

**NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION  
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
ZOOM MEETING  
DATE: MARCH 8, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Phil Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Members present were Chairman Phil Johnson, Kelly Robinson, Dustin Thompson, and Angela White-Davis, Director.

**RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**

Guests in attendance totaled 26

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dustin Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2021 regular meeting as written. Kelly Robinson seconded the motion and the motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Kelly Robinson made a motion to approve removal of the challenged deceased voters. Dustin Thompson seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Chairman Phil Johnson opened the discussion on voting bills being heard at the State Capital.

There is a bill that would limit requesting mail out absentees to only those who are 65 years of age and voter, have physical disabilities or voter being out of town on election day. It also would require more identification for absentee voting, prohibit election officials from mailing absentee ballot applications to voters who didn't request them and create a voting fraud hotline

There are ominous house bills that would require more ID to request an absentee ballot, shrink the window for applying for absentee ballots, limit the use of ballot drop boxes and some current laws to remain.

Nonprofit organization or independent groups would be prohibited from mailing out absentee ballot applications. Nonprofit organization would also be prohibited from distributions of water, snacks, food or anything of value during elections.

The Newton County Board of Elections received a total of \$129,573.62 in grant funding to offset cost of expenditures during the General Election held on November 4, 2020 and General Runoff held on January 5, 2021. The expenditures included employee and poll worker's salaries, tent rentals during early voting, ballot paper, and cameras used at the early Vote Centers. Chairman Johnson encouraged all to stay in contact with their State Representatives to voice their concerns on the current election changes being proposed.

Kelly Robinson stated H.R.1 "For the People Act of 2021" introduced by Federal legislation has already passed the house that will address some of the limitations. This bill addresses voter access, election integrity and security, campaign finance, and ethics for the three branches of government.

The Newton County Board members will establish work sessions to be conducted during March, April and May to review the infrastructures of Newton County precincts. The Newton County Board members have been notified of precincts that have opted out for future elections. The Newton County Board members will review early voting Vote Center locations, poll worker staffing and training.

The Newton County Board members are to provide unavailable dates to Angela White-Davis to confirm work session dates. The locations of the work sessions will be held at Chairman Phil Johnson's office located at 10195 Dearing Street Covington, Ga 30014. All board members were in agreement of the work sessions. The meeting days would be held Saturday or Sunday upon scheduling availability.

The Newton County Board members work session will consist of:

- Preparing a written plan
- Reviewing of the written plan with local political parties
- Newton County Board members voting to finalize the written plan

## **SUPERVISOR'S REPORT - Month of February 2021**

- The Daily Work log of voter registration applications processed from February totaled 804.
- The transferred voters that moved into Newton County totaled 200.
- The transferred voters that moved out of Newton County totaled 321.
- The registered voters that notified the Board of Elections office they moved out of state totaled zero.
- The registered voters that notified the Board of Elections office to be removed from the voter registration list totaled 1.
- The deceased voters reported systematically from Secretary of State office totaled 61.
- The deceased voters list provided by the Secretary of State office for verification by the Board of Elections totaled 39.
- The felon voters list provided by the Secretary of State office for verification by the Board of Elections office which were matched to a Felon 40 Day clock totaled 37.
- The registered voters totaled 85,561 as of February 26, 2021
- The registered voters listed as active totaled 81,557.
- The registered voters listed as inactive totaled 4004.

The Budget Comparison Statement as of March 1, 2021 was provided.

The project for the month of March will continue with reviewing all paper copies of the voter registration application on file to prepare for the next upcoming election. The staff has completed about 20% of the review.

The Secretary of State is preparing a list maintenance of voters.

- Voters that are in Inactive status and have no contact through two general election cycles are then subject to be removed from the voter list O.C.G.A. 21-2-235(b)
- Voters are moved to Inactive status for three reasons returned mail, National Change of Address Notice and No Contact
- No Contact O.C.G.A 21-2-234

## **GUEST COMMENTS**

The attendees shared concerns of integrity and trust in the voting system, more opportunity to vote, extended times for early voting, reducing the voting wait time, convenience of absentee ballots, balancing to make all concerns of all voter's priority, making decisions that are cost effective and resourceful for Newton County voters. The attendees shared concerns of Saturday and Sunday voting options and decisions being proactive and not reactive.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Johnson asked if anyone had any other business to discuss before adjourning the meeting. Kelly Robinson made the motion to adjourn. Dustin Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm

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Minutes Prepared by: Angela White-Davis, Director

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Minutes Approved

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Date