will be leaving. Board Member Brown commented that there needs to be a plan B if something were to happen to Tina. Tina stated with the current employees, together it can get done. Board Member Brown responded that something needs to be in place, maybe check with other counties.

Discussion of Polling numbers report on possible polling place consolidations

Tina stated there are 38 precincts and we would like to combine 3 locations into a different existing location. #35-McDonough and #61 McDonough Central are located across the street from each other. #39-Stockbridge East and #40-Stockbridge West are in the same parking lot and last #44-Austin Road and #47-Ellewood, we would like to move both to the Fairview Recreation Center.

We have to get out of using the schools. We would like to move precincts located at schools to either churches or county owned buildings. Currently there are 14 precincts located in churches. By adding more churches it would add approximately \$4,000 per election to the budget. But by combining 3 of the pairs of precincts, we will save approximately \$3,000 to \$4,000 in staffing the locations per election.

With using the schools, the voting space changes, there are issues with parking, parents don't like strangers coming into the schools. Since the custodians are contract employees they are not dependable in being there at 6 am to open the precincts.

The County will probably not like it because the schools are free, we pay the churches \$250. The fire stations were considered but the parking is not there.

We would have to find churches for the precincts that will be combined. Maybe by April we can visit some churches to consider.

Chairman Callaway commented that during the last election it was not a good experience when visiting the precincts within the schools.

Tina will bring any recommendations to the Board for approval.

Plan location visit for Lake Dow Polling place

This item will be tabled until other possible locations could be added to visit.

Open Discussion

Tina stated that it was approved for the Election Board Members to have a county email. When the information is given it will be forwarded to all members. The email addresses will be added to the website.

Tina stated that Commissioner's Barham and Wilson talked to her about the possibility of Probate Court and Elections swapping buildings. Probate Court has

funds to remodel the building. The only thing is, early voting cannot be done out of the Probate Court building but they are suggesting using space at the building at Heritage Park. It would work for the office space but early voting would have to take place at a different location. This depends on the Judge agreeing to the move.

Chairman Callaway asked how this would work with staff being split up for Early Voting. Tina stated that the employees that handle absentee voting would be at the main office and for big elections other poll workers are brought in to assist.

Board Member Moon asked what the square footage of the Probate building is. Tina stated approximately 9,000 square feet. Board Member Thomas commented that the traffic situation would be solved and the building is more secure.

Chairman Callaway reported regarding the office being notified of possible legislation that might affect the Elections Department. He spoke with Rep. Andy Welch and he agreed to help keep Tina informed on any legislation that might affect the office.

Public Comments

There were no comments.

Adjournment

Board Member Brown made the motion to adjourn; Board Member Schmelz seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

(The Board visited a possible location to relocate the office. The building is located at 536 Macon Street, McDonough)