



MINUTES
STATE ELECTION BOARD MEETING
March 18, 2026
Marietta City Hall, 205 Lawrence Street, NE, Marietta, Georgia
9:00 a.m.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AK_JF-Eh4gc

CALL TO ORDER INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

John Fervier, as Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:19 a.m. A quorum was present for all actions taken by the Board. Board Members present were Chairman, John Fervier, Vice Chair, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sara Tindall Ghazal.

The invocation was given by Member Salleigh Grubbs.
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Member Janelle King.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

State Election Board Meeting: November 13, 2025

Motion: Member King moved to approve the November 13, 2025, minutes

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

State Election Board Meeting: December 9 - 10, 2025

Motion: Vice Chairman, Dr. Johnston moved to approve the December 9-10, 2025, minutes

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

State Election Board Meeting: January 21, 2026

Motion: Member King moved to approve the January 21, 2026, minutes

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT

Attorney Elizabeth Young presented the following cases to the Board.

CONSENT ORDERS

SEB2020-263

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to approve the Consent

Order for a civil penalty fine of \$200 and an Order to Cease and Desist further violations of the election code for Kimberly Shannon, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to approve the Consent Order for a civil penalty fine of \$200 and an Order to Cease and Desist further violations of the election code, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2022-156

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to approve the Consent Order for a civil penalty fine of \$1,000 for Julie Crowe, the Consent Order for a civil penalty of \$150 for Stacey Purnell, and the Consent Order for a civil penalty of \$100 for Matthew Eady and Cathy Moorehead, additionally for all the above an Order to cease and desist from future knowing violations of the election code, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Motion: Dr. Johnston moved to approve the Consent Order to a civil penalty of \$1,000 for Julie Crowe, a civil penalty of \$150 for Stacey Purnell, and a \$100 civil penalty for Matthew Eady and Cathy Moorehead, additionally for all the above an Order to cease and desist from future knowing violations of the election code, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2022-283 and SEB2022-263

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to approve the Consent Order for a \$750 civil penalty for each case, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Motion: Member King moved to approve the consent order for a civil penalty of \$750 for each case, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2022-284

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to approve the Consent Order for a \$500 civil penalty for Brooks County, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to approve the Consent Order for a civil penalty of \$500 for Brooks County, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2023-006

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to approve the Consent Order for a \$500 penalty for Fulton County Board of Elections and Registration, a Cease and Desist from further violations of the Election Code, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to approve Consent Order for a \$500 penalty for Fulton County Board of Elections and Registration, a Cease and Desist from further violations of the Election Code, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

FINAL ORDERS

SEB2021-043

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to approve the Final Order for a Cease and Desist from further violations of the Election Code for Grace Cooper, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to approve the Final Order for a Cease and Desist, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2024-034

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. A motion was passed by the Board to approve the Final Order for no penalty, since this is the Respondent's first offense of photography of only one's own ballot, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office. This office typically recommends a reprimand. However, Respondent has a history of harassing conduct with county election officers. He is currently the respondent in a second matter referred by the Board to this office at its meeting on February 18, 2026: SEB2024-144. That matter involves allegations of interfering with the duties of election officials and concerns more serious conduct. County workers allege that Respondent verbally harassed them in their offices and made workers fearful of physical violence. Representatives for the county appeared at the Board's meeting on September 24, 2025 to register their concerns about Respondent's behavior. Given that the two events are unconnected, we believe the most appropriate course of action is to recommend that the Board resolve the photography matter by a Cease and Desist reprimand, as we typically would, and address Respondent's more serious conduct in conjunction with SEB2024-144.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to approve the Final Order for a Cease and Desist, as recommended by the Attorney General's Office.

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2024-028

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. The Attorney General's Office recommended that the case be resolved with a Cease-and-Desist Order. Chairman Fervier questioned why any fines were not incorporated due to the nature of the case. Elizabeth Young's response was that in the meeting on February 18, 2026, a similar case was resolved with a Letter of Instruction. Member King stated that the case heard in February was different due to the police involvement and should warrant a civil penalty, which is why the Board referred the case to the AG Office. Chairman Fervier requested a motion to be made to continue this case for further investigation and to review prior cases with the same offense. A motion was passed by the Board to continue this Final Order till April 15th meeting for further investigation.

