

**HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
Monday, May 14, 2018**

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 May 14, 2018 at the office of the Hamilton County Election Commission, 700 River Terminal Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Invocation: **Commissioner Clem**

Pledge of Allegiance: **Commissioner Meadows**

Present at Meeting:

Commissioners Walden, Summers, Clem, and Meadows were present at the meeting, as well as staff of the Election Commission, Christian Bennett of Mauldin & Jenkins, and a member of the public.

Approval of Minutes:

**Secretary Summers** made a motion to approve the minutes.

**Commissioner Clem** seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

New Business:

**Certification of Election**

***Election Report***

**Administrator Steelman** said this was my ninth election as administrator and it was by far the smoothest election we've had yet. This is a culmination of enhancements to existing processes and implementation of new processes.

**Assistant Administrator Allen** said we have over 700 workers on Election Day and getting them, at the end of the day, to put paperwork where we can easily find it has always been a struggle. We put in place some new processes to help them stay organized and those worked really well.

**Administrator Steelman** said it's not unusual to have a minor technical issue with one or two machines. In this election there were no technical issues. The only issue that arose was at the end of the night, two polling locations, a total of four precincts, did not print out the results tape at the end of the day and tape it to the door of the polling location. Two poll watchers from UnifiEd recognized this and phoned our office. We instructed them to follow the election workers back to our office and when they arrived we would print out the tapes in front of them and give them an opportunity to view the tapes. We went through that process and the poll watchers were satisfied. However, because there was a question raised, Christian Bennett and I

## Hamilton County Election Commission – Minutes of Meeting May 14, 2018

spoke and decided to add those two polling locations to the audit list so there would be no questions. These precincts were all in County Commission District 5. Based on your selections and those additions, we ended up auditing six precincts within County Commission District 5. District 5 was a race where the challenger won by 15 votes. It certainly helped alleviate any concerns of Mr. Beck, the incumbent who lost, with whom I spoke after the election. While he was disappointed, he was satisfied with our process. However, if he decides he does want to challenge the election, he has until the fifth day after certification.

**Secretary Summers** asked what was the percentage of participation?

**Administrator Steelman** said 10.64%, based on the 192,662 active voters.

### ***Audit Report***

**Christian Bennett, CPA** said it's our pleasure to work with commission again. During our pre-election testing and post-election audit we found no issues whatsoever. The ballot reconciliation form is a significant part of our process so we can account for every single ballot, either through the machine or returned back to the commission. As the person who signs the audit report, that gives me a high level of confidence. Based on these procedures we recommend the commission certify the results as presented to you today.

### ***Certification of Election Results***

**Commissioner Clem** made a motion to certify the election results.

**Secretary Summers** seconded the motion.

All approved.

### ***Certification of Election Expenses***

**Administrator Steelman** said the expenses are relatively in line with previous elections with the exception of election workers. As you'll recall, last year the commission voted to increase the pay for the officers and poll workers. The expenses are reflective of that increase in pay.

**Commissioner Clem** made a motion to certify the election expenses.

**Commissioner Meadows** seconded the motion.

All approved.

### **Scheduling**

The commission will meet on Tuesday, May 29 at 8 a.m. to conduct business in regard to the August 2, 2018 election.

### **Other business:**

**Administrator Steelman** said Deputy Nathan Foster can track voter participation during Early Voting by the hour and can identify hours when voter turnout is lowest. Over the years, the majority of those hours are on Saturdays. After 3 p.m. on Saturday, at all four locations, it's dead. Additionally, from a fiscal standpoint, the Saturday hours are all overtime hours.

**Chairman Walden** said give us some data to look at and we'll discuss it.

## Hamilton County Election Commission – Minutes of Meeting May 14, 2018

**Commissioner Clem** said we pass this cost on to the county. This could be something we might run by the county since they are the ones to pay for it. It could be a little political problem if we cut back on hours to vote.

**Administrator Steelman** said we exceed, at all locations, the minimum that's required by law.

**Deputy Foster** said we also looked at the Early Voting hours in counties of comparable size, such as Knox County.

**Chairman Walden** said we used them to justify a raise for our poll workers, so there's precedent for doing the same thing that other comparable counties do.

**Deputy Foster** said Knox County actually has a higher Early Voting turnout percentage and they have shorter Early Voting hours.

**Chairman Walden** said there won't be time to discuss this before we set the hours for the August Early Voting, so there'll be no changes this election, but we'll address it after that.

**Chairman Walden** said you all did a wonderful job on the election. I agree with Administrator Steelman that this election was, with the exception of one or two minor incidences, without issue. You worked very hard and we really appreciate it.

**Administrator Steelman** said one last thing I do want to note. UnifiEd has taken a very proactive role in the community. They had initially submitted between 80 – 90 names as poll watchers for this election, although in reality they only had 50 or so due to duplicate names on their list. We anticipate they will also be active in August and November. I have reached out to UnifiEd Executive Director Jonas Barriere and invited him in to have a conversation about Tennessee election law and clarify what poll watchers are and are not permitted to do.

### Adjournment:

**Commissioner Clem** made a motion to adjourn.

**Commissioner Meadows** seconded the motion.

All approved.

