



# DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center  
1300 Commerce Drive  
Decatur, Georgia 30030

## Minutes - Draft

### ERPS-Employee Relations & Public Safety Committee

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Tuesday, October 5, 2021

2:15 PM

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*This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available*

*(1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage,*

*(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV*

Meeting Started At: 2:22PM

Attendees: Commissioners Davis Johnson, Rader, Patrick, Terry

**Present**      3 - Chairperson Mereda Davis Johnson, Commissioner Robert Patrick, and Jeff Rader

#### I. MINUTES

**2021-3143**      Commission District(s): All  
Minutes for the September 21, 2021 Employee Relations and Public Safety Committee Meeting

**MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Robert Patrick, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes: 3 - Chairperson Davis Johnson, Commissioner Patrick, and Rader**

#### II. STATUS UPDATE

Public Safety Minimum Average Starting Salaries

-presentation from Director Ransom, Human Resources

-Question JR: is this based upon survey information provided?

B Ransom: this is from the organization outside the badge.com, and this data shows the responses they received

-Question JR: so this is more anecdotal than statistically significant information?

Z Williams: we can look into this and find out

B Ransom: I can look into the pool that was used to generate this information and send that to you

-Question JR: Is the 61 separations you are referencing abnormally high?

Z Williams: That's in line with previous numbers

-Question TT: regarding the officers that left for private sectors or other departments, do you have data on incoming officers that came from private sector or other departments?

B Ransom: I don't recall a record on that

-TT: what I'm getting at, is that are most of our officers are recruits that we train?

Z Williams: That is correct

-JR: from the fire department, it seems 9% of those surveys got out of the Fire career category, and others went to work for other Fire organizations?

B Ransom: that is a reasonable assumption; retirees are not included in these numbers

-Question JR: the starting rates, excluding Fulton County, were from recruits that received training and were later certified after 6 months? Is it true that the accessibility of programs that gives officers that training and allows them to achieve that goal is relatively limited to the size of the recruiting classes of public police forces? The hardest thing seems to be to be accepted into a police recruit class. Academy slots are based upon the number of classes that one can qualify. Being able to secure a position in the academy may be the biggest barrier to entry level next to salary. Regarding filling those academy slots, I wonder if this is the controlling factor.

Chief Ramos: the salary is an issue; at the same time the reason many candidates are eliminated due to being rejected by other nearby agencies. We have 2 choices; either settle for less or settle for less candidates. It may be close to 50/50 where they come from out of town and DeKalb is the only choice, or they've gone to other agencies and have been turned away. We could get the exact numbers.

-JR: that's useful information

-Z Williams: it would be common for applicants to apply for multiple agencies simultaneously as well

-Question TT: It feels like we're in an arms race with this. I would like to know your philosophy on this dynamic where there are agencies with major resources. Is there an end to the arms race? Is there an opportunity for more variability in how we are different to other jurisdictions we are comparing ourselves to?

Z Williams: excellent question, and your characterization of an arms race is appropriate. The fact is, salary is but one of the differentiators. Some of the things we'll continue to work on is the physical environment the officers work in; we also did a survey in which they wanted to be heard. It's not just salary; it's the work environment, the physical conditions of the police stations, the newness of the vehicles, how they connect with the community...all those types of things in order to compete in this arms race, we will have to be more holistic and comprehensive than just looking at salary. Benefits is another key component that Mr. Jacobs will discuss today.

-RP: the next time we have a salary survey, could we also look at the municipalities within DeKalb County? I know there is a wide variety from Lithonia to Dunwoody on what officers would be compensated.

B Ransom: sure; it's been our practice to look at the 'Fab 5' larger jurisdictions, but we don't have a problem including the smaller agencies.

RP: In fact, there may be some organizations that have the salary surveys already prepared; but sort of a little more of a drill down perspective if an employee is happy working in the DeKalb County area, we should also be aware of what the other jurisdictions are offering, just so they know the benefit of working in DeKalb County.

B Ransom: we will include them; what we typically find is that those smaller areas they may pay slightly higher because they have fewer slots, but we'll certainly include them in our slide.

-information provided by Director Jacobs, regarding benchmark peer group study

-Question JR: I appreciate this presentation on the benefits. One of the areas where we still have work is looking at pension eligibility dates for those in the public safety sector and physically demanding jobs. That could be a presentation for another day. Since 2014 we've noticed that those staff in those law enforcement or public safety positions, it's a challenge to keep them on the street until that point in time.