Motion: Member Grubbs moved to continue this Final Order till the April 15th meeting for further investigation

Second: Member King

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

ORDER OF DISMISSAL

SEB20220-001, SEB2022-151, SEB2022-156, and SEB2022-191

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

Motion: Member King moved to dismiss all four cases.

Second: Member Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Voted: Passed unanimous (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2023-005

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. The Attorney General's Office had recommended this case to be Dismissed. Vice Chairman, Dr. Johnston requested that this case be pulled from the recommended dismissal list for discussion due to violation of residency. A motion was passed by the Board to pull this case from the recommended dismissal list and issue a Letter of Reprimand.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand.

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed (3-1)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, and Member Grubbs

Opposed: Member Ghazal

OTHER BUSINESS

SEB2021-105

Multi Counties Excess Voting

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. The Attorney General's Office informed the Board that Chatham County was added as a Respondent at the December 10, 2025 meeting without proper notice. The Attorney General stated at a minimum, if the Board wishes to a charge against Chatham County, the proper procedural step is to re-notice the case at a future hearing and re-vote. A motion was passed by Chair Fervier to move this case to the April agenda for Chatham County to be formally notified.

BREAK - A motion was passed by the Board to take a break at 10:28 a.m.

Motion: Member King moved to take a break

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

The Board reconvened at 10:41 a.m.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were made by the following individuals: Earl Ferguson, Beth Mercure, Marisa Pyle, Michael Beach, Janet Grand, Marl Tepper, Beth Hendrickson, Deborah Davis, Janice Morrow, Debbie Fisher, Mark Swanson, Don Hackney, Elizabeth Harrah, Kristin Nabers, WM Warr Bush, John Richards, Field Searcy, Ralph O'Connor, Garland Favarito, Tamara Favarito, Mark Ccoh, Lulia Frazier, Rick Schroeder, Mandy Schulz, and Max Clavijo

V. VIOLATION CASES

SEB2022-005

Multiple Counties – Dual Registration

This is a multi-county dual registration, dual voting complaint that had been returned to the Secretary of State for further investigation into the alleged double registration and double voting. Mr. Blake Evans from the Secretary of the State's Office had agreed to attend the April 15th Meeting to assist in answering questions. A motion was passed by the Board to move this case to the April 15th Meeting.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to continue this case to April 15th Board Meeting

Second: Member King

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2025-005**Sumter County – Issues with Tabulation of the Write-In Candidates**

Secretary of State's Office received a complaint from Sumter County regarding the November 5, 2024, general election, where they had an issue with write-in ballots for the Soil and Water Conservation District race. One qualified write-in candidate received all 1,750 votes in the election, when he should have only received 1,210. The winning candidate's name was not listed on the election summary report. The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that the Respondent, LaSandra Patterson violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-494. A motion was passed by the Board to send the Respondent a Letter of Reprimand.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand, noting that although the matter was self-reported and substantial corrective efforts have been undertaken to prevent recurrence; the error was significant and could undermine voter confidence.

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

Member Grubbs moved to initiate a Complaint in this matter regarding the remaining issues related to enhanced voting and the guidance provided to Ms. Patterson by the Secretary of State's Office. Chairman Fervier noted that such action would create a conflict for the Board, as it would be responsible for both initiating and subsequently adjudicating the Complaint. Member Ghazal further observed that, should the Board vote to open a Complaint, Board members would be required to recuse themselves from participation in the adjudication of the matter. Member Grubbs thereafter withdrew her motion, while requesting that it remain reflected in the record.

SEB2024-117**Sumter County – Problems at the Polling Precincts**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that the Respondent, LaSandra Patterson, violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-375 (4), O.C.G.A. 21-2-329 and O.C.G.A. 183-1-12-.11. Member Ghazal commended the county for doing exactly the correct procedure to immediately move to the emergency paper ballots, *and reminded counties watching that the 10% limit of emergency paper ballots is a floor, not a ceiling – every precinct should have at least 10% of registered voters in emergency ballot stock.* A motion was passed by the Board to send the Respondent a Letter of Reprimand.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand

Second: Member King

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2025-023**Meriwether County – City of Lone Oak Failure to Fill a Vacancy on City Council**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that the Respondent, Debbie Watson, violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-291 & O.C.G.A. 21-2-493(k). A motion was passed by the Board to send the Respondent a Letter of Reprimand.

