

**HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
Tuesday, November 18, 2014**

Call to Order:

Upon notice duly given, Chairman Walden called to order a called meeting of the Hamilton County Election Commission at 8 a.m. on November 18, 2014 at the office of the Hamilton County Election Commission, 700 River Terminal Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Invocation: **Commissioner Braly**

Pledge of Allegiance: **Secretary Scott**

Present at Meeting:

Commissioners Walden, Summers, Braly, Clem, and Scott were present at the meeting, as well as staff of the Election Commission, Christian Bennett and Quinten Howard of Mauldin and Jenkins, and members of the media and public.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Walden asked if everyone had reviewed the minutes and added that the minutes look so much better than previously.

Commissioner Braly made a motion to approve the minutes.

Secretary Summers seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

New Business:

November 4, 2014 Election Report

Administrator Steelman began by saying this year's elections went extraordinarily well and that is a testament to the staff in this office. They are all extraordinarily committed to the work that they do and we're very fortunate to have the staff that we have here. We had one small issue during the November election. Lookout Mountain Presbyterian did not want campaign workers on their property. This highlights something we will want to address next year. There have been occasional issues in the past concerning campaign volunteers on church property. As recently as the August election we worked with Eastwood Church out in Collegedale when they had a concern about campaign signs and volunteers on their property. We talked to the state coordinator's office and while the statute is clear that we have a responsibility to make sure no one encroaches within the 100 foot boundary, it's not clear about what to do when you get past the 100 foot boundary. In speaking with the coordinator, we think it's best to instruct the churches to set up parameters indicating a designated campaign area as well as areas reserved for church business. Eastwood Church found that to be helpful and the pastor was very grateful for that. The same issue arose with the Methodist Church in Soddy Daisy and once they set those parameters there were no problems. I have relayed this information to the Church Administrator at Lookout Mountain Presbyterian and she feels like she now has clarification on what she can and can't do to address the issue in 2016. We may want to consider formally sending something to all churches that are our precinct sites.

Commissioner Scott said we should inform not just churches, but candidates, too. He said the church he attends is a voting site and a lot of candidates are not respectful, forcing their signs and literature on the

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parishioners. It's not just a problem at churches, but at a lot of voting sites. When you drive by the signs are within the 100 foot boundary; they're 20 feet, 30 feet, everything but the 100 feet.

Chairman Walden added that he thinks part of the problem was churches were not happy with people campaigning for a certain issue, but there has to be equal access.

Administrator Steelman clarified that this information is addressed in the candidate packet that all candidates receive. It clearly states what they can and can't do. We can make this information more prominent in the packet.

Chairman Walden asked what about the possibility of instituting a candidate briefing where the candidates can come in for an hour or two and you can instruct them on what they can and can't do. He suggested that Steelman look to see what Election Commissions are doing in other parts of the state, as well as other parts of the country, and then develop some sort of training program.

Commissioner Scott made a motion to set up a training class for candidates.

Commissioner Braly seconded the motion.

All approved the motion.

Audit Report – Christian Bennett, Mauldin and Jenkins CPAs, LLC

Auditor Christian Bennett briefly reported on the audit findings. He provided copies of the report to the election commissioners and referenced a table in the report that listed the manual count of the poll books, ballot applications and ballot stubs in comparison to the votes recorded on the machines. He said there are no material exceptions between those four numbers in the eight precincts that were audited. In addition the auditors inspected the tapes from each voting machine and the precinct summary reports produced by the Election Commission employees and noted no differences for each candidate for each race. Based on those procedures, he believed the elections results to be materially accurate and recommended certification of the election.

Certification of Election Results

Commissioner Scott made a motion to certify the election results.

Commissioner Braly seconded the motion.

All approved.

Certification of Election Expenses

Commissioner Braly made a motion to certify the election expenses

Commissioner Scott seconded the motion.

All approved

Election Certificates

The commissioners signed the election certificates.

Legal Matters:

There were no legal matters to discuss.

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Adjournment:

Commissioner Scott made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Braly seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

The December meeting has been canceled.

APPROVED:

Jerry Summers

Secretary

Michael S. Walden

Chairman

Ruth Braly

Commissioner

Chris Clem

Commissioner

Kelvin Scott

Commissioner