

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Special Called Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2020

*via zoom platform

Start Time: 2:30 p.m.

End Time: 2:45 p.m.

Board Attendees: Chair Samuel Tillman
Vice-Chair Baoky Vu
Dele Lowman Smith
Anthony Lewis
Susan Motter

Other Attendees: Erica Hamilton, Director
Viviane Ernstes, County Attorney
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney
Irene Vander Els, Assistant County Attorney
Shelley Momo, Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Tillman called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m. Motion by Ms. Motter and seconded by Ms. Smith to approve the agenda. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tillman read the rules for public comment.

Public comment may be submitted by sending an email of one page or less to Electionspubliccmnt@dekalbcountyga.gov which must be received between 2:30 PM and 3:00 PM on the day of the meeting. The body of your email must include your first and last name, followed by your address. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language will not be permitted. By submitting an email for public comment, you agree to have your name, address and the email broadcast on the UStream and entered into the record and minutes. The DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections reserves the right, at the DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections' sole discretion, to (1) add your email to the record/minutes without reading any of it into the broadcast or (2) read all or a portion of your email into the record/minutes. The Public Comments received are attached and hereby incorporated into these minutes by reference. See attachment(s).

NEW BUSINESS

A) Recertification of the November 3, 2020 General Election

Motion by Mr. Vu and seconded by Ms. Smith to recertify the November 3, 2020 General Election. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Tillman read the following statement: The DeKalb County Board of Registration and Election is recertifying the November 3, 2020 General Election at the suggestion of the Secretary of State.

A human error led to 36 ballots being omitted from the initial count. So it was corrected, and the recertification completes the corrective action. DeKalb County immediately contacted the Georgia Secretary of State upon discovery of the error. We have also worked to review all internal protocols with staff and personnel to ensure every legal and verified ballot cast counts in our election.

BOARD COMMENTS

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Vu and seconded by Ms. Smith to adjourn this meeting. Meeting adjourned.

Public Comments (3)

Public Comment #1

Chairman Tillman, Vice-Chairman Vu, and Board Members Lewis, Smith, and Motter:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. I am Susannah Scott, the president of the League of Women Voters of Georgia, and a life-long resident of DeKalb County. I am committed to the League's mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.

I am thankful for the incredibly hard work of the Elections staff and volunteers from around the County who worked hard to ensure DeKalb it's Risk Limiting Audit was completed in a timely fashion. I know that a lot has been asked of the staff in recent months, and I hope they are aware how much their work is appreciated. I would encourage this Board to direct the supervisor to ensure that volunteers and observers are given adequate notice and instructions if a recount is required in the coming weeks, and to share with the public so that miscommunication and uncertainty about the process can be reduced

Finally, I one again request that public comments be read into the record during meetings. Given the failure of this Board to publish minutes in a timely fashion (the last minutes posted on the website are from the June 29, 2020 Special Called Meeting), it is important that the public is aware of the concerns and issues their fellow citizens are raising during the public comment section. I also strongly encourage the Board to ensure that they are adhering to the Open Meetings Act (§50-14-1) by ensuring meeting agendas and minutes are posted in a timely fashion. Given the importance of this election cycle, it is imperative that this information be made available to the citizens of DeKalb.

Thank you for your time and attention to these issues. The League of Women Voters stands ready to assist DeKalb to ensure all DeKalb voters have full and equal access to the ballot box in the upcoming election.

Sincerely,
Susannah E. Scott
2557 Hawthorne Drive NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30345

Public Comment #2

Dear Board members:

Thank you for your many contributions through this election and recounts. The current criticism directed at you, especially after your diligent efforts, must be especially trying. Nevertheless, I must point out that granting fair access to the public is important to building public trust.

I have repeatedly voiced my concerns about up-to-date backup paper copies of voter rolls and adequate Poll Pads to this body and to the SEB. These concerns were a major reason I served as a poll watcher at Beulah Baptist on November 3, and I was particularly interested in whether voter check-in was prompt and efficient.

The polling place seemed very well run, but I noticed voters waiting a long time to check in, that the Dominion Voting tech was consulting with the check-in clerks, and that poll workers were on hold on phones while people waited to vote. I stood close enough to the check-in station to get a better understanding of what was going on, always staying out of the way of traffic or hearing voters' personal information.

Almost an hour later I was standing outside the polling place when an area manager told me I couldn't be anywhere near the check-in area. She insinuated that I was taking photos and talking on my phone, which I was not. She was not interested in the fact that poll watchers are permitted in the voting area – not just at the far edge of the space – per state law.

This is one of several times I have been denied meaningful access to seeing and hearing how voting and ballot processing are done in DeKalb. For example, on September 29, Director Hamilton told me I couldn't look at the Election Management System, even from behind a barrier in another room.

Now, more than ever, this body needs to build trust in election processes. Arbitrary restrictions, incompatible with law, will undermine such efforts. Restrictions and permissions are understandably complex, which is why improvements will only come about with better training.

Sincerely
Liz Throop
612 Clifton Rd., NE
Atlanta, GA 30307

Public Comment #3

To the DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections (BRE):

Today marks another of multiple Special Called meetings by the BRE. However, none of the minutes of the preceding meetings since the end of June 2020 have been transcribed and posted to your website. This, if not in direct violation of the Open Records Act, is at least skirting the intent of that law, and

fosters secrecy and poor intent rather than transparency by this body. The VRE has received significant grant money to prepare for and conduct transparent elections, so not having someone to prepare and post minutes is unacceptable. Hire someone and get this done. If you do not, it appears that the entire BRE supports this lack of transparency. In addition, there was no agenda for today's meeting on the website, and there is *still* no agenda posted as I write and submit this comment. This is absolutely unacceptable.

Please continue to cooperate with, and accept help from, the National Vote at Home Initiative, and your key Communications person, Erik Burton and the colleagues from his organization.

Sincerely,
On Behalf of Indivisible Marching Buddies of Atlanta
Paula Bosworth
2845 Whitby Dr.
Doraville, GA 30340