Motion: Member King moved to issue a Letter of Reprimand

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Not passed (2-2)

In Favor:, Member King and Member Grubbs

Not in Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston and Member Ghazal

Chairman Fervier exercised his right to vote and voted in favor

SEB2024-154**Meriwether County – Challenged Voters**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. Per Chairman Fervier, this matter presents a highly complex case involving potentially significant criminal violations implicating multiple individuals, not solely the respondent. Following discussions with the Office of the Attorney General, Chairman Fervier moved to refer the matter to the Attorney General's Office, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) and the County District Attorney for investigation of potential violations of O.C.G.A. § 21-2-566(1) and O.C.G.A. § 21-2-566(2). Vice Chair Dr. Johnston requested that the attorneys for the following additional counties also be notified: Columbia, Ben Hill, Screven, Dooley, Houston, Jones, Bryan, Whitfield, Effingham, and Worth Counties.

Motion: Chairman Fervier moved to send this case to the Attorney General's Office, the GBI, and the County District Attorneys for all the counties involved.

Second: not needed

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2024-068

Irwin County – Giving Food for Votes

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that the Respondent, Larounda Thomas, violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-570. A motion was passed by the Board to send this case to the Attorney General's Office, who will take all the circumstances described by Ms. Thomas' representing attorney, but ignorance of the law is not an excuse.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to send this case to the Attorney General's Office

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

Member Ghazal requested the Board to also consider issuing a formal written request to the Secretary of State's Office to prepare and distribute a candidate guidance packet. This packet should be provided to counties and political parties for distribution to candidates at the time of qualification. The guidance should consist of a concise one- to two-page document outlining key "dos and don'ts" for candidates, including activities that are restricted or prohibited under election law. For example, the packet should address prohibitions against electioneering, including restrictions on candidates being within 150 feet of a polling place unless they are casting a ballot.

The purpose of this guidance would be to ensure that candidates are informed of applicable legal restrictions and to help prevent inadvertent violations. Accordingly, Member Ghazal formally requested that the Board issue a written request to the Secretary of State's Office to prepare this informational material for distribution to counties and candidates statewide. Chairman Fervier directed this request to be completed by Executive Director Mills.

LUNCH - A motion was passed by the Board to recess for lunch at 12:47 p.m.

Motion: Chairman Fervier moved to recess for lunch

Second: Member King

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

The Meeting reconvened at 1:21 pm

SEB2025-047

Cherokee County – Voter Conduct Issue August 2025

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. Respondent, Mr. Richard Jordan, legal counsel raised a procedural objection, asserting that proper notice pursuant to O.C.G.A. 21-2-569 and O.C.G.A. 21-2-597 had not been served to the correct address. Specifically, the notice was mailed to "2080 Old Hickory Place" rather than the respondent's correct address of 2080 Old Country Place - Woodstock, Georgia 30188. Administrative staff confirmed that notice had been transmitted by email and followed up with a telephone call; however, the required mailed notice was sent to the incorrect address. Although the Board noted that the respondent had acknowledged the email and appeared prepared to proceed, the Chair expressed a preference for ensuring procedural compliance to eliminate potential grounds for appeal. A motion to continue was approved. The matter was rescheduled for April 15 meeting, with instructions that certified mail be sent to the correct address in advance of the hearing.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to continue this case to April 15th

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2024-157**Multi County – Women Speak Out PAC Prefilled Absentee Ballot**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to indicate that Respondents Jennifer Gross and Women Speak Out PAC violated O.C.G.A. § 21-2-381(a)(1)(C)(ii). The violation resulted from a technical oversight and miscommunication between Women Speak Out PAC and its direct mail vendor, The Lukens Company. Upon being notified of the issue, the Respondents fully cooperated with the investigation and promptly initiated an internal review with Lukens to determine the cause of the erroneous pre-filling and assess any necessary remedial measures. Following the review, both Lukens and Women Speak Out PAC implemented corrective actions to address the issue and ensure compliance for the remainder of the 2024 election cycle and future election cycles. Subsequent mailers sent by Lukens on behalf of Women Speak Out PAC during the same election cycle contained no pre-filling issues. The Board voted to issue the Respondents a Letter of Instruction.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to issue a letter of instruction

Second: Member King

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2024-171**Multi County – Non-Citizen Voting**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was not sufficient evidence to suggest that the Respondent, Samantha Maclean Gamble (now Samantha Turner because of marriage) violated any election codes or SEB rules. A motion was passed by the Board to dismiss this case, since it was an issue with the DDS.

