

# **SPALDING COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION**

## **AFTER AGENDA**

**February 11, 2025**

The Regular meeting of the Spalding County Board of Elections and Voter Registration was held at the County Courthouse Annex, 119 East Solomon Street at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11, 2025. In attendance: Chairman, Ben Johnson, presiding; James Newland, Dexter Wimbish, Chris Piland and Lee Howell. 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 6:03 p.m.

**Invocation/Moment of Silence** – Invocation was given by Chris Piland

**Pledge to the Flag** – Pledge was led by Lee Howell

**Citizen Comment** – No citizen comments

**Adoption of the Agenda** – Motion to Amend Agenda with two Amendments. James Newland/Lee Howell, 4-0, motion carries at 6:05 p.m.

- Need to move item number 7, Approval of Resubmitting the Revised House Bill HB769 to Old Business
- Enter under New Business approval of Call for Municipal Elections.

Motion/second to adopt the agenda with two amendments. James Newland/Lee Howell, 4-0, Motion carries. 6:06 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes** – Motion/second James Newland/Lee Howell, 4-0, motion carries at 6:07 p.m.

**Election Supervisor Report** –

**Election Calendar** – Spalding 2025 Elections include:

- June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Special Election – Public Service Commission Seat
- November 4, 2025 – General Municipal Election
  - City of Griffin – Published Call for Election
  - City of Orchard hill – Published Call for Election

**Financial Update**

- Budget – 2026 Fiscal year rough draft
  - Possible addition of Computer/Laptop purchases due to Microsoft no longer supporting Windows 10. IT will let us know in the next couple of days.
  - Computation of part time hours, regular hours and overtime.
  - Kim is also working with Finance Director, Erica Dye, on the corrections of some entries and the amount of funds needed for the June Special Election.
  - The Board has been sent the estimated cost of the June Special Election.

**Voter Registration Update** – Given by Sandra Hardy (Total number of Registered Voters as of 2/11/2024 is 54,041.)

- Totals per Category of Registration
  - Mail in/Walk in – 5
  - Department of Drivers Services – 383
  - Online Voter Registration – 1
  - My Voter Page – 0
  - Vitals Records – 32
  - Felon Records – 4
  - Merged Duplicates – 2 (From another county)
  - Transfers out of County – 96
  - Street Update/Additions – 52

**Spalding U** – This has been scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025

This is a 10-month program where participants meet for three hours, one day a month for a hands-on look at services offered throughout our County.

**Printing of Precinct Cards** – Our office continues to find ways to save the taxpayers' money while not compromising Elections and Voter Registration processes.

- “No Changes” to records processed through GARVIS Dashboard account for 50 to 60 percent of records processed.
- The GARVIS system at present generates a precinct card for voters although a change/update to their record is not processed, which in essence costs unnecessary spending.
- We have found a way to process “No Change” records while indicating to KnowInk only the records which require a newly generated Precinct Card. This action has saved approximately \$1,000 to date (beginning in January) and with time will continue to save our county thousands of dollars.

**Advance Voting and Additional Space Update** – As noted at the January meeting, Dr. Ledbetter stated that we would begin looking at the acquired space and redesigning thereof at the beginning of the year. Kim has not been notified of any updates regarding this matter. We are moving forward in looking at the square footage and how we believe the layout would best benefit the Election process in preparation for submitting the Supplemental Budget proposal along with the annual budget proposal.

**Website Update** – This has been included in the FY 2026 Budget proposal. We will enter a contract with Hammond Marketing.

**Precinct Redistricting Project** – Would like consideration of consolidating some of Spalding's 17 precincts. We would go from 17 precincts to 12 precincts. (All members were given maps for reference.) Why would we do this? Reduction in expenditures, Time saver in staffing, precinct lines, managing precincts and consolidation of processes and procedures related to individual precincts. Also, an overwhelming number of voters vote Advanced Voting in lieu of Election Day. Ms. Slaughter reported that 49.69% of the 70.95% voters cast their vote early in the November 2024 General Election. In reducing the precincts, we would save an estimate of \$6000 to \$8000 on Election Day in Poll Worker Salary alone. She also shared that she believed the cost

savings would be a rippling effect, in saving in other areas related to signage, testing, and other processes related to precincts.

Chris Piland asked about staffing if less would be needed or repurposed. Ms. Slaughter replied that it would be both, also depending on the size of the election. The law mandates that we must have one manager, two assistant managers and one clerk for each precinct on Election Day.

Lee Howell inquired about distances, when precincts are combined. Mrs. Kim will gather information regarding traveling distances and the differences thereof. Chris asked about centralizing the combined voting locations. Ms. Slaughter stated that we absolutely would centralize where possible, when possible.

Ben Johnson advised we need to address the business issue and polling access. We won't take action now. He would like to get hard numbers and then soft estimates. The only concerns were voters possibly having to drive further. Mr. Johnson also brought up about renumbering the precincts because we will have further gaps in the numbers. Kim Slaughter will check to see if it is a technical or legal issue.

#### **Projects in Process –**

- Budget (Final and Complete)
- Ballot Images Upload Completion
- Spalding U
- Voter Registration Audit
- Precinct consolidation Project

Sandra Hardy and Kim Slaughter attended the GAVREO Day at the Capitol last week and it was an honor to represent Spalding County and be recognized alone with all Georgia Election and Voter Registration Officials for Providing all voters with transparent and fair elections for all.

**Old Business** – Approval of resubmitting revised HB769 with consideration to legal legislators. County Attorney Stephanie Windham advised they have reviewed several counties: Troup, Clayton, Henry, Pike, Upson, Meriwether, Paulding, Fayette, and Macon/Bibb and have found nothing like HB769. There are general laws and ordinances in several counties that have no residency requirements whatsoever for county employees/election staff. That is the same as in Spalding County. No case law is readily available, indicating that the head of an agency cannot be treated differently than the employees. There was a lot of discussion last month about the percentages of employees. Ms. Windham's recommendation would be to differentiate between the Elections Supervisor and the staff or don't. It needs to be all or nothing and not get into the percentage of persons for required residency.

Board member Dexter Wimbish praised Kim Slaughter and the outstanding job she is doing but believes one day another larger county will try to hire her because of how good she truly is. His concern is that the requirement of County residency could place a hardship on the Board in hiring a new Elections Supervisor. There would be a better chance of more qualified applicants if it was open to applicants outside of Spalding County as well.

Ms. Windham advised this needs to be voted on and submitted the next day. Ben Johnson advised we need to strike that there be changes or leave it like it is. Motion made for the changes to HB 769 striking anything regarding changes to residency. Lee Howell/James Newland. 5-0 at 7:06 p.m.

**New Business** – Approval of the Call for Municipal Elections for City of Griffin and Orchard Hill. James Newland/Lee Howell. 5-0 at 7:11 p.m.

**Board member Comments –**

Chris Piland – No comment.

Dexter Wimbish – No Comment.

Lee Howell – No Comment

James Newland – No Comment.

Ben Johnson - Chairman Johnson congratulated Kim and staff on a good job.

**Adjournment** – Motion/Second to adjourn, Chris Piland/Dexter Wimbish, 5-0 at 7:14 p.m.