

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Special Called Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2021

*via zoom platform

Start Time: 4:00 p.m.

End Time: 5:00 p.m.

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

Other Attendees: Twyla Hart, Interim Director
Viviane Ernstes, County Attorney
Laura Johnson, Deputy County Attorney
Laura Moore, Senior Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Ms. Swift and seconded by Ms. Jester 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.

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.

No comments from the public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Mr. Lewis to recess for executive session to discuss personnel. Motion carries by unanimous vote. Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to resume this special called meeting. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

ITEMS FOR DECISION BY THE BOARD

Ms. Ernstes introduced this item, which consists of two parts: (1) a transition agreement with Erica Hamilton and (2) a transition plan from a recruitment and budgeting perspective for discussion by the Board to consider internally.

A) Transition

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Swift for the DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections to approve the Transition Agreement between Erica Hamilton and the DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections, to accept Ms. Hamilton's resignation from the position of Director of Voter Registration and Elections; effective today, and confirm the appointment of Twyla Hart as Interim Director of Voter Registration and Elections until further notice. Dele Lowman Smith is authorized to sign the Transition Agreement on behalf of the DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

Ms. Smith presented a general leadership transition plan outlining several activities from now until the end of the current election cycle for the Board's consideration. The goal is to identify one or two individuals, either through an executive staffing firm or relevant partners, who can work in an interim capacity while the Board conducts a national search for a Director position and a Deputy Director position.

Ms. Swift asked about the job descriptions provided to the Board and certifications for both positions. Also, Ms. Swift sought clarification about whether there will be one or two interim employees. Ms. Smith believes there is strong justification for two interim employees (e.g., a Director and a Deputy); however, if a candidate presents both skill sets, the Board may decide to select one interim employee.

Ms. Swift asked what the timeline is for this process. Ms. Smith suggested the Board vote at the next meeting because HR is still reviewing the documents. HR is prepared to support the Board throughout this process.

Ms. Ernstes suggested that the Board finish discussing this item and then take action at the next meeting.

Ms. Motter suggested that the Asian Americans Governmental Executives Network be added to the advertising list. Ms. Motter clarified for the public that the Board is working with HR to update the job description for the director position. Additionally, Ms. Motter noted that the CFO and Commissioners are involved in the conversations about funding for these two positions.

Ms. Jester echoed Ms. Motter's comments and discussed the need for budget reform for the department.

Mr. Lewis is satisfied with the timeline and suggested including a schedule for interviewing. Also, Mr. Lewis inquired about the budget for the interim position(s).

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Motter commented on the unexpected passing of Johnathan Grant. Mr. Grant was a journalist who routinely reported on the need for accountability, openness, transparency and public participation in our democracy. Judy, his daughters, and the DeKalb community are in Ms. Motter's thoughts and prayers.

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Ms. Jester commented on the passing of Betty Blondeau. Ms. Blondeau was a longtime advocate who worked tirelessly to pass ethics laws. Both the families are in Ms. Jester's thoughts and prayers.

Ms. Jester also commented on a meeting with the political parties and VRE staff that was very productive and professional. Ms. Jester enjoyed meeting the staff and learning more about the work they do.

Ms. Smith expressed her condolences in the passing of Mr. Grant and Ms. Blondeau and how these losses will be felt in the community.

ADJOURNMENT

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