**Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration**

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

**203 W. Broughton St.**

**Bainbridge, GA 39819**

**August 9, 2016**

**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 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 Gina Burke was absent.

**Public Participation**: None

**Board Members present: Staff present:**

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

Vice Chairman Willie Lamb Jr. Linda Walton (Clerk of Voter Registration)

Keith Sellars

Beverly W. Holmes

**Approve Minutes**

Board Chairman Wendell Cofer made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 29, 2016, meeting. Board Member Keith Sellars seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

**Budget**

Chief Elections Official Carol Heard said the budget is at 90 percent, which is where the ideal percentage is. She said a big hit in the budget was contract labor, which took into account the Runoff Election. It will continue to be hit hard through the Nov. 8 General Election and for the mandatory training in association with that election.

Chairman Wendell Cofer said the items that concerned him on the budget were group and life insurance, which were at 88 percent, and workers comp insurance was 85 percent. He was concerned that they were not calculated properly.

Heard also said that next months’ equipment and maintenance will reflect that 25 more batteries were ordered for the DREs.

Board member Keith Sellars asked if the liability/property insurance items is at zero and was charged out already. Cofer said it probably was charged in bulk.

**Old Business**

**(A) Overtime hours, etc., policy for Board of Elections staff and other staff policy changes.**

Chief Elections Officials Carol Heard said there were minor changes to the policy, with the word “Definitions” inserted into the heading of 3.1, and the rewording of the last paragraph in 4.0 Procedures. Contract Labor was added and flex time was reworded based on recommendations from the board.

Chairman Wendell Cofer said he would like to see the title for IT Manager Roy Reynolds changed from Sheriff’s Department IT Manager to Board of Elections IT Manager Roy Reynolds. Cofer also asked about if there is a conflict, what to do if IT Manager Roy Reynolds has to sit out and the Board must hire another IT person. Heard said the second paragraph under 4.2 Contract Labor should cover it.

Cofer asked if we can’t use IT Manager Reynolds but use Sterling IT Solutions, if it would be budget neutral. Heard said if Reynolds is not paid the $500 a month for a particular month that Sterling IT Solutions charges the Board of Elections $75 per hour, that the office staff could only use Sterling for certain hours during L&A of the DREs, and the staff do the L&A on the ExpressPolls. There was some discussion on doing L&A in October and the election in November.

Board Member Keith Sellars said he didn’t have a problem with Reynolds working the Primary Election but understands from a perception basis that it was something the board had to do. Sellars said if this conflict should arise again that Reynolds recuses himself for the election that it would also apply to the L&A.

Board Member Beverly Holmes asked if the Board of Elections needs Sterling Widner and if he has been trained.

CEO Heard said he has not officially been trained other than the time he and Heard went to KSU prior the Primary Election for mainly Election Night Operations and not L&A. He was briefly trained in L&A by Reynolds during the Runoff Election.

Chairman Cofer said all this policy is doing is addressing an alleged perception problem. Board Member Keith Sellars said he agreed. Cofer recommended that the board table the 4.2 section of the policy until more information and budget concerns are addressed, and he will get more information and report back to the board.

**(B) CEO’s accumulated comp hours**

Chairman Wendell Cofer referred to a memo written by CEO Heard on approximately 50 hours of comp time that was left over from when she was salary and went to hourly. Cofer said Heard had requested that 40 hours be used after the 2016 Election season but prior to the end of the new fiscal year on July 1, 2017, for a tentatively planned trip, and use up the remaining hours as soon as her schedule allows. The board agreed with Cofer to bring up the issue with County Administrator Alan Thomas.

**New Business**

**(A) Hours of Early Voting**

CEO referred to a memo on increasing the minimum number of early voting hours for the Nov. 8 General Election, specifically because there were almost 1,000 more voters who voted early than voters who voted on Election Day. CEO Carol Heard endorsed Sunday voting and endorsed extended hours during the last week of early voting.

Chairman Wendell Cofer said closing the polls at 5 p.m. doesn’t make a lot of sense to him because people are getting off work and trying to go home. Cofer said he could easily buy into making every night until 6 p.m., and he could easily buy into dropping the last week of advance voting starting at 8 a.m. instead of 9 a.m., or basically from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day of advance voting. Cofer said there may be an additional 23 hours for 10 poll workers.

Chairman Cofer asked board members if they can buy into 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at least for every day of advance voting. Board Members Beverly Holmes, Keith Sellars and Willie Lamb said yes, mainly because voters do get confused. Sellars said because he works out of town, he would be in favor of extending the last week of advance voting until 7 p.m.

Chairman Cofer recommended that staff do a cost analysis on the extended hours and the different schedules. Cofer said first and second week, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; third week, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Chairman Cofer said Sunday voting is very controversial and the board should proceed with caution on beginning Sunday voting. Board Members Beverly Holmes and Willie Lamb said they would like to do more research. Board Member Keith Sellars said he is not in favor of it because there have to be limits on staff time, budget, etc. Chairman Cofer said it is too much to add 23 hours of advance voting and Sunday voting.

Chairman Cofer and Board Member Keith Sellars made a motion that Sunday voting be tabled pending further research, and the proposal for extending hours on the first and second week to 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; the third week to 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. is tentatively approved pending cost analysis. Board Member Willie Lamb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Cofer said Sunday’s cost analysis is tabled and for board members to do their own research.

Board Member Beverly Holmes further asked about the overtime CEO Carol Heard and Clerk of Voter Registration Linda Walton might incur as well. Holmes also asked if that cost analysis could include staff overtime.

**(B) Date and time stamp machine**

Chief Elections Official Carol Heard said the present date and time stamp is not working properly and staff recommended the purchase of a Pyramid 3600SS because the Board of Elections name could be added to the time stamp. Chairman Wendell Cofer offered a motion to purchase the lowest cost machine from Amazon. Motion passed unanimously.

**(C) Tablets for Election Day Line Managers**

Chief Elections Official Carol Heard summarized the concept of line managers at the Fairgrounds and Coliseum polling location. Heard said she anticipated using the tablets for this election and maybe one more. After talking with Verizon on tablets, Heard said she was not happy with the concept of commercial tablets such as through Verizon. Heard thought the idea of line managers is still good, but the purchase of tablets was not appealing at this time. Discussion centered on just using laptops.

**(D) Tentative Election Day poll worker schedule, training and proposed pay rate for clerks in this election.**

Chief Elections Official Carol Heard had submitted a tentative schedule of poll workers for Election Day. Heard said there are a lot of highly trained clerks for this election and recommended that clerks receive a pay raise from $7.50 to $8 per hour. Board Member Willie Lamb made a motion to increase the clerks’ pay rate from $7.50 per hour to $8 per hour for the Nov. 8 General Election. Board Member Beverly Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board adjourned by 7:36 p.m.