



MINUTES
STATE ELECTION BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, January 21, 2026
The Historic Barrow County Courthouse; 30 North Broad Street, Winder GA 30680
9:00 a.m.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmo4WZzrd_I

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

John Fervier, as Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. A quorum was present for all actions taken by the Board. Board Members present were Chairman John Fervier, Vice Chairman Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal, and Member Salleigh Grubbs.

The invocation was given by Member Salleigh Grubbs
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Member Grubbs was introduced as the Board's newest member replacing Member Rick Jeffares, who resigned to work on other matters. Member Grubbs delivered first-meeting remarks thanking Lt. Governor Burt Jones for appointment and former member Rick Jeffares for service. Member Grubbs outlined nonpartisan intent, enforcement priorities, transparency, voter privacy, verifiable outcomes, canvassing/reconciliation/accuracy, and governance improvements (bylaws and ethics).

Dr. Johnston welcomed Shuan White, our newest staff employee and thanked Georgia State Patrol law enforcement Steven Boykin, Coby Hunt, and Colonel Hitchens for securing the meeting.

Dr. Johnston requested to pull SEB2024-180 for discussion under possible dismissals and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal pulled SEB2023-080 from the possible dismissal list for discussion.

ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT

No report from the Attorney General's Office. The Board agreed to consult with the Attorney General on referral classification (civil vs. criminal).

INVESTIGATIONS REPORTS

The investigation reports to be considered are listed below according to the disposition recommended by the Secretary of State's Office Investigation Staff. These recommendations are not binding on the Board, which has sole discretion to act on complaints.

Six cases were listed for possible dismissal; two were pulled for separate handling, SEB2023-080 and SEB2024-180. The other four listed below were voted and dismissed by the Board as a group.

The Board voted 4-0 to dismiss four cases as a block:

SEB2024-061	Newton County	Residential Voter Registration Fraud 2024
SEB2024-048	Wilkinson County	Candidate Qualifying Issue
SEB2024-105	Jasper County	Poll Worker is a Relative of Candidate
SEB2025-017	Ware County	Repeat Voter

Motion: Member King moved to dismiss SEB2024-061, SEB2024-048, SEB2024-105, and SEB2025-017.

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Janice Johnston

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2023-080 Fulton County Union City Voting Delay Issue November 2023

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Fulton County poll workers used an incorrect procedure (provisional ballots instead of the statutory backup paper ballots) during a voting machine outage. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a Letter of Instruction to Fulton County Board of Elections and Registration.

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to issue a Letter of Instruction to Fulton County

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-180 Fulton County High Museum of Arts Violations

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings and moved to continue the case to the February meeting. The Board ordered that Daybreakers and Fulton County be officially named as Respondents and notified for future hearing.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to continue the case for a more thorough investigation and add the Respondents Daybreakers and Fulton County

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

SEB2022-015 Fulton County Tabulation Issues

Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, discussed the procedural problems involving SEB2022-015.

The Fulton County tabulation issues case, SEB 2022-015, involves missing and unsigned ballot scanner and tabulator tapes from the 2020 General Election. Although the complaint was filed in March 2022 and the investigation was completed in early 2023, the case was not brought to the Board's attention until October 2023. As a result, the Board was not made aware of the matter until roughly two and a half years after the complaint was filed.

Missing Tapes: Out of an expected 1,128 opening and closing tapes (from 148 early voting and 416 election day scanners), investigators received only 173 unsigned tapes (137 early voting closing, 36 election day). This means 955 tapes were missing.

Zero Tapes: Specifically, zero opening tapes were produced for early voting, and zero election day closing tapes were produced.

Incorrect Procedure: The absence of opening "zero tapes" makes it impossible to verify that ballot boxes started with zero ballots, which is crucial for maintaining the chain of custody and ensuring accurate vote counts.

SOS Oversight: Questions were raised regarding why the Secretary of State's monitors and staff, including Gabriel Sterling who oversaw the Dominion voting system, did not ensure these tapes were properly printed, signed, and certified in real-time.

Seriousness: The issue was described as a "failure to account for every ballot and every ballot box," casting doubt on the safety, security, and accuracy of the election.

