

Bean, 27, named chairman of Macon County Democrats

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Stephen M. Bean, 27, is the new chairman of the Macon County Democratic Party. He won a narrow 449-vote victory Monday night over Larry Royer.

The tally was 4,114 for Bean and 3,665 for Royer. Precinct committeemen voted the number of ballots cast in their precinct in the March 18 primary.

Meanwhile, H.G. "Skinny" Taylor was routinely re-elected to his 17th term as chairman of the Macon County Republican Party. Taylor will serve more consecutive terms as a party chairman than any other in state GOP history. There was little open fighting between the voting Democrats present at St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

The only controversy arose after the meeting, when Royer complained he was denied a chance to speak before the vote.

"I was dumbfounded. I thought I would be able to speak," Royer told James W. Johnson, chairman of the meeting and a Bean supporter. "That was worth a thousand votes right there. My parliamentarian didn't know what the hell was going on."

At one point at the meeting, Royer

was nominated as a candidate for party treasurer. He withdrew, as did William Odeneal, a Royer backer. Lynda Hagler, a Royer supporter, was later elected treasurer.

Sarah Sain, R.C. Smith and Rick Jackson, all Bean supporters, were elected vice chairmen over Jack Marques of Oreana, a Royer supporter. Rosemary Halverson was elected secretary over Mrs. Hagler.

Other Republican officers elected at the Ambassador Motor Inn are:

Carl Deyton, first vice chairman; Ralph Wilcox Jr., second vice chairman; William H. Maddox, secretary; Robert W. Davis, treasurer; James Malloy and William Heft, sergeants at arms.

Bean's victory makes him the youngest Democratic county chairman in the state.

"I think it was a healthy fight," Bean, personal officer in the state treasurer's office, said later. "That's what Democrats are famous for."

Royer had been critical of the party organization headed by 12-year veteran Halie Bafford, who retired as chairman by nominating Bean. There were 43 precinct committeeman vacancies in the

March 18 primary election, Royer had noted.

There were a dozen committeemen, controlling 983 votes, absent Monday night. Three others, with 222 votes, passed without voting. In another 13 precincts, worth nearly 1,000 votes, there are no committeemen. Bean said his first priority would be to fill the vacancies.

He also said he wants to concentrate on fund-raising, open a permanent party headquarters and hold regular office hours.

Two of three committeemen controlling the most votes supported Royer. They included Marques, whose 216 votes were the largest number cast by any one committeeman. William F. Oliver, a Decatur city councilman, nominated Royer at Monday's meeting. Royer said later there were six or seven committeemen who had promised him their votes, but voted instead for Bean.

"Six or seven of the big ones we were told were in our corner," said Royer. "All of a sudden they weren't. And that's politics."

Bean said he had similar experiences, but that the voting was "a lot closer than I expected."



Staff photo by Doug Gaumon

"It was a healthy fight," observed Bean after his victory.

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Thu, Dec 13, 2018