Motion: Member King moved to dismiss this case

Second: Member Ghazal

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2025 - 037**Fulton County – Double Voter in GA & FL Nov 2024**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was not sufficient evidence to conclude that the Respondent, Steven G. Williamson, violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-572. A motion was passed by the Board to move this case to April 15th, as the underlying investigative documentation had not been provided to the Board, and the Secretary of State's investigators were not present.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to continue this case

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2022-068**Fulton County – Double Voter**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. Fulton County had submitted additional documents, and the Secretary of State was expected to attend today's meeting to answer questions regarding those materials. However, it was stated that representatives from the Secretary of State's office will instead attend the next meeting to address the Board's questions. Based on this information, the Board passed a motion to continue the case until April 15.

Motion: Member King moved to continue this case

Second: Member Ghazal

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

SEB2024-180**Fulton County – High Museum of Arts Violation**

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that the Respondent, Daybreakers Organization violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-570 and O.C.G.A. 21-2-414. Respondent's counsel, Adam Sparks of Krevolin & Horst, maintained that Daybreaker is a nonpartisan, woman-owned wellness and dance organization and stated that the food and beverage table was located well beyond the statutory 150-foot boundary. The Secretary of State investigator initially recommended dismissal of the complaint. During Board deliberations, however, members raised several concerns. A subsequent measurement conducted in February 2026 reported placed the event stage approximately 42 feet from the polling place entrance. Board members also

noted that the event's title, "Party to the Polls," expressly referenced voting, and that photographs contained in the record appeared to depict a bag of "I Voted" stickers that were not associated with official election workers. Defense counsel acknowledged he had not previously reviewed those photographs and could not account for them, though he argued that the activity did not constitute campaign material under the statute. The Chair observed, "The stage was within 150 feet and the event was titled 'Party to the Polls' — you're encouraging people to vote within 150 feet of the polls." A motion was passed by the Board to move this case to the Attorney General's Office.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to refer this case to the Attorney General

Second: Member King

Voted: Passed (3-1)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, and Member Grubbs

Not In Favor: Member Ghazal

SEB2024-254

Fulton County – Double Voter GA and NC 2024

The Board reviewed and discussed the investigative findings. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that Respondent, Phineas Giegengack, violated O.S.G.A. 21-2-572. The Board found that, according to Fulton County's investigation, Mr. Geigengack did not cast a ballot in Georgia. Although he attempted to vote, his name could not be located on the voter list, and he left the polling location before the activation code was processed. Fulton County Election Management staff subsequently issued voter credit in error without confirming that a ballot had been cast. Records from North Carolina showed that his absentee ballot was received on November 4, after his unsuccessful attempt to vote in Georgia. Fulton County also confirmed that additional staff training had been implemented. A letter of instruction was issued regarding the requirement to maintain residency and voter registration in only one state at a time. A motion was passed by the Board to send the Respondent a Letter of Instruction.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to issue a Letter of Instruction

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

VI – Report from the Executive Director

I would like to begin by thanking the City of Marietta for making this facility available to us, and Board Member Grubbs for helping coordinate our use of this space. During the ongoing renovations at the Capitol, the Board has had to remain flexible regarding meeting locations, and we appreciate the public's patience and understanding as we navigate those circumstances. Unfortunately, the renovation schedule is outside of our control, and we are grateful to the City of Marietta for its continued accommodation and support.

With respect to agency operations, open records requests continue to arrive at a steady pace. To date, the agency has processed approximately 66 requests this year, which represents a substantial volume for this point in the calendar year. Open Records continue to manage those requests diligently and in a timely manner.

