

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Meeting Minutes

May 28, 2024

Start Time: 12:03 p.m.

End Time: 1:41 p.m.

Board Attendees: Karli Swift, Chair
Vasu Abhiraman, Vice-Chair
Nancy Jester
Anthony Lewis
Susan Motter

Other Attendees: Keisha Smith, Executive Director
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney
Shelley Momo, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Tristen Waite, Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Swift called the Board of Registration and Elections meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. Ms. Austin read the roll by calling each board member by name. A quorum was met.

Motion by Ms. Jester, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, to amend and approve the agenda by adding item 5B under Items for Decision to discuss and approve two polling place changes. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, to approve the minutes of the April 11 scheduled meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Austin read the rules for public comment:

Public comments may be made in person or submitted by sending an email of one printed page or less at a minimum font of 12 to electionspubliccmnt@dekalbcountyga.gov which must be received between 35 and 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting. The body of your email must include your first and last name. By submitting an email for public comment, you agree to have your name 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. All public comments will be limited to 2 minutes. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, holding up signs, clapping, yelling, standing or laying in the aisles to show support for or opposition to a speaker will

Approved 06/24/2024

not be permitted, but a show of hands or quietly standing in place will be permitted to show support for or opposition to a speaker's position.

The following citizens provided public comment:

- Gail Lee
- Bill Henderson
- Brent Reynolds
- Robert (Mike) Bryan
- Elizabeth Shackelford
- Nancy Arnold

ITEMS FOR DECISION

A) Certification of the May General Primary/Nonpartisan Election

Director Smith reported the election results and statistics of the 2024 General Primary/Nonpartisan Election. She shared the continued success of partnerships with other County departments and proceeded to thank all key stakeholders for another successful election cycle.

Ms. Jester asked if a footnote could be added to the reporting to explain the effects of a two-card ballot on the reported number for ballots cast. She further inquired on the cause of the differential. Director Smith replied that the nonpartisan ballots were single-card ballots. Ms. Jester also asked if anything was done during the election to change the programming of or L&A test any machine. Director Smith replied that privacy filters had to be added to the touchscreens but that did not require any machine to be L&A tested again.

Mr. Lewis asked for the most common reason absentee ballots were rejected due to an identification issue. Director Smith replied that either the ID was not valid or did not match what was on file and could not be verified to be accepted. He further asked about provisional ballots that were rejected due to the registration being in question and Director Smith advised that the information could be provided to him at a later time. Lastly, Mr. Lewis inquired about a discrepancy between DeKalb's results on one race and the results displayed for that race on the Secretary of State's site. Director Smith replied that DeKalb VRE is responsible for ensuring that results uploaded from the department are accurate; and reiterated that DeKalb's upload to the SOS were correct. She went on to explain how the display error on the SOS site appeared to have stemmed from the SOS not adding together the unofficial and incomplete results for the multi-county race which included results from DeKalb and Gwinnett.

Ms. Motter asked for an explanation of the difference in the absentee by mail numbers between the election summary report and the post-election presentation. She also requested a footnote to be added when there is any discrepancy in numbers. Registration and Elections Supervisor Jay Catherwood explained that the difference is caused when absentee ballots are received with missing pages. He stated definitively that there were 3,179 absentee ballots received. Ms. Motter also mentioned challenges with USPS and asked Director Smith if any guidance had been received from the SOS on navigating mail issues for the General Election in November. Director Smith responded that guidance from the SOS had not been received at this time and emphasized the importance of making a plan to vote including requesting and returning absentee ballots early.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, to certify the May General Primary/Nonpartisan Election. The motion passed unanimously.

B) Polling Place Changes

Director Smith reported that due to summer renovations, polling locations at Chesnut Elementary and Fairington Elementary would not be available for the June runoff election. She further stated that the change is expected to be temporary and that both schools should be available for November.

Motion by Ms. Jester, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the polling place changes.

Chair Swift asked the distance between the existing polling locations and the new proposed locations and for a map to show the locations relative to one another. She further asked how many voters are affected by the polling place changes and what is the plan to provide them notice. Director Smith replied that there will be signage at both the existing locations and the new proposed locations; all impacted voters would be mailed letters; and information on the polling place changes would be posted on the website as well as on social media.

Ms. Motter confirmed that the four polling place changes for the June runoff that had previously been approved by the Board were still in place. She further confirmed that these new polling place changes are in addition to the previously approved changes for a total of six polling place changes for the June runoff election.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Ms. Jester, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to recess for 10 minutes to sign certification documents. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Ms. Jester, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to reconvene the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A) Director's Report

Director Smith reported on registration, election, and warehouse activities. She stated that a moving company was used to deliver and pick up election equipment for this election and due to the success, the department would continue to implement that process for the subsequent elections. She further stated that the procurement process was followed and mentioned that an update will be provided on the company selected and cumulative total for services for the subsequent elections which will exceed \$50,000. Additionally, she reported on pre-election activities including the application of the privacy screens and post-election activities including the Risk-Limiting Audit. She stated the five races that will be in the June runoff election and presented the locations for advance voting, including the locations with drop boxes. She went on to provide updates on the FY24 budget, poll worker recruitment and training, and outreach activities. She re-emphasized the importance for voters to make a plan to vote and to double check their precincts ahead of time. Director Smith thanked the staff, the Board, County partners, poll workers, and other stakeholders for assisting with facilitation of another successful election cycle.

Ms. Jester asked Director Smith if there had been communication to the parties to request observers for the Risk-Limiting Audit and Director Smith replied affirmatively. Ms. Jester asked for a chart

of registration activity for the last few years by month. She also asked about credits and other line items in the budget.

Mr. Lewis asked Director Smith if the Election Night Runners continued to have a positive impact on results tabulation and reporting. Director Smith replied that tabulation is able to begin about two hours sooner due to the runners. He also asked about the poll worker recruitment process and the easiest way to apply and follow up. He inquired if the increase in full-time staff has had an impact on the amount of overtime being worked.

B) Legal Updates

Ms. Momo gave an update on the legislative session and provided a summary of the three election related bills signed by Governor Kemp: HB974, HB1207, SB189.

BOARD COMMENTS

Vice-Chair Abhiraman said thank you to everyone for their hard work.

Ms. Motter echoed the comments of Vice-Chair Abhiraman and also thanked the poll workers and the public that attended the meeting.

Mr. Lewis thanked the staff, all of the volunteers, and DCTV.

Ms. Jester thanked everyone as well as the public for coming out and sharing their thoughts.

Chair Swift thanked the staff, the Law Department, and the public and reminded everyone of the importance of local elections.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Motter, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m.