

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2021
*via zoom platform
Start Time: 12:00 p.m.
End Time: 3:00 p.m.

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

Other Attendees: Twyla Hart, Interim Director
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney
Shelley Momo, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Irene Vander Els, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Tristen Waite, Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) November 8, 2021

Motion by Ms. Motter and seconded by Ms. Jester and Mr. Lewis to adopt the minutes. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Austin 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:

- S. Binney

Click here to view BRE meetings: [Video On Demand | DeKalb County, GA \(dekalbcountyga.gov\)](https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov)

Ms. Hart and Dr. Obeng discussed the redistricting process in response to public comment. Ms. Jester explained the process at the state-level.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioners Mereda Davis Johnson and Ted Terry addressed the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Ms. Swift and seconded by Ms. Motter and Ms. Jester to enter executive session to discuss personnel. Motion carries by unanimous vote. Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Mr. Lewis to adjourn executive session and reconvene this regular meeting. Motion carries 4-0.

No action was taken during executive session. Ms. Swift will rejoin this meeting shortly.

ITEMS FOR DECISION BY THE BOARD

A) Certification of the November 30, 2021 Municipal Election Runoff

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to certify the November 30, 2021 Municipal Election Runoff results. Motion carries 4-0.

B) 2022 Meeting Schedule

Currently, the Board meets at 4:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month, subject to change in months with elections. The Board will keep this schedule for the next year. Motion by Ms. Motter and seconded by Ms. Jester to approve the schedule. Motion carries 4-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A) Revision of BRE Bylaws

Ms. Smith informed the public that the latest version of recommended revisions to the bylaws are available on the VRE website.

Mr. Lewis commented on Article VIII Section b which provides:

The Chair may exercise supervision of employees only in the absence of the Executive Director or their designee, which shall cease upon return of the Executive Director or their designee.

Mr. Lewis asked if the provision is lawful because it essentially allows the Chair to act as director and supervise department employees. Also, the director cannot be a board member and when interacting with major political parties, this gives the appearance of a conflict.

Ms. Smith responded and emphasized the need for the department to be led in the unlikely event a staffing emergency occurs but it might be helpful to have additional parameters detailing how the supervision would be exercised.

Ms. Jester echoed the concern and suggested adding language to establish oversight and communication with the Board if the Chair were to supervise in this limited capacity.

Ms. Motter generally approves the language but suggested revising to account for the unforeseen circumstances or emergency in which this would apply. Alternatively, the Board might consider

the option of holding a special called meeting to make an appointment but if time does not permit, then the Chair would serve in this limited capacity.

Mr. Lewis wants to explore options for building into the chain of command within the department to provide a failsafe in case of emergency so someone in the department can supervise because this would avoid the appearance of conflict.

B) FY2022 VRE Department Budget

Ms. Hart submitted the budget for 2022. Based on changes resulting from SB 202, redistricting and other needs, the department is seeking \$7.8 million dollars. This is a \$2 million dollar increase over the 2020 budget.

Ms. Jester believes this is a good start but anticipates the department will need more because the department has been operating with a tight budget and the Board is in the process of making changes in the midst of redistricting and reapportionment.

Ms. Motter acknowledged that staff has been underpaid for a number of years and the Board needs to compensate them for the work being performed. It's important for the Board to be mindful of the market salaries for positions in the department to attract and retain employees.

Mr. Lewis echoed Ms. Motter's comments. The department has been underfunded for so long and based on the initial figures, the department will likely need more funding.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Mr. Burton provided a report directly to the Board before the meeting and was available to answer questions. No questions from the Board.

Ms. Smith requested branding for the department on LinkedIn to attract talent to the organization.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The department will start the process of evaluating the election and implementing procedures learned during the process.

ADJOURNMENT

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