

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD
OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
DEKALB COUNTY
April 27, 2020**

The DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections convened to conduct its monthly meeting on April 27th, via teleconference (Zoom) while simultaneous available via livestream on DCTV's UStream channel (<https://video.ibm.com/channel/dctv-channel-23>).

Present:

- Anthony Lewis, Board Member
- Susan Motter, Board Member
- Dele Lowman Smith, Board Member
- Baoky Vu, Board Member
- Erica Hamilton, Director
- Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney
- Irene Vander Els, Assistant County Attorney
- Shelley Momo, Assistant County Attorney
- Sharon Hillman, Administrative Coordinator

Mr. Tillman called the meeting to order at approximately 4:30 PM and the agenda was adopted.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion. The question was called, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Comments from the Public

Eight citizens emailed their comments between 4:30 PM and 5:00 PM. They are attached to the minutes.

Unfinished Business – There was no unfinished business.

New Business -

- A) 2019 Challenged Voters: Ms. Hamilton stated that it is the staff's recommendation to table this item pending legal counsel. Mr. Lewis motioned to adopt the staff's recommendation and table the item. Mr. Vu seconded the motion. The question was called, and the motion passed unanimously.
- B) Emergency Polling Place changes: Ms. Hamilton stated that the staff is still speaking with polling places regarding the June 9th Election and requested that the item be tabled until further discussion with polling locations. Mr. Vu motioned to adopt the staff's recommendation and table the item. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. The question was called, and the motion passed unanimously.
- C) June 9, 2020 Advance Voting Location and Times: Ms. Hamilton provided the Board with the staff's recommended locations and times for the June 9, 2020 Advance Voting. Ms. Smith motioned to adopt the staff's recommendation and

approved the advance voting locations and times. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion. The question was called, and the motion passed unanimously

- D) May Meeting Date: Ms. Hamilton stated that it was the staff's recommendation to move the May meeting to May 14, 2020 since the election was moved to June. Mr. Lewis motioned to adopt the staff's recommendation and move the meeting to May 14, 2020. Mr. Vu seconded the motion. The question was called, and the motion passed unanimously
- E) Secure the Vote HAVA (Help America Vote Act): Ms. Hamilton stated that the Secretary of State's office was providing a grant to the counties for purchases that were needed to accommodate the new voting equipment. The grant has a maximum of \$15,000.00. Ms. Hamilton stated that is staff's recommendation to apply for the maximum amount. Ms. Smith motioned to adopt the staff's recommendation and apply for the grant. Mr. Vu seconded the motion. The question was called, and the motion passed unanimously

Director's Report

Ms. Hamilton provided information on the status of the Registration Department, Election Department, and Absentee Ballot request. She also thanked the staff for their hard work during the COVID- 19 crisis.

Comments from the Board – Ms. Motter thanked the staff for their hardworking during the election cycle with the Covid-19 crisis. Mr. Vu thanked Ms. Hamilton for her leadership, the staff for their work, and the county for this response to the crisis. Ms. Smith thanked the staff and the county for their work. Ms. Smith also asked if Ms. Hamilton would provide information on the State Elections Board's Absentee Ballot Drop Box decision. Mr. Lewis echoed the thanks to the staff and county. Mr. Tillman thanked the staff and stated that it is imperative that the department receive additional physical space. He also spoke about how quick the department was to respond to the State Election Board's ruling on ballot drop box.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sharon Hillman, Administrative Coordinator.
Registration and Elections

April 27, 2020 Public Comments

Derek Spransy, 21 Sycamore Sq, Decatur

First, I would like to thank the staff of DeKalb BRE for their hard work processing absentee ballot requests. It is not an easy job, but it's essential, and they have my thanks.

Earlier this month the Jackson County BRE passed a resolution that they sent to the Secretary of State and Speaker of the House requesting that the state's primaries be conducted entirely by mail due to health concerns for voters, poll workers, and BRE staff. I would go so far as to say that **all** voting this year should be conducted by mail for those who are able. The number of contact points required to use touchscreen voting, signing the poll pads, passing out ballot cards, etc. puts everyone at risk, as we recently saw in Wisconsin where now over 40 Covid-19 infections have been tied directly to in person voting.

Vote by mail works in other states, it can work in Georgia, and the health of everyone involved is worth it. I would like to ask that the DeKalb BRE pass a similar resolution as Jackson county, to be sent to the SoS and legislature, requesting vote by mail for the rest of the current election cycle (through January 2021). You cannot change election law and procedure, but as the BRE for one of the largest counties in the state your input makes a difference. Please consider this request for the safety of all. Thank you.

Liz Throop, 612 Clifton Rd., NE, Atlanta

Hello, this is Liz Throop. Thanks for allowing me to comment.

I applaud the Elections office for moving quickly to create ballot drop boxes to help ensure reliable delivery of mail ballots.

However, whether we think it's a good idea or not, many county residents will vote in person this month and next. Poll workers must be provided with updated training, plus masks, gloves, and shields. Otherwise, we risk poll workers refusing to work due to safety concerns, followed by polls closing due to lack of staff, followed by bigger crowds at remaining polling places, followed by even more fearful poll workers. We have seen this happen in Wisconsin.

Sanitation will be much simpler by not using touchscreens for voting or poll pads for signing oaths. Some of you have read the Best Practices from Dominion Voting, recommending against cleaning voting machines unless they are powered off. We know shutting down voting machines between each voter, or anything close to that, is not feasible.

Similarly, collecting onscreen signatures on Poll Pads risks transmitting the virus between poll workers and voters.

