

**HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
Monday, November 21, 2016**

Call to Order:

Upon notice duly given, Chairman Walden called to order a meeting of the Hamilton County Election Commission at 8 a.m. on November 21, 2016 at the office of the Hamilton County Election Commission, 700 River Terminal Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Invocation: **Commissioner Braly**

Pledge of Allegiance: **Secretary Summers**

Present at Meeting:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Secretary Summers made a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Braly seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

New Business:

Certification of Election

Administrator Steelman said at last meeting he said he anticipated the total turnout would set a record and it did, both in number of people who voted and percentage of registered voters who turned out. Early Voting set a record, too – for the first time in Hamilton County, Early Voting exceeded Election Day voting. Early Voting accounted for 51 ½ % of the total turnout in Hamilton County.

Christian Bennett said based on the results of the testing and procedures, he recommended certification of the election results.

Commissioner Braly asked if there had been any issues.

Administrator Steelman said none (out of the ordinary?) ... beginning with the August election we changed the roll of the inspectors to be more proactive and less reactive. This has made a big difference...instead of the nine inspectors sitting at the office waiting for officers to call in with a problem, they are out in the field. Roughly by county commission district, so they are never more than ten or fifteen minutes away from a precinct. When polls open there are always a few issues with the machines, but able to make it to precincts and resolve issues without 10-15 minutes.

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Secretary Summers asked about lines, elderly, emergency machines we could have if lines are too long?

Administrator Steelman said we are looking at adding computers to the early voting sites, looking at some other sites....thinks reports of long wait times were overblown. He and Scott went to the sites and what they observed was not in line with the reports.

Assistant Administrator Allen said there were six computers at the Election Commission site and five at each of the satellites, there's just not enough space at the facilities that house the satellite locations to have six computers.

Secretary Summers said you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. If you increase the workers, but have a low-turnout election then people criticize you for spending too much money. Thinks you're doing a good job.

Commissioner Scott said he would like to see extra polling places for Early Voting. Soddy Daisy, South Side (the Bethlehem Center), the BX.

Chairman Walden said we can look into that, we've got some time.

(Summers said have staff look into it..... I think he tried to make a motion, but no one did anything.)

Chairman Walden said before we get too far off topic, do we have a motion to certify the election?

Commissioner Braly made a motion to certify the election as recommended.

Secretary Summers seconded the motion.

All approved the motion.

Certification of Election Expenses

Administrator Steelman said Increase because of additional role of inspectors, and addition of voter assistance clerk. Honestly, a huge benefit in the presidential election.

Chairman Walden asked if there was a VAC at each polling place?

Administrator Steelman said yes.

20% increase overall. Part of that was also because state changed the requirements for ordering ballots, and more must now be ordered. 40-50% increase in ballots because of printing requirements from state. 130 different ballot styles.

Summers, can we lower the number of ballot styles?

Stelman – no. (because of # of precincts.)

Stelman also said that of the \$300,000 in expenses, \$66,000 will be billed to the municipalities and reimbursed to the county.

Commissioner Braly made a motion to approve the election expenses.

Secretary Summers seconded the motion.

All approved.

City of Chattanooga Election 3/7/17

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Administrator Steelman said (listed pertinent dates for Chattanooga election) and they agreed on the date for the next election.

Other Business:

Chairman Walden said he wanted to commend the staff for a great job. Probably one of the best general elections he’s seen while a commissioner.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Braly made a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Summers seconded the motion.

All approved.

APPROVED:

Jerry Summers

Secretary

Michael S. Walden

Chairman

Ruth Braly

Commissioner

Chris Clem

Commissioner

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Kelvin Scott

Commissioner