Cited Violations (Rules and Statutes): Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston identified multiple potential violations, including:

SEB Rules:

- 183-1-12-.10(5): Signing the zero tape before opening polls.
- 183-1-12-.12(1): Signing tabulated results tapes.
- 183-1-14-.027: Signing zero tapes for advanced voting (zero of 148 found).
- 183-1-14-.0215: Signing three tapes of vote totals for advanced voting.

OCCA Violations:

- 21-2-440: Duty of poll officers to sign general returns.
- 21-2-458(2): Printing and examining proof sheets.
- 21-2-483(h): Official returns certified and posted.
- 21-2-493(h): Proof sheets as prima facie evidence.
- 21-2-73: Preservation of election records for 24 months.
- 21-2-299: Training poll officers.
- 21-2-562: Neglect or refusal to deliver documents.

The Board discussed the following topics:

Certification vs. Rules: A debate occurred regarding whether rule violations automatically invalidate election certification, with the consensus that while certification is statutory, rule violations undermine confidence and warrant accountability.

Document Retention: The 24-month retention period for election documents was discussed, noting that the complaint was filed within this period, but investigators sought documents from the Secretary of State's office that were unable to be produced. The Board discussed 24-month retention limit and whether complaints trigger a hold on to destruction; concern that delays risk improper destruction.

Memory Cards: The practice of wiping memory cards after elections was highlighted as a concern, as retaining them could provide verifiable evidence. A suggestion was made to recommend Legislation for their retention.

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings and moved to send a letter to the Attorney General, delineating the eleven identified violations for further investigation and potential penalties involved in the SEB2022-015 complaint.

Motion Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to send a letter to the Attorney General outlining the eleven identified violations for further investigation and potential penalties

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

BREAK - A motion was passed by the Board to take a break at 11:02 a.m.

Motion: Member King moved to take a five-minute break

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Board resumed at 11:17 a.m.

SEB2022-267 Fulton County Voter Fraud

A procedural matter regarding Fulton County voter fraud required a re-vote because a motion for a letter of instruction had been made by Member King and seconded by Member Jeffares in the December meeting, but was not formally voted on due to a busy agenda. To rectify this, a motion to reconsider the original motion was made and passed, followed by a new motion to issue a letter of instruction, which the Board then approved.

Motion: Member King moved to reconsider her original motion for SEB2022-267

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Chair entertained a new motion:

Motion: Member King moved to issue a Letter of Instruction for SEB2022-267

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Tindall-Ghazal

CASES FOR POSSIBLE VIOLATION

SEB2023-024 Richmond County Residency Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. The Board moved to continue the case.

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to continue the case to the February meeting

Second: Member King

Discussion: Board noted two prior continuances and risk of automatic “no” if a third happens.

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-304 Long County Interference with election

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Debby Griggs violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-597; Intentional interference with performance of election duties. A motion was passed by the Board to refer the case to the Attorney General for further investigation.

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to issue a Letter of Instruction

Motion was denied due to lack of a second

2nd Motion: Member King motioned to refer the case to the Attorney General for further investigation

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed (3-1)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs

Opposed: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-246 Appling County L&A Testing Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Appling County Board of Elections violated SEB Rule 183-1-12-.08 (Logic and Accuracy Testing) Allegations of not being able to see all the BMD machines, allegation that the supervisor never explained any of the machinery, and the Election Supervisor not being present for the entire first hour. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a Letter of Instruction for allegations 1-4 and to dismiss allegations 5-7.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to issue a Letter of Instruction for allegations 1, 2, 3 & 4 and to dismiss allegations 5, 6, & 7

Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-234 Fayette County Campaign Literature at Polling Location

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to continue the case.