Using disposable styluses may be a way to keep screens clean, but ballot access cards are also a disease vector. It's far simpler and safer to switch now to hand-marked paper ballots, filled in with a disposable pen or a pen brought from home. Switching to hand-marked ballots would also

allow placing booths far away from electrical outlets or even outside in parking decks to achieve social distancing.

I'm very appreciative of DeKalb's efforts to allow residents to vote from home and will continue to promote that through phone banking and social media. But let's prepare for the safest possible in-person voting experience.

Betsy Schwalbach, 536 Hardendorf Avenue, NE, Atlanta

Hello:

My name is Betsy Schwalbach and my address is: 536 Hardendorf Avenue, NE, Atlanta, GA 30307.

Regarding the DeKalb County Voter Registration and Elections website, I noticed you added two paragraphs explaining to voters the two types of ballots that they will receive for the June 9th election, depending on whether they voted early for the March 24th election or not.

My concern is the wording of these paragraphs. You do not mention that the voter **MUST** apply for an absentee ballot. Rather you state that the voter will **RECEIVE** a ballot. Please change this so that the instructions are clear to the voter. They need to be informed that they **MUST** apply for an absentee ballot **BEFORE** they will **RECEIVE** a ballot.

For reference, I copied and pasted the two paragraphs I am referring to here:

Voters who have previously cast ballots in the presidential preference primary / special election originally scheduled for March 24, 2020, will receive a ballot that contains the races for the June 9, 2020, general primary and general nonpartisan election only.

Voters who have not yet cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential preference primary/special election will receive a ballot that contains both the presidential preference primary/special election races and the General Primary and general nonpartisan election races.

I also have a question about how much additional staffing you are adding to process the influx of absentee ballot applications? It seems this will be overwhelming.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Burns, 731 Scott Circle, Decatur

Hi,

Thanks for holding this meeting remotely and thank you for all the work you are doing!

A few questions that you might get to during this meeting anyway!

- 1) What is the expected time frame for when a person emails their absentee ballot application and when they can expect the SOS website to update?
- 2) Are we having drop boxes in DeKalb for the June 9th election (ballots, I know we have it for absentee applications)?
- 3) What is the scale for in-person voting?

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Thanks!

Elizabeth Burns

Bethann Frillman, 1659 E Clifton RD

My name is Bethann Frillman, I live at 1659 E Clifton Rd, in DeKalb county.

First let me say that I hope you all and your staff have stayed healthy and safe. Thank you for all you are doing to make this election run during this difficult time.

I have a couple of questions and observations today, that I hope will help the primary run as smoothly as possible.

1. Last winter, you let us know that the Department of Elections website was being completely redone with a launch date in January. This date was eventually moved to March 2. I understand that updating the website is likely not a top priority right now, but I am hoping that some additional information can be posted until the website relaunch is ready.

I see that changes have been made to supply up to date information via page banners including the location of drop boxes and new election date.

I think it is also very important to include an explanation and FAQ on how to fill out an absentee ballot and the oath. The SOS has a pdf that Fulton county DRE has linked to on their site that may be helpful. **I also think there are so many changes during this election that a FAQ page with all the updates and explanations will be very helpful, especially as more changes are likely.**

2. Do you have any updates on polling places, early voting locations and election day?
3. It has come to my attention, that the absentee ballots are being delivered with a folded 'sleeve' instead of an inner envelope, even though instructions reference an envelope . How will these be processed and how do we get information to voters about this change? Will all ballots have a sleeve or will some have an envelope?

Again, thank you for all your work and addressing these questions.

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Bethann

Joy Wasson, 612 Clifton Rd NE, Atlanta

Hi. My name is Joy Wasson and I live in DeKalb County at 612 Clifton Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30307. I want to thank the Board and Elections Department for your hard work during this challenging time. I am especially appreciative of your installing two ballot drop boxes at Memorial Drive because this will be a great convenience and ensure safety for voters. Voters all over DeKalb look forward to learning of additional drop box locations.

If there are any polling place changes approved at today's meeting, could you please share the details on screen during the meeting, not just verbally? Also, could you please promptly post any changes on social media and your website?

I am sure Director Hamilton will be giving a report on absentee ballots, including requests. I am hearing from friends and seeing posts on social media that applications sent long ago by email haven't been processed yet. I know this is an unprecedented amount of applications and ballots to be contending with. Any details on the delay in processing email applications and when you'd be caught up would be particularly welcome. (For example "We're now processing applications received by regular mail that came in on April __th and processing electronic mail applications dated April __th. We expect to have our backlog completed on ____.") That way we can assure folks that their applications will be received and they do not need to further burden you with duplicate emails or calls.

Thank you.

Shawn Ouweleen, 1476 Fairview Rd, NE, Atlanta

Hello:

My name is Shawn Ouweleen and my address is: 1476 Fairview Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.

While I am appreciative that there are two secure drop boxes located at 4380 Memorial Drive I am wondering, as DeKalb County covers over 270 square miles if it makes more sense to have

additional drop boxes located strategically around the county?

I would also like to know what lag time should we expect for processing an VBM Request and then having a ballot sent out?

Thank You,

Shawn Ouweleen

Libby Howze, No address provided

To BRE Director Hamilton and your staff for all your good work during Covid 19! I especially appreciate your mailing absentee ballots to inactive as well as active voters.

Libby Howze

Tucker

**“Democracy only works
when we work for it.
When we fight for it,
when we demand it.”**

Stacey Abrams