I also want to provide a brief update regarding legislative and budget matters affecting the agency. The General Assembly restored the funds that were initially reduced in the supplemental budget, returning the State Election Board to a fully funded level through June 30. The legislature is now working through the Fiscal Year 2027 budget process, and we are actively engaged in efforts to secure restoration of those same funding levels in the upcoming fiscal year budget. Currently, I do not have a definitive update to report, but those discussions are ongoing and remain a significant priority for the agency.

In terms of legislation, the agency is closely monitoring Senate Bill 214, which has moved to the House Governmental Affairs Committee. A substitute version of the bill appears to have advanced from committee, although the final language has not yet been determined. Based on the version currently under consideration, additional responsibilities may be assigned to the State Election Board agency. Should those responsibilities ultimately be enacted, it will be essential that the agency also receives the necessary funding and resources to effectively carry out those duties. At present, those resources do not exist within the agency's current structure or budget.

The legislature's consideration of assigning potential auditing responsibilities directly to this Board reflects a growing level of confidence in the work and credibility of the State Election Board. Historically, such responsibilities have been handled through other agencies. In my view, the willingness of both the House and Senate to consider this Board for those duties is a testament to the professionalism and diligence demonstrated by the Board and staff.

That credibility has been built through consistent hard work, including the Board's successful efforts to address and eliminate the significant

backlog of cases that once existed. The Board and staff should be commended for the progress that has been made and for the continued commitment to carrying out the agency's responsibilities effectively and transparently.

Lastly, beginning this month, the Board will seek to recognize members as they reach additional years of service.

This month marks Dr. Jan Johnston's fourth year on the Board. All of you deserve our deepest appreciation. As volunteer Board Members, you each give so much of your time and energy. While we may not always agree, we are united and share the same goal: a better future for the nation we cherish. We are proud to be Americans, proud to be Georgians, and we each fight for our freedom in our own way. To the entire Georgia State Election Board, I simply say Thank you

VII – Old Business

A. Former SEB employee, Alexandra Hardin

Her text messages have been requested by the Board. Per Chairman Fervier, Ms. Hardin has been contacted and invited to attend the next Board Meeting, April 15th to respond to the Board's request and questions.

B. State Election Board E-mails and Text messages

Matt Mashburn has provided his e-mails, which have been forwarded to Executive Director Mills. The Secretary of State's Office has indicated they are willing to provide any additional materials that may be missing for Alexandra Hardin and Addison Hooks.

C. Social Media Website

No update. However, a Facebook page for the Georgia State Election Board has been created, where individuals can access the latest news meeting information and updates; and individuals can sign up for email notifications, if preferred.

VIII – New Business

A. Rule Petition - Stefan Bartelski: SEB Rule Proposal – Prohibition of Charges for Voter Registration Challenges

Mr. Bartelski presented a proposed rule that would prohibit counties from imposing fees on individuals submitting voter registration challenges. He cited the Board's duty under O.C.G.A. § 21-2-31 to promote uniformity in election practices statewide. Mr. Bartelski noted that a limited number of counties have adopted policies requiring challengers to pay fees associated with labor, materials, or copying, and that at least one county requires the physical submission of eight copies per challenge. He argued that such requirements operate as deterrents to legitimate voter roll challenges. A Board member observed that the issue differed from prior fee-related rule proposals and noted that O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-229 and 21-2-230 are silent as to whether counties may impose such fees, thereby creating a potential basis for the Board's uniformity authority. Mr. Bartelski respectfully urged the Board to proceed with adopting the proposed rule to prohibit these financial impositions and establish uniform, no-cost procedures for submitting voter registration challenges statewide.

Following discussion, the Board voted to initiate rulemaking procedures in response to the proposed Rule Petition. The Board further noted that, throughout the rulemaking process, if the Legislature determines the Board lacks authority to proceed or if the Attorney General issues a formal opinion on the Board's authority in this matter, such determinations or opinions can be provided during the rulemaking process.

Motion: Member King moved to initiate rule-making procedure on this rule

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Voted: Passed (3-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, and Member Grubbs

Abstain : Member Ghazal

A motion was passed by the Board to take a five minute break @ 3:28 p.m.

