

Decatur County Board of Elections and Registration
Board of Elections Courthouse Annex Meeting Room
122 W. Water St.
Bainbridge, GA 39817
January 9, 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 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.

Public Participation: None

Board Members present:

Board Chairman Wendell Cofer

Board Vice Chairman Willie Lamb Jr.

Board Member Keith Sellars

Board Member Gina Burke

Board Member Beverly Holmes

Staff present:

Carol P. Heard, Chief Elections Official

Linda Walton, Clerk of Voter Registration

Office staffers Margaret Bryant and Carla Robinson

Guests, Kelvin Bouie, Edith Miller, Melbah Andrews and

Billy Ward

Approve Minutes

Board Member Beverly Holmes made a motion to accept the minutes from the Nov. 13, 2017, meeting, and Board Member Gina Burke seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget

Chairman Wendell Cofer said at this point in the year the ideal remaining percentage is 51, and the Elections budget is 62 percent. CEO Heard said two ExpressPoll 4000s and one ExpressPoll 5000 were sent to ES&S for repair. The annual conference registration opens in next couple of days and she wanted to get an idea of who is committed to going. Chairman Cofer said they will first put down Board Member Keith Sellars, then Vice Chairman Willie Lamb can go if Sellars cannot go.

Old Business

A. Recognition of poll workers

a. Guidelines for poll worker recognition

Chairman Cofer asked the Board how they would like to recognize poll workers. Cofer said he and staff checked on gift cards, but they are considered bonuses and are unconstitutional. They checked on building names, but the county commission is against that, which includes any type of "naming of building" both inside and outside. CEO

Heard said the Board has in the past given plaques to poll workers for incremental years of service. Board Member Gina Burke suggested a “years of service” plaque and wall of fame.

Cofer said the Board requested the CEO to put together a multi-name plaque. Board Member Keith Sellars suggested the plaque be located at the Courthouse Annex. Cofer said the board is in favor of a multi-name plaque at the Elections Office in the Courthouse Annex.

b. Consideration of resolution for Janelle Nelson

A draft resolution renaming the Fairgrounds honorarily for Janelle Nelson during times of elections was reworked so that any mention of renaming the polling location for Janelle Nelson be taken out. Beverly Holmes said her mother, Anna R. Washington, worked for more than 40 years as well. Poll worker Mary Jacobs has worked more than 40 years. Chairman Cofer said when a poll worker retires who has served a long time be given a small plaque when they retire. Further, when poll workers reach milestones, such as 30, 40, 50 years, that they names be added to a multi-name plaque recognizing their years of service. Chairman Cofer said the Board would like the poll workers contacted to see who else has served if 40 years.

Upgrades to the Fairgrounds

The board agreed to move forward with installing a hot water heater at the Courthouse Annex.

CEO Heard said the Board had originally talked about storing the DREs at the Fairgrounds; however, Chairman Cofer and CEO Heard both said after some consideration that storing the DREs at the Fairgrounds for an extended period was not the wisest move. CEO Heard said some DREs that will not be sent to a polling location on Election Day can be stored at the Fairgrounds. But the ones that will potentially be used in an election should remain at the Courthouse Annex.

New Business

A. Consideration of amending Board of Elections bylaws so terms of chairman and vice chairman are aligned.

Chairman Cofer said he would like the board to combine the terms of the chairman and vice chairman and make them two-year terms. Cofer also wanted to eliminate the term limits. Board Member Keith Sellars made a motion to align the terms of the chairman and vice chairman and for the terms to be two years and not limited. Board member Gina Burke seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Elections of Board chairman and vice chairman.

Board Member Keith Sellars nominated Wendell Cofer as chairman and Willie Lamb Jr. as vice chairman. Sellars also said he would be happy to serve as vice chairman if necessary. Beverly Holmes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission memorandum of agreement for its election on Nov. 6, 2018.

CEO Heard said the Board received an agreement from the Commission requesting the Board hold an election on Nov. 6, 2018, for its district supervisor. Heard had County Attorney Bruce Kirbo reviewed the agreement, and his only question was who would pay for a runoff, which would be on Dec. 4, if that race was the only one to be held. A Commission representative replied in an email that the commission would reimburse the county for a runoff election should one occur for the district supervisor's election.

Board Member Burke made a motion to enter into the agreement with the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission to hold its election. Vice Chairman Willie Lamb Jr. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Recap of Carol's visit to Lowndes County and to VRAG Legislative Committee meeting in Atlanta.

a. Provisional ballots – board's role in approving or disapproving each ballot.

CEO Heard gave a recap on her visit to the Lowndes County. Heard said there were some things they suggested we do and don't do. One not to do was the board voting on each provisional ballot. Chairman Cofer said most provisional ballots are clear cut and the Board should only be involved in a ballot's final determination if staff needs guidance or has a question on it. Chairman Cofer said he would favor a blanket vote on provisional votes as part of the certification process.

Arcview purchase or online map access.

CEO Heard said Lowndes County uses Arcview, a program furnished by the Regional Development Commission, to ensure each voter is in their correct precinct combo boundary based on their address. The Board said they would like to add Arcview into next year's budget.

Adjournment -- The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.