**Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration**

**Decatur County Elections Office, Courthouse Annex**

**122 W. Water St.**

**Bainbridge, GA 39817**

**November 10, 2020**

**Call To Order**

**Administrative Notes and Announcements**

The regular meeting of the Decatur County Board of Elections and Voter Registration was called to order by Board Chairman Keith Sellars at 6:30 p.m., and stated that the meeting had been duly advertised in the newspaper, and on the appropriate building properly identifying the meeting date, time and location as required by governing laws. Board Member Dan Provence told staff and the chairman he was going to be out sick.

**Public Participation**: None

**Board Members present: Staff present:**

Board Chairman Keith Sellars Carol P. Heard, Chief Elections Official

Board Vice Chairman Beverly Holmes Tasia Porter, Clerk of Voter Registration

Board Member Johnny Brown Margaret Bryant, office staff

Board Member Gina Burke Poll workers Melba Andrew, Edith Miller, Billy Ward,

and Tracy Moten.

Democratic Party County Chairman Kelvin Bouie and Democratic Party Liaison Meghan Hickman

Republican Party Chairman Ann Marie Emmons

Local attorney Jim Conger

Warren Pearson, representative with the Biden campaign.

**Approved Minutes**

Board Member Gina Burke made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 13, 2020, regular meeting. Board Vice Chairman Beverly Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Budget**

Chief Elections Official Carol Heard reviewed the 2020-2021 budget. The Elections Office is at 78 percent with the ideal remaining is 75 percent. Heard said the budget doesn’t reflect the full array of expenses associated with the Nov. 3 General Election. Also, the Jan. 5, 2021 Runoff Election will perhaps entail a lot of expenses since turnout is expected to be heavier than a normal runoff. Heard inquired about the advertisements for the regular public meetings. The Board asked Heard to investigate what the requirements are and report back to the board.

**Old Business**

1. **2020 General election, certify election results.**

Vice Chairman Beverly Holmes said the election was very smooth and thanked the staff and poll workers for all their hard work. Holmes then moved to certify the election results for the Nov. 3, 2020, General Election results. Board Member Johnny Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Members of the board signed the Consolidation of Returns mandated by the state.

1. **Review calendar for upcoming state and federal runoffs.**

Chief Elections Official went through the proposed calendar for the upcoming state and federal runoffs. Heard said staff and poll workers will begin the first audit and hand recount of all ballots cased. The Secretary of State did combine the state and federal runoff elections to occur on Jan. 5. The board had approved advanced voting hours for the state runoff, but that action was voided after the state combined the elections.

Advanced voting for the runoff is set to begin on Dec. 14. Heard said there is no set Saturday voting for the runoff, but suggested that advanced voting occur on the first Saturday, Dec. 19, because turnout may necessitate that Saturday voting. There will be three days of voting on Dec. 21-23, with Dec. 24 and 25 being county holidays. Come back on Dec. 28-30 for regular hours, at which time voting will cease. The office will be open from 8 a.m. to noon on Dec. 31, but no voting will occur. Jan. 1 is a holiday.

Board Member Gina Burke made the motion for those hours, and Vice Chairman Beverly Holmes seconded that motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Heard said the Board of Education is considering a request to call a special election for March 16.

**New Business**

1. **Complaint from Independent Sheriff Candidate Chip Nix**

Chairman Keith Sellars read the emailed formal complaint from Independent Sheriff Candidate Chip Nix, who didn’t attend the meeting: “I would like to make a formal complaint regarding Board of Elections Member Keith Sellars. This is regarding social media comments in reference to the local election. I believe the comments show unethical behavior and a violation of his oath. I don’t believe that he could fairly make board decisions regarding the local election. Open records request of Sellars show other unethical behavior during this election. Thank you and advance I believe this matter will be looked into and treated in a professional manner.”

Sellars further read from the Georgia Election Code Annotated 21-2-214(c):

“No member of a county board of registrars, deputy registrar, member of a county or municipal board of elections or county or municipal board of elections and registration, or a member of a joint county-municipal board of election or joint county-municipal board of elections and registration while conducting the duties of such person’s office, shall engage in any political activity on behalf of a candidate, political party or body, or question, including but not limited to, distributing campaign literature, engaging in any communication that advocates or criticizes a particular candidate, officeholder, or political party or body, and wearing badges, buttons, or clothing with partisan messages.”

**Adjournment --** The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.