Motion: Chairman Fervier moved to break

Second: Not needed

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

Meeting reconvened at 3:33 p.m.

B. Roster Presentation — John Richards, President & CEO of Sephos

Sephos recognizes the need for a robust solution for states that are not part of ERIC. As many states have exited the program with no plans to return, and others never joined, Sephos remains neutral on the matter. Their focus is supporting the Secretary of State's Office with practical, effective tools. They are here to help

As a third-party provider, Sephos offers a forward-looking approach. They do not dwell on past issues or engage in debates around fraud. Instead, they concentrate on strengthening trust in the democratic process while reducing the administrative burden caused by delayed or outdated voter rolls.

Currently, for states outside of ERIC or without bilateral data exchanges, election offices rely primarily on DDS and NCOA data to track voter moves. Sephos can significantly enhance this process. They maintain public copies of voter rosters from 44 states plus Washington, D.C., providing an added layer of analysis and support.

Their philosophy aligns with Director of Elections, Blake Evans' preference for a "belt-and-suspenders" approach—leveraging as many reliable data sources as possible. They deliver parity with ERIC in key areas, using the same NCOA provider, while going further with additional validations such as mailing address caps, obituary and legal death records, and more.

They deliver tiered, actionable reports that function like confidence intervals:

- Tier 1: High-confidence matches requiring immediate action.
- Tier 2: Strong leads needing limited additional verification.
- Tier 3 & 4: Items suitable for county-level review, providing clear direction and prioritized lists for local offices.

This structure allows the Secretary of State's Office to efficiently allocate resources and provide counties with targeted, time-bound guidance.

Their reports cover critical areas including data validation, incomplete registrations, NCOA/PCOA matches, multi-state registrations, in-state duplicates, mortality matches, and comprehensive roster analytics. While they do not currently process felon, citizenship, or judicial incompetence data, our platform is ready to incorporate those lists if access is provided.

They also supply detailed rubrics and a full data dictionary, explaining every code and field so staff can quickly understand and act on the information. Sephos does not generate data—we ingest, standardize, and analyze existing public and authorized sources according to each state's direction.

Examples of issues they surface include obvious data entry errors (such as default dates like 01-01-1900), invalid ZIP codes, missing registration dates, and incorrect suffixes. These may seem minor, but it can prevent future matching and create isolated records. They also flag high-confidence matches like NCOA barcode confirmations and multi-state registrations using full name and date of birth.

Additional advanced analytics—such as near-match detection with small birth-year deltas or directional reporting on high-volume states—help offices prioritize bilateral agreements and focus resources where they matter most.

Ultimately, Sephos exists to reduce the administrative burden on election offices, lower costs through economies of scale, and improve the accuracy and efficiency of voter list maintenance. By partnering with Sephos, states gain a powerful, neutral resource that enhances their ability to maintain clean, accurate voter rolls without increasing internal staffing demands.

Chairman Fervier had to leave the meeting @ 4:01 due to an obligation. Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston served as Chairman the remainder of this meeting.

C. SEB Resolution – Recommendation to General Assembly – Hand-marked Paper Ballots presented by Member Grubbs

Member Grubbs presented a detailed resolution seeking legislative guidance on compliance with voting system requirements. The resolution addressed key issues including the QR code provisions of Senate Bill 189, the application of OCGA 21-2-281 backup balloting requirements, and requests for bipartisan legal advisors and county-level funding support. Following robust discussion regarding the appropriate scope and tone of the resolution, one Board member expressed reservations about its prescriptive language directed at

the legislature, while supporting the core recommendation for hand-marked paper ballots. Another member asserted the Board's authority to issue recommendations to the General Assembly and emphasized that any delay in SB 189 implementation does not relieve the state of its existing legal obligations under state and federal law to ensure votes are recorded in a human-readable, voter-verifiable format.

The Board also heard brief testimony from Gwinnett County Elections Supervisor Zach Manifold (in his final day in the position). He indicated that securing sufficient ballot stock for the November 2026 election would be manageable but noted outstanding technical concerns regarding whether the current Dominion 5.x software and scanner configuration could reliably process the significantly larger ballot images associated with full-scale hand-marked paper ballots.

