**Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration**

**Decatur County Administrative Offices’ Meeting Room**

**204 W. Broughton Street**

**Bainbridge, GA 39819**

**February 10, 2015**

**Call To Order**

**Administrative Notes**

The monthly meeting of the Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration was called to order by Chairman Wendell Cofer at 6:30 p.m. and stated that the meeting has been duly advertised in the newspaper and on the buildings properly identifying meeting date, time and location as required by governing laws.

Chairman Wendell Cofer stated member Gina Burke had an excused absence.

**Board Members present: Staff Present:**

Lamb, Willie Jr . White, Doris (Chief Election Official)

Holmes, Beverly W. Heard, Carol (Clerk of Voter Registration)

Cofer, Wendell (Chairman)

Sellars, Keith **Visitors:**

Basil Lucas

Billy Ward

**Approve Minutes**

The minutes of the January 13, 2014, regular meeting were unanimously approved.

**Old Business**

1. Budget. A copy of the budget was given to members present. Doris White said the ideal remaining percent is 39 percent, but the current department’s budget has a remaining percentage of 51. The department is 12 percent above a projected ideal remaining percentage. Chairman Cofer asked if the department anticipates any major expenditures for the rest of the year. White stated the copier is dying. In previous meetings, White and Cofer recall that there had been discussions on moving money from the Technical-Premier category, which has $11,598.39, to help pay for a copier if the need arises.
2. Copier. Heard reported that a board request for more information included a separate bid from Xerox, which a sales representative gave two separate versions of copiers similar to what the bid from TriState Office Products gave. The Xerox copiers came in at least $1,000 more than the bids from Tri-State’s bids. The two bids from TriState were $4,161 and $5,950, and the bids from Xerox were $4,937 and $6,905 as just the purchase price. Cofer said the copier that we originally looked at versus the copier the staff thinks will work is about $1,800 less. Sellars stated he often purchases copiers at his work, and he said he thought the bids on the copiers were for a product that cost too much and perhaps included too many “bells and whistles” than the office needs. He was concerned of spending that kind of money the bids were as compared to what the volume of work the Elections Office does. He asked what the bid perimeters were. Heard said the copier the office has now is networked, it produces a high volume of color copies necessary for poll worker training manuals and other documents, and the office needs something that is fast. Sellars said the bid should reflect what the demands of the office are and not necessary what the office presently has. He said based on the costs of the copiers that they are more than what the office actually needs. Holmes asked if the costs included service agreements, which did not include the service agreements, but if the board was to get a service agreement, it would include everything but paper and stables. Sellars said he would be more comfortable if there was an evaluation on the number of copies the office produces during a high-volume month, then base the bid requests on that. Cofer asked if there was a way to do an evaluation. White said the Georgia Secretary of State’s Office will probably request local offices produce their own state-mandated forms after downloading them from the internet, which is new. Further, White said 2016 will demand a high number of poll worker manuals that are produced in color. Sellars and Cofer suggested staff access the copy counters inside the current copiers to get an idea on the volume the office produces. White said an older copier in her office is used heavily as well as individual printers tied to each of the computers. Cofer suggested that staff email to board members a count of the current copiers and if the copier needs to be networked or non-networked copier and to consult with Roy Reynolds. *(Roy Reynolds and Cofer were in the office shortly after the Board meeting, and Reynolds said the copier needs to be networked. The volume of copies and the necessity of various functions of the copies will be emailed later this week.)*
3. Municipal Elections. White reported the four municipalities have published their qualifying fees in the newspaper as required by law. She asked if a proposal she prepared has been presented to the cities. Cofer said they have not. He stated a new protocol with the county attorney has been established that instead of county employees going directly to the county attorney, that business for the county attorney first go through the county administrator. Cofer asked the board if he may approach County Administrator Gary Breedlove and have the new county attorney assist the board with the new municipal intergovernmental agreements among the four municipalities. The board approved of Cofer making a request for the county attorney to assist with the intergovernmental agreements.
4. Voter education and poll worker recruitment. Heard reported she sent an email to former Board member, Dr. Ray Chambers, about trying to put together a civics-type program at Bainbridge State College in September or October as part of the College’s Arts and Lecture Series. Heard said she would also like to develop an “election” that would be specific to Bainbridge State and Bainbridge High School students so they would identify more with the importance of voting. Cofer asked if the staff was thinking of using the machines to conduct the mock elections. Heard said yes (*Kennesaw State University’s Center for Election Systems does produce mock ballots with a three-week turn-around time*). Holmes said she remembers using the voting machines to vote on the middle school queens, and it said the students enjoyed it. Holmes said mock elections using the current machines could be a good learning tool. Heard said she would also like to recruit students, such as those from the Honors Program, to be the “poll workers” during those elections, and that perhaps would turn some on to applying to be county poll workers. Heard said White determined the average age of the county’s poll workers is 62.9 years old.

