

**SUMNER COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023, 4:00 p.m.**

Members present: Chairman M. Allen Ehmling; Secretary Patricia D. Collins; Commissioner J. Michael Fussell, Commissioner Jeffery B. Hulsey and Commissioner Denise D. Shepherd. Also present: Lori D. Atchley, Administrator of Elections; Annette Haw, Assistant Administrator of Elections and Election Deputy Alea Hollandsworth.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Acting Chairman Fussell with a motion by Commissioner Hulsey, seconded by Commissioner Collins, and the motion passed 4 – 0.

II. APPROVE AGENDA

The agenda was approved with a motion by Commissioner Hulsey, seconded by Commissioner Collins, and the motion passed 4 – 0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. APPROVE MINUTES

Commissioner Hulsey made a motion to approve the January 10, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Collins and the motion passed 4 – 0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. INSPECTION – APPEAL PROCESSED VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS

There was one appeal presented to the Election Commission. The applicant (JH) when attempting to register to vote checked “Yes” to the “Have you been convicted of a felony?” declaration question. An appeal form was sent to the

applicant who returned the form as having inadvertently checked “Yes” to “Have you been convicted of a felony?”

*Chairman Ehmling arrived at 4:02 p.m.

All Commissioners present reviewed the appeal documentation presented. Motion by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Hulseby to find the registration application of JH sufficient to allow them to properly register to vote. The motion passed 5– 0. Chairman Ehmling signed the appeal form.

B. INSPECTION – NEWLY PROCESSED VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS

Commissioners inspected 68 voter registration applications out of 679 new applications with no discrepancies noted. Commissioners present signed the report to be submitted to the State Election Office.

C. REPORT FROM ADMINISTRATOR

- CONVENIENT VOTE CENTERS

AOE stated that Coordinator of Elections Mark Goins and Representative William Lamberth had confirmed that no further legislative action was required for Sumner County to proceed with Convenient Vote Centers.

- TRC BUILDING MOVE

AOE stated that on February 6, 2023, herself, Chairman Ehmling, AAOE Haw, and Commissioners Fussell and Collins attended the General Operations Committee at the request of Mayor John Isbell to formalize the move of the Election Commission from the Administration to the TRC building. The move was initiated, planned, approved and over 50% complete in coordination with the previous County Mayor Anthony Holt and the then State of Tennessee Lessees. Commissioner Merrol Hyde, who is not a member of the General Operations Committee and has no vote on that committee, chaired the portion of the meeting regarding the move. Many of the General Operation committee members claimed the move was a total surprise, although it was on their publicly noticed agenda and had been ongoing since 2020. The General Operations Committee denied formalizing the move and deferred the matter to the

March General Operations Committee, with AOE and Chairman Ehmling emphatically stating the delay on the decision was too late, as the voting machines will be delivered in March 2023 and must have sufficient storage area, be secured and under 24/7 camera surveillance.

- **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

AOE, in conjunction with the prior item, reported that the Budget Committee had met the previous evening, February 13, 2023, and once again, since October, 2022, denied the request for \$61,000+ to fund part time worker funding as advised by Finance Director David Lawing based on two county flawed budget benchmark data analysis, for the remainder of the fiscal year. The Budget Committee decided to continue to fund the Election Commission negative balances on a month to month basis.

AOE recommended that the Sumner County Election Commission seek legal counsel to provide guidance in regards to the county commission properly funding the election commission per TCA Statute 2-12-109 and address the authorization and move of the Election Commission to the former TRC building that was previously authorized. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Mike Fussell made a motion to engage attorney Tom Lee to represent the Sumner County Election Commission for legal guidance, not action, in regard to the current County Commissions obligation to properly fund the operations and provide an ample facility for the election commission to operate. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Shepherd and the motion passed 3-2 with Commissioners Collins, Fussell and Shepherd voting in favor, and Commissioners Ehmling and Hulseley voting against the motion stating they preferred to defer any action at this time.

- **OTHER**

AOE reported that there are 73 pending legislative items regarding voting issues being considered in the current legislative session. AOE advised she would update the Election Commission on an ongoing basis of legislation that actually passed.

V. REPORT FROM ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

A. CHAIRMAN

No report.

B. ELECTION COMMISSIONERS


No reports.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Hulsey to adjourn the meeting, and the motion passed 5 - 0. The meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.



M. Allen Ehmling, Chairman



Patricia D. Collins, Secretary



Lori D. Atchley, Administrator of Elections