**Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration**

**Decatur County Elections Office, Courthouse Annex**

**122 W. Water St.**

**Bainbridge, GA 39817**

**May 25, 2018**

**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 5:30 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. However, the agenda had the wrong day of the week on it, and it was noted.

**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 Office staff Margaret Bryant and Carla Robinson

Board Member Keith Sellars

Board Member Gina Burke

Guests: Poll worker Melbah Andrews, Billy Ward and Edith Miller

**Approve Minutes**

Board Member Gina Burke made a motion to accept the minutes from the April 10, 2018, meeting, and Board Member Beverly Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Budget**

**Review of 2017-2018 budget** – With 17 percent remaining in the year, the Elections Office has 32 percent but there was just an election.

**Review of proposed 2018-2019 budget** – Chairman Wendell Cofer said there was $4,100 difference, which $8,000 was added to refurbish the Fairground polling location. Overall the budget is essentially the same.

**Old Business**

1. **May 22 Primary/Nonpartisan General Election.**

Chief Elections Official Carol Heard said the Elections Office staff processed the provisional ballots and completed the duplication. There was one gentleman who voted in advance and then was allowed to complete a provisional ballot on Election Day as an out-of-precinct voter. However, while doing the staff research, his provisional ballot was rejected for that reason. Chairman Cofer said CEO Heard briefed Chairman Cofer and Board Member Beverly Holmes prior to the meeting on the circumstances surrounding James E. Lee’s provisional ballot. Cofer was concerned that the poll worker didn’t catch this at the time.

Chairman Cofer offered a motion to reject Mr. Lee’s provisional ballot because he had already voted in advance. Board Member Keith Sellars forwarded the motion, and Board Member Beverly Holmes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Wendell Cofer and Member Holmes asked staff to give that poll worker additional training and counseling. There was discussion on how this oversight may have occurred, and more importantly, to prevent this from happening again.

Chairman Cofer suggested that the precinct manager double check the voting status of a voter prior to giving them a provisional ballot, even if they are voting out of precinct.

CEO Heard said to be fair to the Fairgrounds precinct, it had 19 provisional ballots – far more than the other precincts -- because most of the voters are out of precinct voters. Heard suggested a person be dedicated to provisional ballots whom will triple check a voter and their circumstances while they are voting provisionally to alert the elections office of how to treat that ballot. It was suggested that the provisional ballot clerk at the Fairgrounds have a laptop to look up the voter on eNet as well as have an extra ExpressPoll available. Chairman Cofer said there should be a provisional ballot checklist that is followed before a provisional ballot is counted.

Prior to certifying the election, CEO Heard double-checked other provisional voters to ensure they are given credit for voting and that they had not voted in advance as well. The meeting was adjourned for a brief period.

Also noted, Board Member Gina Burke had to leave because of a medical issue with her father.

Chairman Cofer asked if all the other provisional ballots had been checked. CEO Heard said all the other ballots had been checked and are clear to be counted. However, a voter who voted provisionally because she didn’t have a photo ID never presented one before the deadline. Chairman Cofer said that ballot is rejected by law and no motion is required.

**Shut-down procedures**

Chairman Cofer said there were two elections that the Board was waiting on precincts to bring back results. He asked for more training to help expedite the shut-down procedures for the July runoff and all future elections.

CEO Heard said that Elections Office staffer Carla Robinson had suggested that some of the Board Members go right at closing time to the precincts with local races on the ballot to observe.

Board Member Keith Sellars emphasized the importance of poll managers to communicate with the office. If a poll manager is running passed 8 p.m. to call the office and communicate with the progress of getting the returns to the office.

It was the consensus that all poll workers need additional training on closing procedures and to emphasize closing procedures so results are at the Elections Office no later than 8:30 p.m.

**Adjournment --** The meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.