**Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration**

**Decatur County Board County Commissioners Meeting Room**

**203 W. Broughton St.**

**Bainbridge, GA 39817**

**June 13, 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 Member Keith Sellars notified staff he was out of town relative to his job.

**Public Participation**: None

**Board Members present: Staff present:**

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

Board Vice Chairman Willie Lamb Jr. Linda Walton, Clerk of Voter Registration

Board Member Beverly Holmes IT Manager Roy Reynolds

Board Member Gina Burke Staffer Margaret Bryant

**Approve Minutes**

Board Member Gina Burke made a motion to accept the minutes from the April 11, 2017, meeting, and Board Member Willie Lamb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Budgets**

1. **Status of this fiscal year’s budget.**
	1. The ideal budget is 5 percent and the current Elections Office budget is at 12 percent. Chief Elections Official Carol Heard said the remaining percentage will go down as the travel item in the budget, which is $3,346.27, will go down substantially as the Election Center national certification and VRAG travel will be drawn.
2. **Final 2017-2018 budget.**

CEO Heard said the Board of County Commissioners passed the budget. It’s pretty much how the board submitted it except for a few items. Chairman Wendell Cofer said the county’s current policy is to push all costs related to a particular budget to that department’s budget. These items include electricity, water and sewer and garbage pick-up.

**Old Business**

1. **Recap of Georgia Election Officials Conference.**

Vice Chairman Willie Lamb shared his thoughts on attending the Georgia Election Officials Conference with staff members Carol Heard and Linda Walton in May. There were two issues that were cleared up, which were that a carry weapon permit is an acceptable form of ID and that the opt-out when registering to vote is now the law in Georgia.

1. **Plans for Voter Registrars Association of Georgia conference in August.**

CEO Heard said the plans are for Chairman Cofer, CEO Heard and Clerk of Voter Registration Linda Walton to attend the conference.

**New Business**

1. **Student Ambassador Program and working with new Bainbridge High School Principal.**

Board Member Gina Burke said the high school had planned to do the Student Ambassador Program last year but they had to rework some things. Burke said she spoke with Mr. Matthews and he’s very interested in the program and enhancing voter registration and other programs dealing with elections. CEO Heard said the group of students Burke put together to be poll workers in November was a success and would like to expand voter and civic education.

1. **Discussion of changing meeting place.**

Chairman Cofer said he attended some training and there were three things that he felt the Board should do or consider doing. The first was that the agenda of the meetings needs to be published prior to the meeting. A notice of the meeting is all that’s published and posted. It may be put on the county’s website and at the meeting place’s location. The agenda may be posted at least three days prior to the meeting.

Cofer said a summary of the meeting also needs to be published at least 48 to 72 hours after the meeting. The minutes of the meeting must be voted on within 30 days or they become the minutes as they stand.

The enabling legislation says the Board of Elections meet where the Board of County Commissioners meet. Cofer said the Elections Board could change its meeting place if the county commissioners would adopt it as local legislation and vote on it in two separate meetings. Cofer said meeting in the Elections Board building would make it more convenient and make more sense as far as better serving any potential electors during a board meeting. Board Members Burke and Beverly Holmes both said it would make more sense to move the meetings to the Board of Elections’ Office. After Cofer asked if they wanted him to discuss this with County Administrator Alan Thomas. The members said to pursue the change

1. **Poll Worker Agreement and new compensation package.**

CEO Heard said she would like to give the same pay rates for managers, assistant managers and clerks at each of the nine precincts. Currently the Coliseum, Fairgrounds and other precincts are on different levels. Board Member Holmes said she would like to see that because she did have a poll worker question why certain precincts were getting more pay than others. Cofer said to formulate an equitable pay plan. Cofer also said it’s OK to pay for training after Election Day, but they must be paid for training even though they couldn’t fulfill their election day duties. Cofer wanted to make sure that compensation package is in budget. He instructed staff to double check the budget and how the increase in the compensation package would affect it.

1. **Discussion of computer security and worst-case scenario.**

IT Manager Roy Reynolds updated the Board on steps taken to improve anti-virus and malware and ransomware software. The Elections Office receives numerous emails with attachments, mainly applications for absentee ballots. We are required to receive those and to process those applications in a timely manner. Reynolds said receiving attachments via email is the main way hackers can access data and potentially create damage. The voter registration data are not at risk on the local level. The worst case may be that our computers are compromised, but not the data. Reynolds said if we maintain best practices for the time being until the state makes changes, that we should be OK in terms of the conduct of our elections. Board Member Gina Burke said these issues need to be dealt with at the state and federal levels but it is good that we are talking about it on the local level.

1. **Consideration of canceling July 11 board meeting.**

Chairman Cofer said he didn’t think we could even though CEO Heard will be out of town for training. He said the board canceled the May meeting and he is reluctant to cancel a second.

**Adjournment --** The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.