Motion: Member King moved to continue the case to the February meeting and add Harris/Waltz Campaign as a Respondents

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (3-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, and Member Salleigh Grubbs

Abstained: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-235 Fayette County Unauthorized use of BMD

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Carla Knobler violated O.C.G.A. §21-2-385(a). The Board passed a motion to issue a Letter of Reprimand to Carla Knobler and dismiss the case against Fayette County Board of Elections and Registration.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand to Carla Knobler and dismiss the case against Fayette County
Second: Member King
Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)
In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-277 Peach and Crawford Counties Voter Registration Problems

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Crawford County Board of Elections and Supervisor violated SEB Rule 183-1-12-.18 (4)(a) Provisional Ballots (allegation #1) and dismiss allegation #2.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to issue a Letter of Instruction to Crawford County Board of Elections for allegation 1 and dismiss allegation 2
Second: Member King
Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)
In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

LUNCH - A motion was passed by the Board to recess for lunch at 12:54 p.m.

Motion: Member King moved break for lunch
Second: Member Grubbs
Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)
In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

The Board reconvened at 1:46 p.m.

SEB2024-221 Chatham County Election Night Results

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to continue the case.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to continue the case to the February meeting so that the Board can hear about the processes between Mr. Wooten and Ms. Garrett with Registrars Office and Elections Office
Second: Member King
Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)
In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-005 Multiple Counties Dual Registration

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to continue the case for further investigation.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved that the case be continued since it is still under investigation with the Secretary of State
Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal
Vote: Passed (4-0)
In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-046 Dekalb County Observer Denied Right to Video Record

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to dismiss the case.

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to dismiss the case
Second: Member Grubbs
Discussion: Attorney General's Office, after reviewing the case, didn't find applicable Georgia Code or SEB rule that was violated to support the Complainant's case. Member Grubbs stated she would follow up with the Judge who found the case to have violated federal law.
Vote: Passed (4-0)
In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-068 Fulton County Double Voter

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. The Board motioned and passed the following measures on the Respondentss listed below.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to continue the case regarding Annabella Monroe Farabaugh and Shayna Danielle Peterson to give time to verify if the same complaint involvement in a different case numbers SEB2021-105 for Ms. Farabaugh and SEB2021-102 for Ms. Peterson has already been adjudicated. The SOS investigative report wasn't clear.

No action taken at this moment

Motion: Member King moved to dismiss the case against Ms. Shirley Lowrie

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to dismiss the case involving Joanne Marilyn Steiner

Second: Member King

Discussion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston raised concerns regarding potential systemic vulnerabilities in voter registration records, specifically the possibility of duplicate voter registration numbers being assigned to a single individual. The Member expressed concern that such duplications could create opportunities for improper vote attribution, even if caused by clerical error.

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to refer Brenda Thompson, Aureatha Willis Flowers, Claudia Mae Holland, Thomas McKintosh, and Yolanda Brown to the Attorney General for a violation of O.C.G.A. § 21-2-572 – Repeat Voting in Same Primary or Election

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston continue the case portion concerning Ms. Hyachith Stephanie Clarke for further investigation

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Janice Johnston moved to dismiss Annabella Monroe Farabaugh and Shayna Danielle Peterson. This motion was put in place after the Chairman received a confirmation that the complaint against them was adjudicated in a different case number.

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston to dismiss the case against Sidney Bernard Gartrell, Dyisha Ponder, and Quasandra Tiarra Moody

Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to dismiss the case against Ms. Casonya Tippins Green

Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to continue Mr. Edward Williams Jr. for further investigation

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Member King moved to continue the Fulton County portion of the case to the February meeting and answer questions about documents that weren't provided for this case and Ms. Nadine or someone that can explain the voter rolls and why they are

not being cleaned monthly as they stated earlier.

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved that the SOS Investigators further investigate the track of why 20 voters received extra votes to a 2nd voter registration number in this case

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-109 Fulton County Voter Registration Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to dismiss the case

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to dismiss the case

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (3-1)

In Favor: Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Opposed: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

SEB2022-324 Fulton County Voter Discrepancy Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to dismiss the case.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to dismiss the case

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

BREAK - A motion was passed by the Board to take a break at 3:23.

Motion: Member King moved for a break

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Board resumed at 3:34 p.m.