**New Business**

1. Technical Training (KSU) in Macon (Carol and Roy). Cofer said Carol Heard and Roy Reynolds both completed KSU training in Macon, and it completes the certification for Heard. Reynolds completed all the tests, but he did not complete the other half of the certification, which are the online courses offered by the Secretary of State’s office. Cofer said Reynolds relayed to him that the entire trip was worth it because he learned that the county can sequester the optical scanners and the people who run them to run ballots through about two hours before the polls close; and he learned how to run result tapes without running the long result results, which takes an hour to two hours. Cofer said that trip was worth it because the board’s time processing optical scan ballots could be cut several hours on election night. White said sequester first came about in 2003 or 2004, and she said that sequester means no telephones, and Democrats and Republicans each have two representatives and they can’t have phones in with them or can’t discuss it. She suggested if the board decides to be run the optical scan ballots and sequester those doing it that it be done in the Grand Jury Room of the Courthouse. White said sequester has to be published and the Secretary of State has to approve the request. Cofer said it may be worth it in order to get the results released to the public quicker.
2. Carol – Certification Completed. Cofer congratulated Heard for earning the county election certification requirements.

**Other Business**

The board didn’t have other business to discuss, but offered the members of the public to comment. Billy Ward, a member of the Civics 101 organization, asked if the program proposed by Heard at the College would be open to the public. Heard said the program would be open to the public. Cofer said the office has offered public education opportunities to practice on machines in the past and would be happy to do it now that the office is fully staffed.

Basil Lucas, another member of the Civics 101 organization, suggested the office set up practice sessions at the public library. He also wanted to reach the general public on the importance of voting. Cofer mentioned a voter booklet the office intends to produce informing them of the mechanics of voting that would include a sample ballot. The booklet is modeled after Leon County, Fla. Holmes emphasized that voters need to vote during run-off elections as well.

**Executive Session, Personnel**

Chairman Cofer requested a motion be made to enter into Executive Session. Motioned by Keith Sellars and seconded by Willie Lamb that they enter into Executive Session. The Board voted in favor and excused themselves at 7:10 p.m. for Executive Session.

The Board returned at 7:21 p.m. after 11 minutes of closed discussion. Upon returning, Chairman Cofer said he needed an affirmation notice that they made no decisions in Executive Session and all decisions will be ratified here.

Cofer made the following recommendations:

1. The Board is desirous that part-time Ethics Technician Linda Walton attend all board meetings. Lamb extended the motion and seconded by Sellars with no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.
2. The Board is desirous that the precinct managers for the Fairgrounds, Coliseum and West Bainbridge be invited to attend the board meetings at two hours’ expenditure of funds in order to stay in contact with the board and discuss issues before and after elections, especially with a very busy 2016 election year coming up. Holmes extended the motion and seconded by Lamb with no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.
3. The Board is desirous that staff be instructed to identify poll workers who have 10, 15 and 20 meritorious years’ service such that either in the March or April meeting that those poll worker be invited to this board meetings, that plaques be prepared for their service and they be so honored. Sellars extended the motion and seconded by Lamb with no discussion. Motion passed unanimously. White mentioned Fannie Boutwell’s service from 1949 to 2009. Cofer said she should be on the top of the list. Sellars said he would recognize her with something extra in her plaque.