

**MONTHLY MEETING OF THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF
ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATIONS**

April 06, 2022 @ 9:30 A.M.

**Board of Elections & Registration Office
284 GA Highway 119 South, Springfield, GA 31329**

The Board of Elections and Registration held a Special Board Meeting on April 6, 2022

PERSONS ATTENDING THE MEETING AND ROLL CALL:

Those present were: Chairman Tommy Allen, Vice Chairman Glenda King, Board Member Ruth Brown, Board Member Rose Harvey, Director Olivia Chapman, and Deputy Registrar Dezita Thompson. Also present was Democratic Party Tony Chiariello and Democratic Party Treasurer Jack Garvin. Special Visitors: Attorney Ben Perkins of Oliver Maner, Candidate Stephen Sims, Mark Lee, and Lisa Crawford. Absent was Secretary Carla Freels.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Allen called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. Chairman Allen led the Invocation and the Pledge was recited. The meeting was properly advertised.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

The Agenda was presented, and it was approved as presented to the Board. This Special Meeting was properly advertised, special meeting required 48-hour notice. No correction or additional needed to the Agenda. Agenda was approved as presented.

MINUTES:

N/A

OLD BUSINESS:

N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

- Chairman Allen explained that the meeting was being held to determine the residency qualifications of Stephen Sims, Candidate for State Court Judge, and whether or not to proceed with a formal hearing after some concerns were brought to Director Chapman's attention after the qualifying period had ended.
- Information was provided by Mr. Sims in response to a letter send by Director Chapman requesting documentation. Questions base on homestead exemption filed in Chatham County by Mr. Sims.
- Director Chapman also contacted the County Attorney, Lee Newberry, who in turn contacted Ben Perkins from Oliver Maner LLP for guidance on handling this issue in reference to residence of a candidate and regarding Mr. Sims' Homestead Exemption on file with Chatham County. Additional information was provided to each board member of the attorneys' response.

- Attorney Perkins discussed the elections code and case law to help explain how to determine ones' residency for a candidate. Per the Georgia Supreme Court Ruling Handle vs Powell, Perkins stated that the Homestead Exemption is not of more importance than any of the other 14 guidelines for determining residency.
- Mr. Sims, stated he has lived in Effingham County for 17 years and was vouched for by Mark Lee (former Solicitor General of Effingham County). Mr. Sims, stated his residence changed in January 2022 that included the change of auto tags, credit card states, taxes, utility bills after his intent was to run for the State Court office.
- Also discussed was the fact that Mr. Sims' property in Springfield is zoned as business only property (B1 General Commercial Usage). However, Perkins stated that he had contacted the City of Springfield and it could not be determined when the change occurred because of prior zoning matters.
- A motion was made by Vice Chairman Glenda King that the Board Members vote to determine if a Hearing is necessary or not, second by Board Member Harvey. By a show of hands 4 to 0 it was unanimous that a hearing was not necessary. The qualification for Stephen Sims was accepted for him to continue running for the State Court Judge.

➤ **BOARD OR STAFF CONCERNS:**

- N/A


EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- No executive session was necessary.

ADJOURNMENT:

No further business was required. There were no objections to adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 9:54 AM. The next board meeting will be scheduled for April 11, 2022 at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted:


Carla Freels, Secretary