



MINUTES
GEORGIA STATE ELECTION BOARD MEETING
Thursday, February 19, 2026
The Historic Barrow County Courthouse; 30 North Broad Street, Winder GA 30680
9:30 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

John Fervier, as Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:35a.m. A quorum was present for all actions taken by the Board.

The following Board Members were present Chairman John Fervier, Vice Chairman Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, and Member Salleigh Grubbs. Member Sara Tindall Ghazal was absent from the meeting.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

Motion: Member King motioned to approve October 22, 2025, amended SEB meeting minutes

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (3-0)

In Favor: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston, Member King, and Chairman Fervier
(Member Grubbs recused herself from the vote)

Motion: Member King motioned to approve November 12, 2025, amended SEB meeting minutes

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (3-0)

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

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Subpoena for 2020 election documents and ballots from Fulton County

The Board discussed the status of subpoenas seeking 2020 election documents and ballots from Fulton County. Member King said she believed the investigation and seizure were necessary because the Board had previously subpoenaed the same records and was seeking transparency in election processes and records. She spoke at length about election integrity, public trust, and the importance of making election procedures understandable and transparent to citizens. Member Grubbs stated that Fulton County had resisted compliance with prior subpoenas and that the Board had a duty to continue pursuing the requested records. She expressed concern that the county's actions reflected a lack of transparency and accountability. Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston gave a detailed statement describing the legal framework under which the Georgia legislature created the State Election Board and County Election Boards. She outlined the Board's authority to investigate possible violations of the election code and stated that, in her view, Fulton County had failed to comply with subpoenas and document-preservation obligations. She also stated that the FBI's January 28 seizure of documents occurred independently and that the Board's subpoenas remained active.



The Board then considered ratification of letters sent to preserve subpoenaed records returned by the FBI. The Board passed a motion ratifying the spoliation letters sent to Fulton County entities.

Motion: Vice Chair Johnston moved to ratify the spoliation letters

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (3-0)

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

Chair/Executive Director Exchange

A discussion occurred between Chairman Fervier and Director Mills regarding prior communications with the Secretary of State's office and allegations about whether the Chair had obstructed prior meetings or restricted the Executive Director's access. Chair Fervier denied the allegations and stated that he had simply wanted a private conversation at the time to understand his role and responsibilities. Director Mills disputed the Chair's account and asserted that the Board had faced obstruction in its efforts to obtain records and conduct investigations

Update on SEB email records - Addison, Sheila, Member Mashburn (2020 – 2024)

The Board discussed missing or incomplete email records involving former staff and Board-related communications. Chairman Fervier stated that requests had been made to obtain records from Addison, Sheila, and former Member Mashburn, and noted that Mr. Mashburn had indicated he was willing to provide his emails if contacted. The Board also discussed Alexandra Hardin's emails and the status of her government-issued phone. Member Grubbs expressed concern about missing emails, text messages, and records, and suggested subpoenas might be necessary to obtain them. Vice Chair Johnston stated that Hardin's emails and text messages were critical in open records litigation and for future open records requests. A motion was passed by the Board to issue a subpoena to Alexandra requiring her to appear at the next SEB meeting and to require production of her cell phone, cell phone records, and text message records.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to issue a subpoena to Alexandra Hardin

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed unanimously (3-0)

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

Update on SOS publication of SEB Adopted Rules from 2024

The Board discussed the status of publication and certification of rules adopted in 2024. Vice Chair Johnston noted that she had not received updates from the Secretary of State regarding publication or certification. The Board discussed which rules had been adopted, which had been litigated, and the normal publication process. No formal action was taken.

Update on Member Grubbs' request for Firefly access, GARVIS access (read only)

Member Grubbs raised concerns about access to Firefly and GARVIS, stating that board members should be able to see communications the Secretary of State sends to counties. She said she had been denied read-only access and expressed concern about accountability, transparency, and communication barriers. Director Mills stated that the Board had requested sight-only access to GARVIS for investigators and had been denied. Member King and Vice Chair Johnston expressed similar concerns that the Board lacked visibility into information communicated to counties. Chair Fervier noted that the Board needed access to information in order to perform its oversight responsibilities. No formal action was taken





Directors and Officers insurance policy

The Board discussed a Directors' and Officers' insurance policy. Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston had previously raised the issue, and Director Mills explained that the application process required budget information and likely signatures from the Chair and Vice Chair or designees. The Board expressed support for pursuing the policy. No vote was taken at this point, but the Board agreed to proceed as budget allowed.

