

9 February 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Board members present: Myesha Good, Maurice Hurry, Michele Crochetiere, Kevin Evans and Chad Word

Staff present: Milton Kidd, Tesha Green, Crystal Danley-Bridges, Philbert Smith, and Malcolm Unvala

Call to Order

Mrs. Good called the meeting to order at 5.03PM.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Good requested a motion for approval of the meeting's agenda. Mr. Hurry made the motion and Mr. Evans seconded. The agenda was approved unopposed.

Citizen Comment

There were no citizen comments.

Approval of Minutes for 12 January 2023 Monthly Board Meeting

Mrs. Good requested a motion for approval of the 12 January 2023 Monthly Board Meeting minutes. Mrs. Crochetiere made the motion and Mr. Hurry seconded. The minutes were approved unopposed.

Felon Hearings

Mrs. Green informed the board that four felon letters were mailed out and none were returned.

Office Operations report

Mr. Kidd announced that the office has acquired a new Administrative Elections Coordinator position and introduced Mrs. Crystal Danley-Bridges. Mr. Kidd explained that Mrs. Danley-Bridges will be taking over the administrative functions of future board meetings.

Mrs. Green explained that Mr. Kidd, Mr. Unvala and herself attended the Douglasville city council meeting on Thursday, 2 February in order to discuss changes to municipal election law and discuss the costs involved in conducting their election.

Mr. Kidd added that the office has been communicating with the municipality of Villa Rica as well concerning the proposed redistricting changes to their districts. He noted that at their last council meeting, new maps were approved and the Elections and Registration office will move affected voters and mail out precinct cards to those affected. A bill will be submitted to Villa Rica for postage costs involved with redistricting.

Mr. Unvala explained that the office would be attending the annual Georgia Association of Voter Registration and Election Officials from Monday, 13 February until Wednesday, 15 February in Jekyll Island. This is to ensure staff maintains their election official certification as well as an opportunity to be trained on new procedures and legislation.

Mrs. Good asked about the meeting with the Douglasville City Council and whether they were aware of the budget and costs of conducting an election.

Mr. Kidd explained that the municipality is ultimately responsible for the cost of their election and the Douglas County Board of Elections provided them with a cost estimate including the 14 Election Day polling locations as well as the three-week Advance Voting Period. He added that essentially the office will perform the administrative functions of conducting an election.

Mrs. Good asked about the voters affected by Villa Rica's redistricting and which precincts are involved.

Mr. Kidd explained that Douglas County only has one polling location in Villa Rica, but a small part of Ward 3 which was previously not in Douglas County is now part of Douglas County.

Mrs. Crochetiere noted that the one polling location in Villa Rica is rather large and asked Mr. Kidd if the office has considered creating other polling locations for those voters.

Mr. Kidd explained that the office makes every effort to keep municipal precincts physically within the municipality, and Villa Rica is split between Carroll and Douglas Counties. He noted that the current facility holds voting in a gymnasium and there has been ample space to conduct voting on Election Day.

Old Business

Mr. Kidd announced that the office has begun looking for sites to relocate the elections office as well as coordinating with legal counsel to create a lease proposal to present before the Board of Commissioners. He noted that anyone who has voted at the Douglas County Courthouse would understand the need for expanded space to conduct elections in a more effective and efficient manner.

Mr. Kidd announced that the entire office staff has attended live, in-person trainings for the new voter registration system, GARViS, and that system went live on 6 February. He explained that the system maintains voter files, including their precinct information and election participation history.

Mr. Smith explained that the Secretary of State's office has begun planning an update to the internal operating system of the voting equipment including the BMDs and scanners. This update is planned for the Spring and the office will be coordinating with the state for time and location for the update.

Mr. Smith also announced that the First Baptist Church of Douglasville no longer wishes to serve as a polling place but explained that they have graciously agreed to serve one last election for the November municipal election. A new location will be chosen for the 2024 election cycle and the office will be in contact with all affected voters.

Mr. Hurry asked if the First Baptist Church of Douglasville gave a reason for not being a polling place anymore.

Mr. Smith explained that their decision was influenced by the current political climate and their congregation raised concerns about campaign signage on the property.

Mr. Word asked about the status of voter rolls with the implementation of GARViS as well as the security aspects and asked if it was possible to see a demonstration of the system.

Mr. Kidd explained the voter registration system itself and any security measures are not maintained at the county level. Mr. Kidd invited the board members to the office to demonstrate the system and what staff has been trained on. He also noted that the system is still in the implementation phase and the office would welcome questions and concerns and relay those to the Secretary of State's Office.

New Business

Mr. Smith announced that the office will be performing routine, preventative maintenance on all of the office's voting equipment to ensure they are in proper working condition. He has been working with the inventory manager to get an accurate count of all equipment as well as other election-related supplies in order to be prepared for the upcoming November elections.

Mr. Kidd announced that Douglas County is implementing a new time-management suite for tracking employee time, accrual time and payroll functionality. He explained that administrative staff attended training on this system and discussed the implementation timeframe. Douglas County expects it to take around six months before it is fully implemented.

Executive Session

Mrs. Good requested a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation. Mrs. Crochetiere made the motion and Mr. Word seconded. The meeting moved to Executive Session at 5:20PM.

The meeting returned to general session at 6:06PM.

Board Member Concerns

Mr. Word requested a conversation with staff regarding communication between staff and board members. He expressed his desire to have more frequent conversations more than once a month.

Mr. Kidd advised the board that it is able to reach out to the office at its own discretion and extended an invitation to all board members.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08PM.