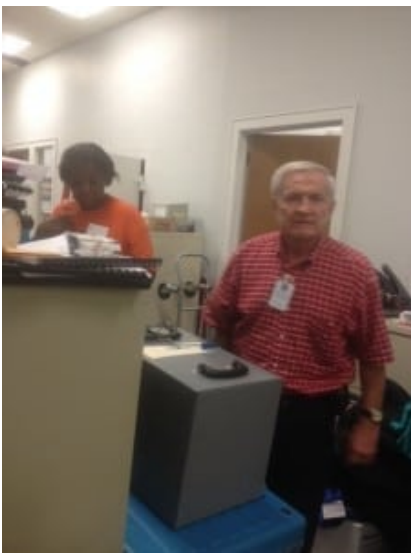


Election Commissioner Turner Jones Misled Public with Statements and Actions



Election
Commissioner Turner
Jones stands beside
the Rowan Box, which
he applied a seal to
it after it arrived
to City Hall without

one.

The Rowan ballot box has come under scrutiny since it arrived so late back at city hall and arrived without a security seal. All ballot boxes were delivered to the precincts with a seal, but later during election day the Rowan seal was reported as being lost. So, a second seal was delivered to the Rowan precinct. The Rowan Precinct is Dupree's strong hold. In spite of multiple seals being given to the Rowan poll manager, the ballot box was delivered to City Hall over five hours after polling closed, and the box did not have a security seal on the box. The Hattiesburg Patriot reported the missing seal at 1:00am Wednesday morning. The Hattiesburg Patriot's witness overheard Mr. Jones ask the poll manager, "where's the seal?" She shrugged her shoulders. Mr. Turner then slipped a seal on the box and pretended as if nothing happened, but later admitted that the seal on the box was not on it when it arrived and that he placed a seal on the box after arrival.

On Wednesday, media attended the ballot inspection process at City Hall and when questioned about the incident on camera Mr. Jones stated that the additional seal for the Rowan box also went missing, and Election Commissioner Lillie Easton went to Rowan to check on matters and "accompanied the box back (to city hall) to preserve the integrity of the election." This statement is not true, as Ms. Easton did not accompany the box back, but instead rode in a separate vehicle from the poll manager. The poll manager was not only in possession of the box, but also in possession of the key to the lock on the box. This is a clear violation of MS CODE 23-15-247 which states:

SEC. 23-15-247. Ballot boxes.

The commissioners of election in each county shall procure, if not already provided, a sufficient number of ballot boxes, which shall be distributed by them to the voting precincts of the county before the time for opening the polls. The boxes shall be secured by good and substantial locks, and, if an

*adjournment shall take place after the opening of the polls and before all the votes shall be counted, the box shall be securely locked, so as to prevent the admission of anything into it, or the taking of anything from it, during the time of adjournment; and **the box shall be kept by one of the managers and the key by another of the managers**, and the manager having the box shall carefully keep it, and neither unlock or open it himself nor permit it to be done, nor permit any person to have any access to it during the time of adjournment. The box shall not be removed from the polling building or place after the polls are opened until the count is complete, if as many as three (3) qualified electors object. After each election the ballot boxes shall be delivered, with the keys thereof, to the clerk of the circuit court of the county for preservation; and he shall keep them for future use, and, when called for, deliver them to the commissioners of election.*

Sending someone to ride in a separate car from the ballot box is not "accompanying" anything; nor is it securing the integrity of the election. Why didn't Mrs. Easton simply take a seal to the precinct, record the number, and put it on the ballot box before it left the building? Why did Turner Jones make misleading statements, or was he misinformed? This incident raises more questions than it answers and none are comforting for many citizens of Hatteisburg.