SEB2022-256 Camden County Absentee Ballot Fraud

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There is sufficient evidence provided to suggest Camden County violated O.C.G.A 21-2-226 (a)(b)- Duties of county Board in determining eligibility of voters; maps of municipal boundaries; notice of ineligibility; issuance of registration cards; reimbursement for postage cost. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a letter of instruction.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to issue a Letter of Instruction to Camden County

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-299 Cobb County Absentee Ballot Fraud

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that Cobb County Elections and Registration violated O.C.G.A 21-2-384 when they failed to properly and timely mail/issue absentee ballots requested by voters and sufficient evidence to support the allegation that Cobb County Elections violated O.C.G.A 21-2-384 a. 1. 2. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a Letter of Instruction.

Motion: Member King moved to issue a Letter of Instruction

Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-325 Cobb County Improper Ballot Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to dismiss the case.

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to dismiss the case

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-332 Cobb County Memory Card Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration violated O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.11 (g) - Procedure for tabulation of votes, O.C.G.A. § 21-2-420 (a) - Procedure for counting and tabulation of ballots, and SEB Rule 183-1-12-.12 (b) Tabulating Results. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a Letter of Reprimand.

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-342 Cobb County Voter Left with Ballot

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that Brandi Wigley violated O.C.G.A. § 21-2-574-Unlawful Possession of Ballots and sufficient evidence show that Cobb County Elections and Registration violated State Election Board Rule 183-1-12-.11 when they allowed a voter who left the polling place in possession of their official ballot to return and repeat the voting process, when in fact, that voter should have been deemed to have voted and evidence to suggest Cobb County Elections violated O.C.G.A. § 21-2-590(2) Poll Officer Permitting Unqualified Persons to Vote. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a Letter of Instruction to Cobb County Board of Elections and Brandi Wigley.

Motion: Member King moved to issue a Letter of Instruction to Brandi Wigley and Cobb County Elections and Registration

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed (3-0)

In Favor: Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal; Vice Chair. Dr. Johnston did not vote

Discussion: Dr. Johnston stated for the record that she did not consider a voter briefly walking outside with their own ballot to constitute a violation of statute. Vice Chair, Johnston referenced the statutory prohibition regarding possession of a ballot and noted that the provision does not apply to a voter holding their own ballot, as absentee-by-mail voters lawfully possess their ballots. Based on that interpretation, the Member expressed opposition to issuing a Letter of Instruction to Ms. Brandi Wigley on the first allegation. Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston requested for reconsideration of the vote so she could vote for each Respondents.

The Chair asked if Member King would like to reconsider the vote so that Dr. Johnston could vote.

Motion: Member King moved to reconsider and make a motion for a Letter of Instruction to Brandi Wigley

Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Vote: Passed (3-1)

Opposed: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

In Favor: Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Motion: Member King moved to reconsider and make a motion for a Letter of Instruction to Cobb County Elections and Registration

Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2022-352 Cobb County Absentee Ballot Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-384(a)(1) and (a)(2). A motion was passed by the Board to issue a Letter of Instruction.

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to issue a Letter of Instruction

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-075

Cobb County Improper Absentee Ballot

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-386 when they failed to properly receive, document, and safely store two (2) absentee ballots by mail. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a Letter of Reprimand.

Motion: Member King moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand

Second: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-176

Cobb County Non-Citizen Voting

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest Lorraine Fairbanks violated O.C.G.A. § 21-2-561 False Registration. A motion was passed by the Board to refer Respondents Ms. Fairbanks to the Attorney General and continue the case for Cobb County to the next meeting.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to refer Respondents Ms. Fairbanks to the Attorney General and continue the case involving Cobb County with a notice to check their voter rolls and present them to the Board during the February meeting.

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-214

Cobb County Ballot Issue

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that Tate Fall and Marcques Spivey violated SEB Rule 183-1-14-.11 Mailing and Issuance of Ballots. A motion was made to issue a Letter of Reprimand. Following further discussion, the Board approved a subsequent motion to refer the case to the Office of the Attorney General.

