

**HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
Monday, August 22, 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 August 22, 2016 at the office of the Hamilton County Election Commission, 700 River Terminal Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Invocation: **Commissioner Braly**

Pledge of Allegiance: **Chairman Walden**

Present at Meeting:

Commissioners Walden, Summers, Braly, Clem, and Scott were present at the meeting, as well as auditor Christian Bennett from Mauldin and Jenkins, 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 I've included in your packet some statistical data to give you a snapshot of this election. Out of 186,000 registered voters, 29,000 total ballots were cast – a fifteen percent turnout. This is one of the lowest turnouts in the last 20 years in Hamilton County, but it was consistent with the statewide turnout. In terms of early voting we had 11,655 voters. As a total number of ballots cast, Early Voters accounted for 40 percent of the total vote. Also, earlier this week I emailed a draft copy of the audit to each of you. Mr. Christian Bennett is here to provide the report.

Auditor Christian Bennett said there is one minor typo that our quality control department found on the draft. It will be corrected in the final version we issue this morning. In the precincts that we audited, the counts were probably the most consistent that they've been in the six years that I've been involved here. We had one or two count differences between ballot stubs and signatures, but all the ballot reconciliations came back on target. Everything else went fine with no issues. Based on those results and our testing, we recommend certification, with the one minor correction.

Commissioner Braly made a motion to certify the election.

Secretary Summers seconded the motion.

All approved the motion.

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Certification of Election Expenses

Administrator Steelman said expenses were consistent with the March election and slightly below the comparable election of August 2014. The only increase was in Election Officials and that was because of the creation of one position—the voter assistance coordinator, which is the clerk who handles all the failsafe applications and provisional ballots on Election Day. This will be an important position for November. It was a very successful implementation of the new position.

Secretary Summers made a motion to certify the expenses.

Commissioner Clem seconded the motion.

All approved.

City of Chattanooga Charter Amendments for November 8th Ballot

Administrator Steelman said there are two amendments to the city charter that have been proposed for the November ballot. The city attorney is required by state law to submit the ordinance in the form of a summary if the ordinance is greater than 300 words. A summary has been provided. The summary and full ordinance are both in your packet.

Commissioner Braly said ordinance 13007, section 5, says it is to be placed on the ballot for the August election.

Administrator Steelman said the city had originally intended for these to be on the August ballot, but did not have the time to advertise.

Commissioner Braly said that just needs to be corrected.

Chairman Walden said we can send these back and they can bring it before us at next meeting.

Secretary Summers said the other ordinance says November.

Administrator Steelman asked do you want to take action on 13039 today?

Chairman Walden asked if there was a motion to approve ordinance 13039.

Commissioner Scott asked shouldn't we wait and vote on these together?

Commissioner Braly said we could hold it.

Administrator Steelman said our urgency to get it approved this meeting is with regard to the short time frame concerning the District 3 vacancy. We will meet on September 19, but that is to approve the ballot once we already have it prepared.

Commissioner Braly said we could approve it with the exception, but the city would still need to correct it.

Chairman Walden said I don't know that I'm comfortable approving it with a typo on it.

Commissioner Scott said I'm not either.

Secretary Summers made a motion to pass approval of the Chattanooga charter amendments to the September meeting and send it back to the city to correct it.

Commissioner Clem seconded it.

Commissioner Braly asked will it still be on the ballot?

Administrator Steelman said we will put it on the ballot to be ready for approval on September 19.

All approved the motion.

Chairman Walden said we are not objecting to the ordinance, we are objecting to the typo.

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Certification of Petitions/Call for Referendum

Administrator Steelman said there are two Wine in Grocery petitions to approve. Food City is seeking to sell wine in retail stores in Soddy Daisy and also in the unincorporated areas of the county. You'll notice with the unincorporated petitions there are three municipalities that are included because of population size. Cities with a population of more than 925 but less than 5,077 may choose to be included with the countywide referendum. Any cities with populations less than 925 are automatically bound by the unincorporated results. Food City has obtained a sufficient number of signatures to have these initiatives placed on the ballot.

Commissioner Braly made a motion to approve the certificate of petition as presented.

Secretary Summers second the motion.

All approved.

Scheduling

Administrator Steelman said Chairman Bankston has indicated Marty Haynes' resignation will be accepted at their August 31 meeting, effective September 1, the day he is set to be sworn in as Assessor of Property. The local parties will be caucusing about September 8 so they can provide candidate names to us so we can have the ballot ready for the September 19 meeting. As we have discussed previously, we will need to meet that Monday to approve the ballot.

Chairman Walden asked if the commission needed to take action on that at this time.

Administrator Steelman said no.

Other Business:

Chairman Walden said the Election Commission staff did a great job with the last election. Everything went off without a hitch.

Secretary Summers said there were a couple of small glitches, but they cleared them up.

Administrator Steelman said when he and Christian Bennett met last week, Bennett pointed out that due additional training we did here our results for the precincts that were audited were very good. As a result that saved us a significant amount of time and money on the audit.

Chairman Walden said that's good. A lot of time the employees hear when things are bad; they need to hear when things are good. Also, I appreciate your outreach to the minority community, as well.

Administrator Steelman said we had a very good response to the advertisement in the Chattanooga Chronicle

Chairman Walden said going forward we can continue to advertise with that publication.

Commissioner Scott said thank you for doing some different advertising with diverse companies such as the Chronicle and the radio station. One thing I would like to see is better training of poll workers. There are sometimes questions they are asked that they aren't able to answer.

Chairman Walden said what about creating a Frequently Asked Questions list for poll workers.

Commissioner Scott said there are a lot of elderly poll workers and it is sometimes challenging for them to remember some of this information. That would help cover us and make sure the candidates are getting a fair shot at what they are doing.

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Adjournment:

Commissioner Scott made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Braly seconded the motion.

All approved.

APPROVED:

Jerry Summers Secretary

Michael S. Walden Chairman

Ruth Braly Commissioner

Chris Clem Commissioner

Kelvin Scott Commissioner