**Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration**

**Decatur County Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room**

**203 W. Broughton St.**

**Bainbridge, GA 39819**

**February 14, 2017**

**Call To Order**

**Administrative Notes**

The monthly meeting of the Decatur County Board of Elections and Voter Registration was called to order by Board Chairman Wendell Cofer at 6:30 p.m. and stated that the meeting had been duly advertised in the newspaper and on the appropriate buildings properly identifying meeting date, time and location as required by governing laws. Board Vice Chairman Willie Lamb Jr. had earlier said he had an excused conflict from the meeting.

**Public Participation**: None

**Board Members present: Staff present:**

Board Chairman Wendell Cofer Carol P. Heard, Chief Elections Official

Board Member Gina Burke Linda Walton, Clerk of Voter Registration

Board Member Beverly Holmes Elections Staff Margaret Bryant

Board Member Keith Sellars Poll workers Billy Ward and Edith Miller

Members of the public: Dedrail Johnson and Tanota Johnson Hollis

**Approve Minutes**

Board Member Keith Sellars made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 10, 2017, meeting, and Board Member Beverly Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Budget**

The ideal remaining budget percentage should be 39, but the Board of Elections has 42 percent. Board Chairman Wendell Cofer noted that electricity is at 15 percent, saying the county began taking out from the Elections’ budget electricity for the Fairgrounds, which had been within the Extension Office’s budget. Chief Elections Official Carol Heard said the Courthouse Annex will also be charged for its electricity, which in the past was charged to the main Courthouse. The Board was also given a copy of the proposed 2017-2018 fiscal year budget. Chairman Cofer went through some of the highlights of the proposed budget.

**Old Business** Chief Elections Official Heard updated board members on the upcoming Special Called Election on March 21. Because there doesn’t appear to be many requests for mail-in absentee ballots, the board will not request to do early tabulation and will count the mail-in ballots after 7 p.m. After review of the upcoming events, Board Member Beverly Holmes will not be able to be at the special called election on March 21 nor the following meeting on March 24.

**New Business**

**(A) Consideration of thanking long time poll workers who have stepped down.**

Chairman Cofer said in light of long time poll workers Bubber Hester and Anna R. Washington stepping down as poll workers this year that an appreciation gift would be nice. Within the last two years, these same poll workers were given a plaque and a clock for their long service. However, the Board was asked to consider perhaps a simple gift card. CEO Heard asked the board for some guidance on how to acknowledge long serving poll workers who do an exceptional job. Cofer said the gift card suggestion sounded like a good, appropriate idea. Board Member Gina Burke said she didn’t think they needed another plaque or clock. Chairman Cofer said he would send up the list to the county administration and copy the board with the results.

**(B) Discussion on who attends statewide conferences**

Board Chairman Wendell Cofer asked board members to look at their calendars if they can attend the Georgia Election Officials Association conference in May in Savannah. Chairman Cofer thought it was court week which would preclude him from going, members Gina Burke and Keith Sellars said they will have work-related conflicts, and Board Member Beverly Holmes said she would have to check following a new position she is moving into. Vice Chairman Willie Lamb has expressed interest in going to the Voter Registrars Association Conference in August in Augusta.

**(C) Consideration of canceling May 9 meeting.**

Chairman Cofer said even though the board is required to hold meetings when there is a countywide election that year, the May 9th meeting falls at the time of the Georgia Election Officials Association annual conference, and Cofer said he felt by meeting with Chief Elections Official Heard and passing any information from those causal meetings that the requirements would be met. Cofer said he would like to consider canceling the May 9th meeting and possibly the June meeting if there are no budget considerations the board must deal with. Board Member Gina Burke moved that the May 9th meeting be canceled, and Board Member Beverly Holmes seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

**NOTES:** Clerk of Voter Registration Linda Walton updated the Board on merging duplicate voters within eNet and pending voters. Since the November General Election, there were more than 100 pending voters whose information needed to be checked or double checked in order for their voter registration to be completed. Walton said Elections Staff member Margaret Bryant made a concerted effort to reach out to those voters in order to clear up any mistakes or conflicts of those voters’ registrations. The office was down to 16 pending voters. Walton said Bryant has done a remarkable job of clearing those voters’ records up.

**Adjournment --** The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.