Motion: Member King moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand

Second: Member Grubbs

Discussion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal pointed out that this was a pattern of behavior and thought it should be referred to the Attorney General

Chairman asked Member King if she would like to withdraw her motion after discussing the case further. Member King replied, yes

Motion: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal moved to refer the case to the Attorney General

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

SEB2024-245

Cobb County Photo Case

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to continue the case to the next Board meeting.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to continue the case to the February SEB meeting

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following individuals participated in public comments: Beth Hendrickson, Phil Searcy, Scott Bailey, Dr. Kendra Bogalski, Kevin Muldowney, Jody White, Rick Schroeder, Marissa Pyle, Rachel Glover, Kyle Gomez-Lindweber, Janet Grant, Sandra Burkhardt, Don Hackney, Ralph O'Connor, George Balbona, and Eric Christensen

BREAK - A motion was passed by the Board to take a break at 5:23 p.m.

Motion: Member King moved to take a five-minute break

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

The meeting resumed at 5:30 p.m.

REPORTS

Executive Director

The Executive Director reported on the Board's activity and operations for calendar year 2024 and early 2025. He noted that approximately 117 cases were decided by the Board from January 2024 through January 2025, compared to approximately 427 cases decided from January 2025 to date.

The Executive Director further reported on the proposed fiscal year budget. He stated that the Board's FY 2025 budget was approximately \$1.389 million and that current projections indicate a modest surplus, which he believes will be sufficient for ongoing operations. He explained that a flat budget request was submitted, reflecting no increase or decrease, along with an alternative minimal request.

The Executive Director noted that future budget adjustments could be necessary if the Board were to assume additional investigative responsibilities, which could require additional staffing resources. He stated that such circumstances would necessitate further budget consideration.

The Executive Director concluded his report and offered to answer any questions from the Board. No action was taken.

OLD BUSINESS

Tabled Business from November 12, 2025, meeting: SEB2023-025

The Board engaged in extended discussion regarding SEB 2023-025, including the procedural history of the complaint, the timing and handling of the investigation, and prior Board consideration of the matter.

A Board member stated the case had been previously tabled to allow additional time for review due to concerns regarding discrepancies in handling and unresolved questions. It was noted that some questions raised were directed at the Secretary of State's investigative staff and could not be answered by the Board during the meeting.

The Complainant, Mr. Joseph Rossi, addressed the Board and summarized concerns regarding delays between filing and investigation commencement, changes in investigative personnel, the case being removed from a prior agenda shortly before a scheduled meeting, and limitations on rebuttal at a prior hearing.

Mr. Joe Rossi and additional presenter (Garland Favorito) provided exhibits and summarized data they stated related to Fulton County's administration of the 2020 general election, including the following:

Mr. Rossi stated that duplicate ballot images indicated ballots were scanned more than once and asserted that at least 3,125 ballots were scanned and counted twice, with a later stated updated figure of approximately 3,930.

Mr. Rossi stated that ballot images contain unique filenames and timestamps and asserted that duplicated images correspond to duplicated entries in the Cast Vote Record (CVR) posted on the Secretary of State's website.

Mr. Garland Favorito described a "certification flow" and stated that physical ballots → ballot images → cast vote records → statement of votes cast is the sequence leading to certification and referenced associated electronic records

(including image files and signature/hash files).

Mr. Garland Favorito stated that they identified 17,852 missing ballot images, referenced an additional claim of approximately 380,000 ballot images missing, and stated that signature files were missing; these totals collectively reflected approximately one million electronic ballot source records missing.

Mr. Garland Favorito stated that published results reflected a difference of approximately 4,880 votes between the original count and a recount, and further stated that while an 852-ballot difference had been cited, analysis comparing categories of ballot images yielded an asserted difference of approximately 11,873, including figures presented as: approximately 5,800 ballot images present in the original count but missing from the recount; approximately 3,930 ballot images asserted as double-counted; approximately 1,330 new ballot images asserted as appearing in the recount but not the original count; and approximately 250 test ballot images asserted as appearing in the recount.

