

**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**COUNTY OF HENRY**

The Henry County Board of Elections and Registration held a Special Called Public Meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 28, 2018 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:

Arch Brown, Chairman  
Mildred Schmelz, Vice-Chair and Democratic Party Appointee  
Andy Callaway, Republican Party Appointee  
Jonn Kirkpatrick, Democratic Party Appointee  
Dan Richardson, Republican Party Appointee

Also in attendance was: Tina Lunsford, Elections and Registration Supervisor; Brook Schreiner;

Those speaking in public comments was: Sarita Dyer; Kasey Carroll; Judy Neal; Lani White; Thomas White; Annette Edwards; Vivian Thomas; Jayden Williams; Vikki Consiglio; Donna Crumbley; Charles Mobley, Carolyn Ingram; Amanda East; Kathryn Gilbert; Gordon Gilbert; Tara Bogan; Zachery Daniels; Ramona Hailey

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order.

**Acceptance of the Agenda**

Chairman Brown called for an acceptance of the Agenda with the amendment to move public comment before the discussion. Board Member Schmelz asked what the reasoning was. Chairman Brown stated it could impact the board's decisions regarding additional satellites. Board Member Schmelz motioned to accept the agenda; Board Member Richardson seconded. The motion to accept the agenda as amended carried 5-0-0.

**Public Comments**

Judy Neal spoke before the Board against opening other early voting satellite locations. Thomas White, Chairman for Henry County Democratic Party spoke for opening other locations. Vivian Thomas, Board of Commission District 4 candidate spoke for opening other locations. Vikki Consiglio, Elected Soil and Conservation Member spoke against opening other locations. Donna Crumbley spoke against opening other locations. Zachery Daniels, former City of Hampton councilman spoke against opening other locations. Carolyn Ingram spoke against opening other locations. Kathryn Gilbert spoke against opening other locations. Ramona Hailey spoke for opening other locations. Annette Edwards, Board of Education District 5 elected official spoke for opening other locations. Sarita Dyer spoke for opening other locations. Tara Bogan spoke for opening other locations. Charles Mobley spoke against opening other locations. Sara Billups spoke for opening other locations. Gordon Gilbert spoke against opening other locations.

**Board discussion and vote on opening up additional satellite voting locations for the July 24, 2018 General Primary/Nonpartisan General Runoff**

Board Member Richardson asked what the official request that the Board received from the Board of Commissioners was or the reason for the Special Called Meeting. Chairman Brown stated the he wasn't sure of where it started but believes it was with the Board of Commissioners asking the Board to look at the possibility of and our responsibility for traditional sites. Board Member Callaway stated that the Board of Commissioners will go by our decision made today. Board Member Schmelz stated she has listened to all the comments made today and knows that one early voting site is not going to be enough. She would like the Board to consider, and will put this in a form of a motion also, to look at the map geographically as Mr. Mobley mentioned and consider putting satellite precincts in those areas for the voters to vote. She would also like for Tina to give the Board an idea of the cost that would be involved with poll workers and to open early voting locations in those geographical locations. Chairman Brown asked Board Member Schmelz if she is asking for one in each city. Board Member Schmelz stated that is correct. Board Member Richardson had Brook read back the minutes from the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding the Board's discussion and vote on advanced voting schedule and locations for the May Primary and Nonpartisan General Election. Brook read the minutes with the motion made by Board Member Schmelz to move forward on the director's recommendation to not have the early voting location in Locust Grove

open for the primary and accept the advanced voting schedule due to low voter turnout and fiscal responsibility. Board Member Callaway asked if the locations would be done geographically or by municipality. Board Member Schmelz stated geographically. Board Member Callaway asked where the other voting satellites are located. Tina stated Fairview, Stockbridge, Hampton, Locust Grove, and McDonough. Board Member Richardson stated the reason why he wanted to go back and reflect what took place at the March meeting was, at this time, we are talking about disenfranchising or suppressing the voters and our Board voted to not open the satellite in Locust Grove based on fiscal soundness and low voter turnout. Board Member Schmelz stated that was incorrect and the Board had lengthy discussions. One of the questions asked was whether there was any concerns expressed by the voters in Locust Grove or by the Mayor or City Council and was told there were no concerns regarding that issue and that is why the board took the vote they took. Board Member Richardson stated he would like to add that the minutes for the March 7<sup>th</sup> board meeting were approved and he wanted that put into the records. Chairman Brown so noted. Board Member Schmelz asked Chairman Brown if he needed a motion and he said yes. Board Member Callaway stated that if the Board is talking geographically and we go back to the old system, geographically it is not a true set up and asked what the Board can do to make a geographical profile. Board Member Richardson stated that he believes that it cannot be done geographically and would like an explanation from Tina. Tina stated that it is not feasible geographically. With advanced voting the facility has to be located in a government building. In district 4, on the east side, there is not a suitable government building. There are fire stations, however there is not enough room there and they lack parking. Tina went on to say that if the Board is talking about advanced voting in municipalities that would rule out Fairview. Tina also stated that we had issues in obtaining the same potential voting satellites that were used in the May early voting period. This department serves the citizens and offers a function. So do the libraries, as they have summer reading programs for the children planned months ago. The recreation department has parents that pay for summer day camp. Tina asked what the time frame would be for early voting in the additional satellites. Will it be one week, two weeks, or all three weeks? It is approximately \$7,500 dollars from start to finish to operate a satellite location for one week and that does include a Saturday. Tina informed the Board that the office already reached out to the locations and there would have to be two changes if the Board approves to open

