

SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION

AFTER AGENDA

January 14, 2025

The Regular Monthly meeting of the Spalding County Board of Elections and Voter Registration was held at the County Courthouse Annex, 119 East Solomon Street beginning at 6:15 p.m. on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. In attendance: Chairman, Ben Johnson, presiding; James Newland, Dexter Wimbish, and Lee Howell. Chris Piland attended virtually. Each member is allowed to virtually attend two meetings within a calendar year. Also present were Elections Supervisor Kim Slaughter, Attorney Stephanie Windham and Kelly Romero to record minutes.

Call to Order – Chairman Johnson called meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Invocation/Moment of Silence – Invocation was given by James Newland.

Pledge to the Flag – Pledge was led by Dexter Wimbish

Citizen Comment – No citizen comments.

Adoption of the Agenda – Motion/second to adopt the agenda with no amendments. James Newland/Dexter Wimbish, 5-0, Motion carries. 6:17 p.m.

Introduction of Board Members for 2025 – Kim Slaughter introduced all Board Members.

Election of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary for Office (Chair every two years, all others annually)
– Completed at 6:22 p.m.

Floor was open for Chairman nominations. James Newland nominated Ben Johnson. There were no further nominations. Nominations were closed. 5/0 Ben Johnson elected as Chairman.

Floor was open for Vice-Chairman nominations. Dexter Wimbish nominated James Newland. There were no further nominations. Nominations were closed. 5/0 James Newland was elected Vice-Chairman.

Floor was open for Secretary nominations. James Newland nominated Chris Piland. There were no further nominations. Nominations were closed. 5/0 Chris Piland was elected as Secretary.

Approval of Minutes – Motion/second to approve minutes. James Newland/Dexter Wimbish. 5-0, Motion carries at 6:23 p.m.

Approval of 2025 Meeting Calendar – Motion/second to approve 2025 Meeting Calendar. Dexter Wimbish/James Newland. 5-0, Motion carries at 6:26 p.m.

Approval of Resolution delegating certain Board duties to the Elections Supervisor – Motion/Second to approve Resolution. Dexter Wimbish/ James Newland 5-0, Resolution approved at 6:28 p.m.

Election Supervisor Report – Kim Slaughter –

Election Calendar

June 17, 2025 - Special Election – Soil and Water Conservation Seat

November 4, 2025 – Municipal Election

Financial Update

Election Supervisor Kim Slaughter presented a financial update which reflected the following:

- A few line items have been added to the Budget after the fiscal year began by the Finance Director.
- The finance report reflects some line items with a negative balance but the majority in black.
- Summary is as follows: Budgeted: \$678,182.00 Expenditures year to date: 503,679.53 with a remaining balance of \$174,502.47.

Voter Registration Update

Registered voters in Spalding County per Secretary of State (Garvis) as of January 13, 2025 is 54,041.

Summary of Voter Registration action from December 10, 2024 to January 13, 2025:

781 transfers into Spalding County

518 Within County Address Changes

563 New Voters

143 Name Changes

1968 No Changes

3,916 Total of Transactions

There were 1,055 that transferred out of the county (from the MOC, Moved out of County Report) At the time this report was reviewed, 101 of these voters had moved back to Spalding County.

Looking ahead to 2025: The audit of Voter Registration physical records is set to begin by January 22, 2024. It is estimated to take approximately two months. We will also be scanning any records that need a digital file.

Spalding U

We are excited to be a part of Spalding U. It is a free program designed to inform and improve citizen knowledge about day-to-day operations through our county government.

Printing of Precinct Cards

With KnowInk printing and mailing the precinct cards now, there are a significant amount of cards issued that are unnecessary. No changes account for 60% of the voter registration process. Discussions are ongoing with KnowInk for a possible solution. Meanwhile a suggestion has been sent to SOS requesting a “Generate Precinct Card” tab when processing Voter Registration records.

Advance Voting and Additional Space Update

We are hoping to receive an update from Dr Ledbetter in the next couple of weeks about the redesigning of our additional space.