Mr. Rossi referenced an email dated November 19, 2020, stated to have been sent by Michael Pendergast to Fulton County election personnel, which documented awareness of specific hand-count audit errors. He stated that the referenced attachment listed 13 identified errors, and Mr. Rossi compared those items to additional error listings discussed during prior reviews. Mr. Rossi stated that the attachment reflected approximately 1,316 duplicated votes attributed to one candidate and 339 duplicated votes attributed to another candidate and asserted that broader totals discussed elsewhere exceeded 6,000 votes.

Mr. Rossi referenced the Governor's prior referral and stated that 6,691 votes had been characterized as fictitious votes added to reported audit results and not corrected, and Mr. Rossi requested the Board consider filing an additional complaint to investigate what Fulton County officials knew and when.

Board Members discussed prior meeting procedures, including rebuttal practices at earlier hearings and changes to current procedures. The Chair responded to questions regarding prior meeting practices and stated that procedures have changed since that time. The Board now allows Complainants to respond.

The Board discussed its authority under the Georgia Election Code, including the ability of individual Board Members to file a complaint if they determine a potential violation exists, and it was stated that filing a complaint by a Board member does not require a vote of the full Board.

No motion was made, and no formal action was taken by the Board at this time.

SEB-SOS Emails: resolution of obtaining possession from the Secretary of State's Office

1. The Board reviewed progress on obtaining emails and text messages from former director, Mike Coan, and Assistant, Alex Harden.
2. Emails for two temporary employees, Addison Brooks and Sheila, are the only two remaining to be obtained from SOS office.
3. The status of obtaining Matt Marshburn's emails is unknown
4. A request was made for text messages from Mike Coan and Ms. Harden
5. The Board discussed getting confirmation on the policy regarding wiping data from returned government-issued phones

NEW BUSINESS

DOJ Memorandum and possible double voting

Notice for the Members: The Department of Justice sent the State Election Board 10 potential cross-state double voting cases. It was noted that the DOJ is now proactively sending potential double voting cases to the Board for review. No action was taken by the Board.

Resolution regarding submission of Georgia Voter Rolls to the Department of Justice for review

A resolution was proposed by Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston to urge the Georgia Secretary of State to submit unredacted voter rolls to the US Department of Justice, sparking a debate on legality, necessity, and risks.

Chairman Fervier stated that Secretary of State has transmitted the data to the Department of Justice with the exception of PII Information, which is not allowed by state law to be transmitted.

Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston stated the Secretary of State transmitted it to David Becker and ERIC.

Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal stated that the Department of Justice does not have the legal authority to demand this information and Federal Privacy Act prohibits sharing any federal agency from demanding unredacted PII of ten or more individuals without undertaking very specific procedural steps which the Department of Justice has not done.

Member Grubbs stated that the Secretary of State has already given out information to a third party and gave an example of a similar situation with Kennesaw State University. Member Grubbs stated she did not consent to give her voter information to Education Resource Information Center (ERIC). Member Grubbs expressed concern about personal voter information being shared beyond the State of Georgia through the GARVIS system and emphasized that the broader issue stems from counties not properly maintaining and cleaning voter rolls. The member stated opposition to increased federal involvement in elections but argued that if counties fail to comply with voter list maintenance requirements, federal intervention may become necessary.

Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston noted that Georgia claims to have one of the best voter rolls in the nation but questioned why the state would hesitate to share them with the Department of Justice to demonstrate best practices. Dr. Johnston also observed that many counties remain registered at over 100% of the citizen voting-age population when inactive voters are included, but commended Fulton County for reducing its inactive voter rolls, lowering its registration rate from about 114% to approximately 103%.

Member King asked the Chairman to Call The Question, which he did.

Motion: Member King moved that the Board agree to approve the resolution as presented

Second: Member Grubbs

Discussion:

Chairman John Fervier

Stated he could support the resolution only if it complied with Georgia law.

Expressed concern that providing unredacted voter information containing PII may violate state law.

Emphasized that he did not create the law and believes Georgia law may restrict sharing that information.

Member Janelle King

Questioned the concern about sharing the information with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Asked what the fear was regarding how the DOJ would use the information.

Requested clarification on which specific law would prohibit sharing the data.

Vice Chairman Dr. Janice Johnston

Responded that if the state can share personal information in other contexts (referencing ERIC/GARVIS), then the General Assembly could also create a law allowing the information to be shared with DOJ.