After further deliberation, Member Grubbs withdrew the original comprehensive resolution. She ultimately offered a streamlined motion recommending that the Georgia General Assembly transition to hand-marked paper ballots as soon as practicable.

Motion: Member Grubbs made a motion to formally recommend to the Georgia General Assembly to move to hand-marked ballots as soon as practicable

Second: Member King

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal

D. Secretary of State Investigation Report Format: Summary of Investigation (SOI) and Report of Investigation (ROI)

The Secretary of State recently changed the format of their investigation summaries and reports, removing violation codes and findings from the documents. They have advised that amendments will be made to restore this information, which is necessary for our review process.

At this time, we do not have any additional investigations prepared for review next month. However, once the revised reports are issued, we anticipate that approximately 20 investigations will be ready to present.

F. Chatham County

1. Subpoena

This has been changed from a subpoena, to a request, to have Chatham Board of Elections at the meeting in April to hear a report on a case that will be presented.

G. Next State Election Board Meeting

Date: April 15th

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Dawson County Government Center/Courthouse
25 Justice Way, 2nd Floor
Assembly Room 2303
Dawsonville, GA 30534

H. Dominion Voting System Demonstration – Mark Cook/Forensic Analyst

Mr. Mark Cook, who has been traveling nationwide to advocate for his ballot hand-counting initiative, delivered a presentation outlining what he described as vulnerabilities within Dominion voting systems.

Mr. Cook stated that he served as the lead forensic analyst in the Tina Peters case in Colorado involving Dominion voting systems. He explained that his forensic work focused on the Election Management System (EMS) server used to aggregate and process election results. During his presentation, Mr. Cook described several security concerns he said he identified while examining the system. He referenced an incident in Sacramento County, California, where he claimed a password was visibly posted on a Ballot on Demand workstation, characterizing it as an example of poor operational security practices.

Mr. Cook further asserted that Microsoft SQL Server Management Studio was installed on the EMS server, which he argued should not be present on a production election system. According to his presentation, the software provided direct access to the underlying

election database outside the standard application interface. He stated that the database contained election configurations, vote records, and security system information.

As part of the demonstration, Mr. Cook claimed he was able to access election databases without entering credentials and showed how database tables could be viewed and modified directly. He demonstrated altering candidate identifiers within a database table, which he said changed displayed election results when reports were regenerated. Mr. Cook also demonstrated a USB flash drive configured to emulate a keyboard device. He asserted that the device could execute automated commands capable of accessing the database and modifying records without manual keyboard input. According to his presentation, the process could alter or restore displayed election results. Additionally, Mr. Cook demonstrated what he described as a wireless access capability associated with the USB device used during the presentation. He stated that attendees checking for nearby wireless networks on their mobile devices would observe a network labeled “Wireless Backdoor,” which he claimed was being broadcast by the specialized flash drive functioning as a wireless access point. Audience members acknowledged seeing the network appear on their devices during the demonstration.

According to Mr. Cook, the device enabled remote access to the voting system, allowing a user elsewhere in the room to connect wirelessly and potentially retrieve information or alter data. While he declined to disclose the network password, he stated that he believed it would not be difficult to determine. Throughout his remarks, Mr. Cook argued that election officials are often not cybersecurity specialists and therefore rely heavily on assurances provided by vendors, testing laboratories, and certification authorities. He expressed concern that vulnerabilities he described had not been identified during certification and testing processes and questioned the effectiveness of current oversight and security validation procedures.

Mr. Cook emphasized the complexity of election systems and argued that many election officials and administrators lack the technical expertise necessary to identify or defend against sophisticated cybersecurity threats. He characterized the issue as a significant national concern, referring to it as an “elections national state emergency,” and stated that this concern motivated his ongoing efforts to travel to counties and states to present his findings and raise awareness. He concluded by stating that the examples shown represented only a portion of the vulnerabilities and evidence he claimed to have identified through his forensic examinations and remarked that he could provide several additional hours of demonstrations and explanations regarding vulnerabilities he believed existed within election systems.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:00 p.m., the Board passed the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Member King moved to adjourn

Second: Member Grubbs

Voted: Passed (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, Member Grubbs, and Member Ghazal