Discussion of Staff Attorney

The Board discussed the need for a staff attorney. Member Grubbs stated that the Board needed dedicated legal counsel available for meetings, open records requests, and other legal questions. Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston and Member King agreed, noting potential conflicts with the Attorney General's office representing both the Secretary of State and the State Election Board. The board discussed the possibility of a contract attorney or a standalone legal resource.

Discussion of Conflict Counsel

The Board discussed conflict counsel and how legal representation would be arranged, if the Attorney General had a conflict. Chair Fervier stated, it was his understanding, that the Governor would appoint conflict counsel if needed. Member King stated she would like the Board to have input into selecting counsel and that the Board should not be left unrepresented.

Communication Protocols

The Board discussed communication protocols, including who responds to public and internal emails. Chair Fervier stated that he generally responds to emails addressed directly to him and otherwise relies on the Executive Director or other staff members. Member King stated that direct responses should be limited, when possible, to avoid unnecessary open records burden, but agreed the Board should acknowledge public communications, when appropriate.

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

Member Grubbs discussed the need to remind judges and court administrators about responsibilities related to non-citizen voter removals and jury duty notifications. She suggested a bulletin or notice to Court Administrators and Judges. Chair Fervier noted that this was a reminder issue and did not require immediate action.

Swearing in of the Respondents

Member Grubbs raised the issue of warning public commenters and respondents that they must tell the Truth, when appearing before the Board. She cited O.C.G.A. 16-10-20 and requested that a notice be added to public comment materials. Chair Fervier agreed that truthful testimony matters, but noted public comment is a First Amendment activity and not the same as sworn testimony.





Ballot Duplication

The board briefly discussed ballot duplication, noting the topic related to prior discussions about hand duplication versus ballot marking device processes. No formal action was taken.

Legislative Agenda

Vice Chair Johnston stated that the Board had previously adopted recommendations for the Legislature, including ending no-excuse absentee voting and requiring all ballots to be received by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day. She also discussed concerns regarding QR codes, hand-marked paper ballots, ballot-on-demand printers, chain of custody, and tabulator tapes. No new action was taken.

Cases and Investigations

Vice Chair Johnston reported that the Board had completed the remaining cases presented by Secretary of State Investigators and that no new cases were ready for presentation at that time. She praised the work of the Board and staff in clearing the existing backlog.

Licensed Private Investigator Pilot Project

Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston proposed authorizing Director Mills to contract with a licensed private investigator for a “Pilot Project” involving one to four complaints. Chair Fervier requested additional details regarding the cost, scope, duties, and reporting structure. The Board discussed whether Director Mills should first present a formal proposal or be authorized to proceed directly. Ultimately, the Board approved a motion authorizing Director Mills to engage a licensed private investigator to conduct a “Pilot Project” involving one to four election complaint investigations, with expenditures not to exceed \$10,000.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to authorize Director Mills to contract a licensed Private Investigator

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed unanimously (3-0)

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

Discussion of Coalition for Good Governance’s election law complaint on Voting Systems During 2026

Marilyn Marks, Executive Director of the Coalition for Good Governance, presented concerns about ballot secrecy, QR codes, and the State Election Board’s legal authority. She argued that when voting systems fail to comply with the law, counties should be required to use hand-marked paper ballots and scanners as a backup. Marks emphasized that the Board has both the authority and responsibility to enforce election laws in such situations. Board members questioned her on legal distinctions (such as backup vs. emergency systems) and the legal basis for her proposals. She responded to these questions and submitted a proposed order. The Board concluded by thanking her for her presentation and materials.





PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board heard public comments from multiple speakers. Speakers included Dr. Konrad Hayash, Mandy Schultz, Jeanne Dufort, Janet Grant, Kyle Gomez-Leineweber, Marisa Pyle, Rachel Glover, Victoria Cruz, Gail Lee, Richard Schroeder, Sandra Burchardt, Joseph Kirk, David Ramsey, and Garland Favorito.

Threats and Security

Member Grubbs stated that she had received a threatening email and asked for guidance. Chair Fervier stated that threatening emails should be turned over to the GBI and said the board would not tolerate threats against members or staff. He stated that he had already referred threatening communications to law enforcement in the past.

Closing Remarks

Vice Chair Johnston thanked staff members, including Autumn Miller, Shaun White, Jesse Patton, Ann Delmas, Hope Coan, and Director Mills, for their work supporting the Board and its records, investigations, and meetings.

Chair Fervier thanked the county hosts for the use of the facility and thanked participants, audience members, and staff for their patience and work throughout the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 1:13 p.m., the Board adjourned the meeting

Motion: Member Grubbs moved to adjourn the Board Meeting

Second: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston

Vote: Passed unanimously (3-0)

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