Suggested the Legislature could address the issue if necessary.

James Mills (Executive Director)

Noted that Georgia lawmakers have already introduced Senate Resolution 563, which addresses a similar issue as the resolution being discussed.

Vote: Resolution Passed (3-1)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, and Member Salleigh Grubbs

Opposed: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Resolution recommending the elimination of absentee ballot drop boxes in Georgia Elections and secure return of absentee by mail ballots

A resolution was introduced by Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston and passed to recommend the Georgia General Assembly

eliminate absentee ballot drop boxes.

A motion was made to send a resolution to the General Assembly for consideration, recommending the elimination of absentee ballot drop boxes and prohibiting the return of absentee ballots to unauthorized locations.

Chairman John Fervier

Stated that after hearing various perspectives from election workers, he believes opinions on ballot drop boxes vary widely. He stated that monitored drop boxes do not concern him from a security standpoint and suggested they may be more reliable than relying solely on the postal service, which he noted has been inconsistent in his experience.

Vice Chair, Dr Johnston

Stated that drop boxes are unnecessary.

Member Janelle King

Agreed with Dr. Johnston and noted that elections operated successfully before drop boxes existed. She stated that voters already have options to return ballots by mail or directly to the county office and does not believe additional drop boxes are needed.

Executive Director Mills

Pointed out that absentee ballots returned by mail are still delivered by the U.S. Postal Service.

Member Salleigh Grubbs

Expressed concern about relying on the postal service but questioned the need for drop boxes when ballots could be handed directly to election officials inside county offices. She also noted that drop boxes were largely implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and stated she would support the resolution.

Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Encouraged counties to refer to Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 21-2-341 or 21-2-342), which allows counties to establish additional locations for voters to hand-deliver absentee ballots.

Motion: Member Grubbs moved to approve the resolution

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (3-1)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, and Member Salleigh Grubbs

Opposed: Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal

Hand Marked Paper Ballots

Conduct of Special Elections using Hand Marked Paper Ballots

The Board had a discussion on recommending that the Secretary of State use hand-marked paper ballots for any upcoming special elections. The rationale is to gain experience with this voting method in smaller, lower-stakes elections before a potential statewide transition, especially with the expected removal of the QR code from ballots after July 1st. This would allow the Secretary of State's office to "gain some confidence" with the process in a controlled environment.

The Chair noted that the Board has also received a complaint from the Coalition for Good Governance requesting a hearing on using hand-marked paper ballots for upcoming special elections and will arrange the details later.

SEB recommendations for the General Assembly: The Board agreed to postpone the discussion.

Ballot duplication – manual only

Appointment of Chief Managers and Assistant Managers O.C.G.A. § 21-2-90

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-408 Poll Watchers – O.C.G.A. § 21-2- 408(a)(2) amend word Precinct to Precincts in which he or she shall serve

SOS access and support

Firefly, Training Modules, and Read – Only access to GARVIS

Member Grubbs expressed frustration about not receiving access to materials from the Secretary of State's office. She agreed to postpone the topic to the next meeting.

Swearing in of the Respondents

Member Grubbs raised concern that individuals making presentations or speaking before the Board are not sworn in, suggesting that their statements are not formal testimony.

A proposal was made to place a section of the Official Code of Georgia, Title 16, regarding knowingly and willfully falsifying statements, on signup sheets and the Board's website.

The purpose of this proposal was to notify the public that there are consequences for stating false information during public comments and presentations. To promote accountability, not for the Board to levy fines itself.

Member Grubbs made a motion to post this code section as a reminder on the signup sheet and website. The motion was withdrawn, and the discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Cases

A plan was discussed to set up a meeting with the Secretary of State's office and its investigators to determine what information the Board could obtain regarding cases. The Executive Director was tasked with leading this effort.

Agency Seal

Executive Director Mills presented the Board with its first Agency Seal to be adopted. The 5 stars represent the 5 Board Members, The State Seal, and underneath was placed our national motto, In God We Trust.

