

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2021
*via zoom platform
Start Time: 4:30 p.m.
End Time: 7:10 p.m.

Board Attendees: Chair Dele Lowman Smith
Vice-Chair Nancy Jester
Anthony Lewis
Susan Motter
Karli Swift

Other Attendees: Twyla Hart, Registration Supervisor
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney
Irene Vander Els, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Shelley Momo, Senior Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Ms. Swift and seconded by Ms. Motter to call this meeting to order. Motion carries by unanimous vote. Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Mr. Lewis to approve the agenda. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A) August 12, 2021
- B) August 18, 2021 Special Called Meeting
- C) September 3, 2021 Special Called Meeting

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Mr. Lewis to approve the minutes as corrected according to Ms. Swift's revision for the August 18, 2021 and September 3, 2021 Special Called Meetings. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Baker read the rules for public comment.

Public comments of two minutes or less may be made live via the teleconference. For those joining the meeting by telephone, please be aware that your phone number may be displayed to the public viewing or participating in the online meeting. Citizens who attend the meeting via the Zoom link above may join the public comment queue by raising their hand in the Zoom application, while citizens who attend the meeting via telephone may join the comment queue by pressing # followed by 2. There will be no comment cards, so when you are called upon, please state your name and address for the record. Also, please be conscious of speaking time so that everyone has an opportunity to provide input in the allotted time. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language will not be permitted.

The following citizens provided public comment:

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- Jackie Hutter
- Marci McCarthy
- Elizabeth Burns
- Robert Michael Bryan

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Terry addressed the Board and looks forward to working with the BRE to address budget concerns in preparation for consideration by the OPS Committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Ms. Motter and seconded by Ms. Swift to recess for executive session to discuss litigation. Motion carries by unanimous vote. Motion by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Ms. Swift to resume this meeting. Motion carries 4-0. Ms. Jester will return to the meeting shortly. No votes were taken during executive session.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A) Office of Independent Internal Audit

Ms. Jester presented this item and invited Ms. Yolanda Lockett to perform a non-audit review of the department's budget and compare the budget to neighboring counties.

Ms. Lockett explained that the Board will need to submit a formal request in writing that outlines the expectations of the engagement.

Ms. Smith asked if benchmarking with other large, metropolitan areas is within the purview of Ms. Lockett's non-audit services. Specifically, Ms. Smith wants to evaluate the ratio of permanent to temporary employees in the department and the relationship between staffing and process documentation.

Ms. Motter is interested in the benchmarking aspect of this process. In addition to personnel, Ms. Motter is interested in physical capital, machinery/systems, and space. Ms. Lockett explained that any evaluation or assessments the Board desires can be done if the data is available.

Mr. Lewis is interested in assessing strengths and weaknesses; however, Ms. Lockett explained that evaluating strengths and weaknesses would fall under audit services.

Ms. Jester will follow-up with the Board on the formal, written request for non-audit services.

B) Department Budget

Ms. Swift presented an opportunity to submit an amended budget request to be considered by the Board of Commissioners before the OPS Committee meeting on September 21, 2021. This request would be voted on at the following OPS Committee meeting before being presented to the full Commission. Ms. Swift invited the Board to discuss what should be included in the amended budget request.

Mr. Lewis and Ms. Motter do not have any specific items to be included in an amended budget request at this time.

Ms. Smith is interested in updated poll worker training that is available in electronic format, postcard mailing as a component of voter outreach, and staffing accommodations.

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Ms. Swift suggested hiring security staff to manage security issues and including these concerns in the amended budget.

ITEMS FOR DECISION BY THE BOARD

A) Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes

Ms. Gilbert presented the map with recommended locations for absentee drop boxes. There must be a drop box at the Voter Registration and Elections Office. The other five additional drop box locations will be in the North, South, East, and West regions of the county.

Ms. Smith explained that Senate Bill 202 requires at least one drop box be placed at the Elections Office (which is centrally located). Additional drop boxes must be placed inside an advanced voting location and can only be used during voting hours.

The Board has a question about the interpretation of Senate Bill 202 regarding the number of additional drop boxes. Ms. Vander Els will consult with the Secretary of State to confirm what their interpretation is for drop box requirements.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to table this item until the end of this meeting before Board comments. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Swift to remove this item from the table. Motion carries by unanimous vote. Ms. Vander Els reviewed the statute and confirmed the recommended plan does conform to Senate Bill 202 drop box requirements. Ms. Vander Els suggested approving the map before the Board subject to confirmation of the Secretary of State interpretation.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to approve the proposed map before the board subject to additional review, and if needed, consultation with the Secretary of State Office regarding interpretation of the number of additional drop boxes permitted. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

B) Establishing Budget Committee

C) Board Governance Procedures and Notice of Intent to Amend Bylaws

Motion by Ms. Swift and seconded by Ms. Jester to defer items 7B and 7C to the next meeting. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Mr. Burton provided updates on outreach, vaccination efforts, pop-ups at Marta stations and website changes, press releases for both advanced voting locations and polling place changes, and social media integration. Also, efforts to supplement mailers so that residents receive information well in advance.

Ms. Smith commented on the discrepancy between voting hours for DeKalb County residents and City of Atlanta residents within DeKalb County. Because DeKalb County precincts close at 7:00 p.m., any City of Atlanta voter in DeKalb voting after 7:00 p.m. will be required to vote provisionally. DeKalb County cannot count City of Atlanta votes toward the countywide question.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Hart presented information contained in the Director's report prepared by Ms. Hamilton. This is Ms. Hart's first meeting as acting Director.

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Ms. Motter asked Ms. Gilbert about poll worker training, the number of volunteers and PPE supplies. Ms. Gilbert stated that the next poll worker training will be Friday, September 10 and will provide all the dates, locations and times to Board members should they be interested in attending. Ms. Gilbert confirmed the department has all the poll workers it needs and PPE for volunteers.

Ms. Smith asked about the target number of poll workers per precinct, reserve poll workers, poll worker training and compensation for training.

Ms. Hart announced details for the Registered and Ready Event scheduled for October 4, 2021. October 4 is the last day to register to vote in the November General Municipal and Special Election Runoff.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Swift and seconded by Ms. Jester to adjourn. This meeting is adjourned.