additional early voting satellites. Fortson library and Locust Grove library said they could not accommodate voting due to prior commitments. The Hampton early voting satellite would be the old library at 14 Old Griffin Road. The Locust Grove location would be the Henry County Recreation Center in the old First Baptist Church sanctuary. Board Member Richardson asked what type of notice must be given when changing early voting locations. Tina stated there is no required notice. The Board decides how many locations and where they will be. The code does state that it has to be in a government building to secure the machines. The office will need to advertise. The early voting satellites times and locations must be entered in the Secretary of State's voter system for voters to see the early voting schedule on the My Voter Page. Tina stated that we do advertise the schedule in the legal organ and on the website. Board Member Schmelz stated that she understands that the Board of Commissioners has allowed us to move money around and that Tina has had discussions with the Board of Commissioners. She asked for Tina to elaborate on the discussions. Tina stated the county manager said we will have some excess money left over from this fiscal year that we could roll over into the new fiscal year to offset the costs of opening additional sites. Tina went on to say that when the Board voted on the early voting schedule in March for the May Primary, we still had April, May, and June to consider in regards to the budget. The reason we had to have money set aside was in case the election was challenged or to fund any contingencies. Tina stated we would be able to rollover funds from the current fiscal year to fund additional voting satellites but to remember that going forward the Board would have to consider continuing this trend. Board Member Richardson stated he heard from public comments about the Monday through Friday hours at the current location being from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. He asked what would be the feasibility of extending the hours to 7:00 am to 7:00 pm for all three weeks of early voting to provide additional access, including the Saturday approved at the last meeting, and what would be the approximate cost? Tina stated we are looking at 20 hours per week of overtime per employee, not including the Saturday. We have two accounts, one being Election Temp where the poll workers are paid from and the other which the election staff's overtime is paid from. If the Board does do it for all three weeks and add other satellites, they do have to be set up on that Friday and that is three staff members out of the office all day to set the locations up. Board Member Schmelz stated that she did research in all of Metro Atlanta counties they have additional satellite offices for early voting. That would be Fulton, Gwinnett,

Clayton, and Cobb. Rockdale was one that didn't because it is a smaller county and based where the main office is located voters can get there from either location. Board Member Schmelz went on to say that Henry County is growing by leaps and bounds and the Board is going to have to tackle this at some point in time and now is the time to do it. Board Member Richardson agreed that this is an issue the Board needs to address however he stated that he is hard pressed to believe the board members can come into the meeting this afternoon to make a decision that will better serve Henry County not only today but going forward. He stated that he is not in favor of making a change that will have unknown consequences based on the Board getting together in one afternoon where there was not a clear understanding of what the purpose was prior to the meeting. Chairman Brown so noted. Board Member Kirkpatrick stated that it seemed the purpose was for more early voting locations in order to accommodate more people to vote and that it is a simple ask and not complicated. Board Member Richardson made the motion to extend voting hours for the 40 Atlanta Street location for the three week period from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm to the existing schedule including the Saturday to provide our citizens opportunity and additional access to voting; Board Member Callaway seconded. Board Member Schmelz stated that as a Board we need to move forward on doing additional satellite offices for early voting and will have to tackle it at some point in time. She stated that if not now, then when. Board Member Richardson agreed with Board Member Schmelz and added that the Board needs to do working sessions and the early voting situation is an additional item that the Board needs to address. The minutes for this meeting and past meetings reflect that the Board has a lot to discuss and address. He also stated that his motion provides the additional access that the citizens of the county stated that they wanted. He stated that he thinks everyone wants to do the right thing and this gives us a step in that direction. Board Member Kirkpatrick stated that he thinks there needs to be additional sites and that we should have a look at this. He asked what it would be if we made it possible for more locations to vote in the runoff process? He stated that there would be a higher turn out and we feel like we accomplished what we are supposed to do and that is to provide access to voters to vote. Board Member Callaway agreed that it is our duty to make sure voters get their vote. Callaway went on to state that when the Board starts making selections of locations you could call it gerrymandering in a way. Board Member Callaway would like to see either all the locations opened or just the one location. Chairman Brown asked could the office find locations in the areas that are being

discussed. Tina stated the locations have been contacted and asked if it would be our normal locations or municipality based. Chairman Brown replied it would be whatever we could get. Tina stated that going forward, since the Board is starting something new with offering the satellites for the runoffs, then how will the Board choose what locations to open. Will they decide based on what is on the ballot, or will there be procedures going forward so that the office will know how to plan for it. Tina stated that the locations available as runoff locations for this election would be for one week only. If the Board wants additional weeks there will be conflicts with the locations. Board Members voted on the motion made by Board Member Richardson. The motion carried 3-2-0 with board members Brown, Callaway and Richardson for and board members Kirkpatrick and Schmelz opposed. Board Member Callaway thanked everyone who came to the meeting and stated that the Board appreciates it. Chairman Brown suggested that early voting satellites be placed on the July meeting agenda for discussion.

### **New Business**

**Announcement** – Next board meeting July 11, 2018

### **Adjournment**

Board Member Callaway made motion to adjourn; Board Member Richardson seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.