Motion: Member Grubbs moved to adopt the Seal presented as our official Agency Seal

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed (5-0)

In Favor: Chairman Fervier, Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall Ghazal

February Meeting Schedule

Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal stated she would be out of town and requested to change the meeting date. She noted that she made the request via email on January 5th, six weeks in advance, and at a time when the meeting location had not yet been established.

Several Board members expressed opposition to moving the meeting for the following reasons:

The date has already been publicly promoted and changing it would be disruptive to the public.

Vice Chair, Dr Johnston and Member King stated scheduling conflicts with the proposed alternative weeks.

A precedent of not all members being able to attend every meeting has already been established (referencing Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal's absence from the December meeting).

Member Grubbs acknowledged Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal's value to the Board but stated they could not support the change, citing the importance of maintaining a predictable schedule for the public (e.g., the third Wednesday of the month).

Member Sara Tindall-Ghazal noted she had objected to a monthly meeting schedule precisely because of the strain it would place on members with full-time jobs.

No formal motion was made, and the request was effectively denied by consensus.

Discussion of Staff Attorney

The Board tabled the discussion to the next meeting

Budget

Discussion was dispensed with, as it was deemed to have been covered in the Executive Director's Report

Discussion of Conflict Counsel

This was identified as related to, but distinct from, the staff attorney topic, covering legal representation in conflict-of-interest situations (e.g., with the Secretary of State). The Board agreed to table this for future discussion, potentially as part of a larger "legal representation" topic.

Communication Protocol

Member Grubbs requested discussion on this to understand the proper channels for communication. The discussion was postponed to a later meeting.

Court Administrators/Judges/Clerks responsibilities under O.C.G.A. § 21-2-231

Member Salleigh Grubbs raised concerns regarding issues appearing in voter rolls, referencing a prior case involving a woman from the Bahamas who had voted multiple times despite not being a U.S. citizen. She noted that similar situations appear to arise when individuals who are not citizens report this status during jury duty service.

Member Grubbs explained that a Judge had informed her that courts sometimes encounter non-citizens during jury selection and suggested this information should be reported when identified. She stated that she would like the Board to consider issuing educational bulletins or notices to Judges explaining their responsibilities to report individuals who are not U.S. citizens or otherwise ineligible to serve on juries.

She further noted uncertainty regarding whether the reporting requirement applies only to Superior Court Judges under Georgia code or whether State Court Judges who also oversee juries should have the same obligation. Member Grubbs suggested this could potentially require Legislative clarification and expressed interest in continuing discussions with the Secretary of State's office regarding how Judges are notified of these responsibilities, particularly when new Judges take office.

Chairman John Fervier responded that if Member Grubbs develops a proposal for educational materials or notices, she should prepare the proposal and bring it before the Board for discussion. He suggested that if the proposal is completed prior to the next meeting, it could be posted online as an agenda item so the public can review and comment in advance.

Member Grubbs then raised a related issue concerning the Board's website, stating that the Board needs its own website to publish information and maintain a stronger public presence.

Chairman Fervier indicated that the Executive Director is working on the website.

Executive Director James Mills confirmed that work on the website is currently in progress, although he noted that the effort has encountered some obstacles.

Member Grubbs emphasized the importance of resolving those issues so the Board can improve communication with the public.

Member Grubbs reiterated her desire to continue discussions with the Secretary of State's office regarding compliance with reporting requirements related to jury duty and citizenship status.

Dr. Janice Johnston addressed the Board to clarify provisions under O.C.G.A. § 21-2-225, explaining that voter registration data maintained by the Secretary of State is generally available for public inspection, with certain exceptions.

She noted that confidential information includes:

Social Security numbers

Driver's license numbers
Email addresses
Full dates of birth
Locations where individuals registered to vote
Certain financial documents submitted under applicable code sections

Dr. Johnston further explained that some identifying information may be shared with authorized government agencies for verification purposes but must remain confidential and cannot be further disseminated.

Senate Bill 189

Member Grubbs discussed SB189 and requested it be added to next month's agenda for topic of discussion. The Board agreed to add it to the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Member King moved to adjourn

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall Ghazal

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.