



# BENTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION BOARD MINUTES

February 5, 2010

Present: E. J. Miller, Chairman  
Timothy Hutchinson, Secretary  
Bill Williams, Member  
Kathy Mahmens, Staff  
Tabatha Hunter, Press  
Christine Southard, Clerk's Office  
Kris James, Clerk's Office  
Tena O'Brien, County Clerk  
Anna Lee Emanuel, Sulphur Springs Resident  
Bill Emanuel, Sulphur Springs Resident

2010 FEB 19 PM 4:31  
TENA O'BRIEN  
CO. & PROBATE CLERK  
BENTON COUNTY, ARK

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The media was notified.

Chairman E. J. Miller called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Miller stated that Jerry Sheridan proposes an election for Gateway, Garfield & Avoca for fire tax dues to be combined with the May Primary Election. Miller will ask Sheridan to get the paperwork in for the election by next week.

Miller announced he would like to see three more early voting locations; Gravette, Prairie Creek, & Bella Vista Fire Station at Hwys 340 & 71. He stated his goal was to have 50% of voters voting early. Discussion of the early voting sites ensued. No objection to the early voting sites from Tena O'Brien. A vote was taken for the sites and was passed by all.

Commissioner Williams proposed an order form he has written up, to be used for Special Elections. There was a discussion on the order form. A vote was taken to use the order form & all voted yes.

Williams stated that the Election Commission is a non partisan organization & we should not be asking poll workers what party they belong to. Discussion ensued. A proposal was made by Williams to not ask poll workers their party affiliation, seconded by Tim Hutchinson, & third by Miller.

Williams stated that Susan Inman would be in our office next Wednesday. Williams stated that Inman is the most experienced person in Arkansas for election knowledge. Mark White from E S & S will also be here to give a demonstration on the electronic poll book. The meeting was set for 9:30 AM.

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Williams stated that an invitation for bid on the DREs closes on February 10<sup>th</sup> to purchase machines. He stated Helen Peltier would like 50 machines here by May to help out with the May Primary Election.

Williams stated that the state would pay the Election Commission for rental trucks to deliver and pick up equipment from the polling sites. Williams is working with Budget Car Rental to get a discount for vans to use for delivery.

Discussion on inclement weather was postponed until next meeting.

Miller stated that Gary Compton, Bentonville School Superintendent, has requested 7 precincts to be opened for the April 13<sup>th</sup> Special School Election. Williams stated he will find out from Compton if he wants an early voting site opened in Bella Vista. Williams stated he would do all the work preparing for early voting except getting poll workers ready.

Miller opened the discussion on consolidating polling sites. Criteria used for consolidating polling sites was as follows:

- Data used from the 2008 November Presidential election & updated January 2010
- Polling sites that have less than 500 active registered voters
- Consideration given on driving time & distance
- Can new location handle additional volume
- Absentee voting available for handicap by mail
- Early voting being considered in 3 additional locations
- Cost was considered
- Need more effective use of manpower
- Need more technically savvy poll workers

Miller gave as followed, number of active voters in precincts:

- Precinct 72, 290 voters
- Precinct 71, 959 voters
- Precinct 01, 308 voters
- Precinct 03, 1617 voters
- Precinct 02, 430 voters
- Precinct 04, 154 voters
- Precinct 05, 844 voters
- Precinct 82, 108 voters
- Precinct 48, 2094 voters
- Precinct 11, 1270 voters
- Precinct 12, 278 voters
- Precinct 13, 204 voters
- Precinct 14, 537 voters

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Miller stated that it costs \$.30 per paper ballot – 55,000 unused paper ballots were destroyed after general election, wasting about \$16,500. It costs \$3,000 minimum to open polling site.

It was proposed by Miller to consolidate Gateway & Garfield. All agreed. A proposal was made to consolidate precincts 11, 12, 13 & 14. All agreed. A proposal was made to consolidate 48 & 82. All agreed.

A discussion ensued by Miller on consolidating precincts on the western end of Benton County. Miller proposed to consolidate Maysville with Gravette, Cherokee City with Decatur, and Sulphur Springs with Gravette. He also stated that 16 precincts have less than 500 voters that will also be looked at for consolidation after the 2010 census redistricting takes place.

Anna Lee Emanuel from Sulphur Springs was given 2 minutes to speak. She stated that she pays taxes and should be represented like everybody else. There are a lot of elderly people that will not vote if they have to travel. It will be an inconvenience to travel to vote.

Williams offered to go to Sulphur Springs to meet with the voters if they wanted.

Bill Emanuel, Sulphur Springs, complains that there are long lines of people in Gravette waiting to vote. He asked what it will be like with 400 more people in Gravette to vote. He stated that people in Sulphur Springs go north to Noel to shop instead of Gravette.

Hutchinson stated that he was involved with school consolidation. Consolidation of schools 'went across the board'. He wished it had been a case by case situation. He stated he knows the community and does not want to see the precinct closed.

Miller stated that it was a business decision.

A vote was taken:

E. J. Miller voted yes to consolidating Maysville with Gravette,  
Yes to consolidating Cherokee City with Decatur,  
Yes to consolidating Sulphur Springs with Gravette.

Bill Williams voted yes to consolidating Maysville with Gravette,  
Yes to consolidating Cherokee City with Decatur,  
Yes to consolidating Sulphur Springs with Gravette with reluctance.

Tim Hutchinson voted yes to consolidating Maysville with Gravette,  
Yes to consolidating Cherokee City with Decatur,  
No to consolidating Sulphur Springs with Gravette.

The measure passed unanimously to consolidate Maysville with Gravette and Cherokee City with Decatur. The measure passed by majority vote to consolidate Sulphur Springs with Gravette.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM.



Respectfully submitted, Timothy Hutchinson, Secretary

Prepared by Kathy Mahmens, Benton County Election Commission staff

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