L Jacobs: the plan is about 60% funded. Closing amortization schedule, tenure smoothing, and other actions the Board has

*taken over the last few years have put us on a trajectory to improve our funded status steadily over the next few years. Of course, we cannot count on the double digit returns that the stock market has given us in the last few years, including a 20% return on assets for 2020; we know there's going to be another bubble in there, another 2007. But if things continue to go as they are, it does give the county more leverage to pull to look at a unique benefit for public safety folks; talking with Director Lumpkin police officers doing that job at 67 are just not able to physically do that job, and they may be retiring earlier than they normally would and are missing out on the better part of the benefit.*

*-Question TT: thank you for that detailed presentation; regarding the spousal buy-in, it is about \$50-\$100 across jurisdictions?*

*L Jacobs: That is correct; DeKalb is probably lacking a little bit in the spousal surcharge, and we've debated that internally on whether we should increase the spousal surcharge. There are 2 schools of thought. Some say by raising the spousal surcharge, we may be incenting healthy spouses to leave the plan and we would be stuck with only the sicker spouses, so there is a danger in raising that spousal surcharge. Yes we could raise more revenue but we could end up adversely selecting against ourselves.*

*-Question TT: that spousal line item doesn't include domestic partners for DeKalb. Do you have comparative jurisdictional data on domestic partners? Within that is there domestic partners for same sex and opposite sex?*

*L Jacobs: Currently the DeKalb does not offer opposite sex domestic partner benefits. It was about 15 years ago when the County started offering domestic partner benefits for same sex couples. We did a quick peek in Atlanta area, and we did find 1 jurisdiction that offered domestic benefits to opposite sex or heterosexual couples and My guess is that's going to be a trend that will see more and more.*

*MDJ: we had that discussion; when we brought in domestic partnerships of same sex, that was at a time where it was illegal for same sex couples to marry. At this point everyone is on the same playing field. Since it is legal for same sex couples to marry, I think it should be married couples.*

*-TT: I don't think we should get rid of domestic partner benefits, I believe we should expand it to include opposite sex because it could be a competitive HR strategy; for example this could be helpful for police recruits*

*MDJ: common law marriages were outlawed in the State of Georgia several years ago;*

### Insight on Police Strategies, Training, and Procedures

*-discussion not heard in committee*

### III. AGENDA ITEM

#### *Previously Heard Agenda Items:*

[2021-3135](#) Commission District(s): All Commission Districts  
To Approve Agenda Item 2021-3135 ATC Watertown LLC Lease and Approve Change Order No. 2 to Contract 06-900516 for Lease Agreement with ATC Watertown LLC total cost \$3,337,603.90  
**This agenda item was no official recommendation**

*-item not heard in committee*

#### *New Agenda Items:*

[2021-3079](#) Commission District(s): All Commission Districts  
FY 2022 Metro Atlanta Multi-Jurisdictional DUI Task Force (HEAT) Grant, \$43,012.00  
**This agenda item was no official recommendation**

*-item not heard in committee; was sent to consent agenda on 10/5/21*

2021-3084

Commission District(s): ALL  
CO - Change Order No. 1 to Contract No. 1227524 for Construction Fire Station No. 7 (730 days): for use by Fire Rescue Services. This contract consists of the construction of the new Fire Station No. 7. Awarded to Lichty Commercial Construction, Inc. Amount Not To Exceed: \$872,826.85.

**MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Robert Patrick, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes: 3 - Chairperson Davis Johnson, Commissioner Patrick, and Rader**

*-no additional information requested*

2021-3107

Commission District(s): ALL  
CO - Change Order No. 2 to Contract No. 1126717 for Payroll Tax, Wage Deduction, Employment Verification and Affordable Care Act Compliance Services (Multiyear Contract): for use by the Department of Finance - Risk Management. Consists of providing payroll tax filing, wage deductions, employment verification and Affordable Care Act compliance services. Awarded to: ADP, LLC. Amount Not To Exceed: \$42,116.00.

**MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Robert Patrick, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/12/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes: 3 - Chairperson Davis Johnson, Commissioner Patrick, and Rader**

*-information provided by Director Jacobs*

Meeting Ended At: 3:29PM

**MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Robert Patrick, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes: 2 - Commissioner Patrick, and Rader**

**Not Present: 1 - Chairperson Davis Johnson**

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Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC