**Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration**

**Decatur County Administrative Offices’ Meeting Room**

**203 W. Broughton Street**

**Bainbridge, Ga. 39819**

**September 15, 2015**

**Call To Order**

**Administrative Notes**

The monthly meeting of the Decatur County Board of Elections and Voter 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.

**Board Members present: Staff present:**

Chairman Wendell Cofer Carol P. Heard (Chief Elections Official)

Gina Burke Linda Walton (Clerk of Voter Registration)

Beverly W. Holmes

Willie Lamb Jr.

Keith Sellars

Poll Managers: Charlie Laing, Janelle Nelson and Linda Salmon.

Assistant Poll Managers: Emma Sales, Ethel G. Fuller and Anna R. Washington.

Members of the public: Basil Lucas

**Approve Minutes**

Board Member Gina Burke made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 11, 2015, regular meeting as presented. Member Beverly Holmes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

1. Fairgrounds Security System. Chairman Wendell Cofer reported Roy Reynolds said the system is installed and working. Cofer added that the staff and Reynolds need to update the contact list so law enforcement could be stopped from responding if there’s a false alarm. Chief Elections Official Carol Heard added that Fairgrounds Poll Manager Janelle Nelson needs to be a part of that updated contact list.
2. Budget. Chairman Wendell Cofer said the ideal remaining balance is 79 percent. The Board of Elections is at 80 percent, which concerned him. However, the budget does reflect the purchase of the ballot on demand printer, which was $14,675. Two items of concern was postage at 68 percent and travel at 52 percent. Heard said approximately 1,200 confirmation notices were mailed in August, which could account for the postage, and there was a conference in August and another in December. Cofer said he will meet with Michelle West, the county’s accounting supervisor, and Heard to discuss the personal services and retirement contribution accounts and why they are off.
3. Reopening Courthouse Annex for purpose of receiving absentee ballots. Chief Elections Official Carol Heard said she met with County Attorney Bruce Kirbo and he offered his opinion that one resolution was to name the manager of the advance voting location as the “absentee ballot clerk,” and the “absentee ballot clerk’s office” will be the Fairgrounds. Another suggestion is to have two or three voting machines set up in the Annex’s meeting room in the back as another location. Cofer said he is very reluctant to move advance voting from the Fairgrounds. Board Member Keith Sellars said he doesn’t want to add to the confusion by moving it from the Fairgrounds. Board member Beverly Holmes said the issue came up at the VRAG conference. Holmes had suggested to leave it at the Fairgrounds, but have some machines at the Annex so we would be in line with law just in case of an audit. Just make it accommodating to voters if they decide to vote at the Annex and the Fairgrounds. Heard said it would be best to have a small presence in the Annex with maybe one or two poll workers there, and certainly advertise the Fairgrounds as the location with more machines and workers. Board members agreed to have a small number of machines at the Annex during advance voting and to emphasis the Fairgrounds as the main advance polling location.
4. “The Rabbit Concept.” Board Chairman Wendell Cofer said the concept will not work and to kill the idea.
5. Early opening and counting of absentee ballots. Chief Elections Official Carol Heard said this could easily be done, perhaps with a team being sequestered beginning at 5 p.m. The board would need to work out the location. Heard said by running the paper ballots through the optical scanner early, it could save the final results an hour as the absentee paper ballots would be counted ahead of when the precincts come in. Board Chairman Wendell Cofer said he is in favor of the grand jury room in the Courthouse for counting the ballots. Cofer said he would like to see the board try the early tabulation in the forthcoming elections.
6. Challenge hearing for voter whom may have listed business as residency. Christopher Hines Dean registered to vote on Sept. 11, 2014, through DDS with the address of 1305 E. Shotwell St. in Bainbridge, the same address as Dean Chrysler auto dealership. On Nov. 20, 2014, the Elections Office sent him a letter to that address stating that address doesn’t meet the state residency requirements and enclosed a new voter registration application. No response. Again, Clerk of Voter Registration Linda Walton said she sent him a letter on Sept. 3, 2015, challenging his residency and notifying him of this hearing. Still no response. Board member Keith Sellars said there have been multiple attempts to contact him and that removing him from the list of electors is fully justified. Board member Gina Burke made motion to delete Christopher Hines Dean as an elector. Board member Beverly Holmes seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Cofer instructed staff to construct a memorandum of record to be attached to his voter registration documents to stay there permanently detailing every step staff took to try to contact Mr. Dean, and that that record be certified by the chief elections official.

**New Business**

1. Constitution Day at Bainbridge State College. Chief Elections Official Carol Heard gave credit to Basil Lucas for the idea of a “civics day” at the College. She also gave highlights of the scheduled event.
2. Balotar will arrive on Thursday, Sept. 30. Training will be from 1 to 3 p.m. Heard requested Roy Reynolds to be at the training. Also, Logic and Accuracy testing is scheduled for Oct. 1.
3. Deputy Registrar training. Chief Elections Official Carol Heard thanked those who came out for the first round of training. She recommended that the Board of Elections continues the training so there is at least one deputy registrar at each poll location in case someone wants to register to vote at a polling location.

The Board adjourned by 7:11 p.m.