Website Update

A Project Overview and Proposal from Hammond Marketing was given to the Board. If we have our own website, apart from the County, we will be able to make updates as needed and not have a waiting period. There were multiple pricing plans, but the basic plan seems like it would meet our needs. This will be implemented in the 2026 fiscal budget year.

Ballot Images for 2020 to Webpage Update

Kim Slaughter was notified at 4:25 p.m. that the .tif files could possibly have a negative affect on the Spalding County website because of the file size. It appears we can use a link for the folder on the webpage. She is following up with IT and Hammond this week.

Poll Worker Appreciation with Board Members Christmas Party

The Christmas party was attended by approximately 60 poll workers as well as BOER Chairman Ben Johnson and BOC Clay Davis. Kim wanted to thank those that attended and the staff that served the poll workers with a thankful heart. It was a huge success and spoke volumes of our Board, our Staff, and our community.

Projects in Process

Budget

Ballot Images Upload Completion

Spalding U

Voter Registration Audit

Old Business - Consider approval of resubmitting revised HB769 once more for consideration by Local Legislators.

This would change the Elections Supervisor title to Elections Director which would place the position in line with other County Department Heads and is an accurate title for the duties involved as well.

Section 5. is no longer needed as the process has been put in place on the selection of the 5th Board member.

Section 9B:

This revision removes the constraints of the Board being able to hold Emergency and Special Called meetings without a 24 hour notice.

Section 14B. The revision to this section would allow the Board to appoint an Attorney of their choice and not bind the Board to the County Attorney.

Section 12D Currently the election supervisor/director and all employees are required to live in Spalding County. Mrs. Slaughter replies that this can hinder hiring additional qualified people since they don't live in the county. Suggests that a possible percentage of 50% of Staff be required to live in the County.

James advised it is easy for a county our size to be swamped but doesn't want our employees to be from other big counties.

Lee Howell asked if the county has employees that do not live in Spalding to which County Attorney Stephanie Windham answered “yes”. Some discussion followed about how other Counties were designed in regards to residency.

Dexter Wimbish requests County Attorney Stephanie Windham compose an Opinion Letter to ensure the Board has on record seeking legal advice.

Stephanie Windham advised she doesn’t think there are other counties in Georgia that still have this requirement and that she can have this letter ready by next week.

Chris Piland agreed with comments that residents in Spalding would have a better interest in what happens in our county but doesn’t want to put too many restrictions on Kim and who she can hire.

12D needs motion to be amended to require that 75 percent of all employees shall be legal residents and registered to vote in Spalding County. Motion in order. Chris Piland/Lee Howell at 7:06 p.m. to amend motion pending all are agreeable and if the Opinion Letter is positive. Lee Howell withdrew his second motion at 7:11 p.m. advising he doesn’t like doing anything on a contingency. Then James Newland seconds the motion at 7:13. Lee Howell wants to put the vote off until February. Dexter and Lee do not want to vote tonight until they get the letter of Opinion from Stephanie. Chris is okay with withdrawing the motion if a quorum can attend a Special Called meeting.

There was a motion to table the action. Lee Howell/Dexter Wimbish, 5-0 tabled at 7:16 p.m.

It was decided to hold a Special Called Meeting on January 27, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the Office of Elections and Voter Registration.

New Business – There was no new business.

Board Comments –

Chris Piland – Very thankful for the opportunity to serve Spalding County and work along with the other Board members.

Dexter Wimbish – Welcomes the two new members and advised 2025 will be a good year.

Lee Howell – Proud to be here and service the county working with everyone.

James Newland – We all do try to get along. We all have the same goal to serve the voters of Spalding County and conduct fair elections. We all have preferences. Welcomes Chris Piland and Lee Howell. Welcomes back Ben Johnson as Chair as well as Board Member Dexter Wimbish

Ben Johnson – Appreciates the new blood and difference of opinion. He thanked Kim Slaughter.

Adjournment – Motion/Second to adjourn. James Newland/Dexter Wimbish. 5-0, Carries at 7:21 p.m.

Ben Johnson, Chairman

Kimberly Slaughter, Elections Supervisor