

# DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

## Scheduled Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2022

\*via zoom platform

Start Time: 4:35 p.m.

End Time: 6:11 p.m.

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

Other Attendees: Keisha Smith, Executive Director  
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney  
Irene Vander Els, Assistant County Attorney  
John Matelski, Chief Innovation and Information Officer

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Lowman Smith called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. Mr. Catherwood read the roll by calling each board member by name. All members except Mr. Lewis were in attendance. Mr. Lewis joined a few minutes later.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Vice-Chair Jester, to approve the agenda.

Vice-Chair Jester offered a substitute motion to add an item for decision related to the Profile PR contract. The motion was seconded by Ms. Motter.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Vice-Chair Jester, seconded by Ms. Motter, to approve the minutes of the August 11 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Vice-Chair Jester to approve the minutes of the August 20 special called meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Catherwood 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 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 for the record.

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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:

- Marci McCarthy
- Sonya Collette Frix
- Chana Harris
- Gail Lee
- Judy Sophianopoulos
- Naomi Bock
- Ethan Brandon
- Catherine Williams

### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### A) Director's Report

Director Smith thanked the board for attending the board retreat last month. She looked forward for building on the strategic framework established.

The Director informed the board that the IT department had reviewed the technical and security components of the Konnech system discussed at that meeting and confirmed that all data would be stored on servers in the United States. The Law Department had also made some amendments to the contract. She stated that the department was confident moving forward.

The Director reported that at this week's Ops Committee meeting the mid-year budget request had been increased to \$4.4 million, reflecting an additional \$400,000 to underwrite the department's temporary move to the former Sam's Club location in Stonecrest.

The Director also reported on the Voting Opportunity and Translation Equity (VOTE) resolution introduced by Commissioner Larry Johnson urging the department to translate election-related materials beyond the requirements of federal law.

The Director reported a six-month agreement with Profile PR for integrated communication support, the development and updating of transition documents for the Public Relations Manager position, and support of the department's education and community engagement efforts.

The Director highlighted a collaboration with the City of Atlanta on voter registration and recruitment of poll officials, including a series of lunch and learn sessions to be held over the next two months.

Lastly, she announced that poll worker training would begin September 19 and encouraged interested citizens to apply.

Vice-Chair Jester asked a series of questions to clarify the purpose of the Konnech system for the public. The Director responded that the contract was in its final form and expected to be executed imminently; that the system was for scheduling poll officials and maintaining inventory; and that it did not interact with the software used to tabulate votes or store any voter data.

Mr. Matelski added that the contract required the department's data to be hosted on the Microsoft Azure platform on servers within the forty-eight contiguous US states, where much of the county's data is already being stored. He discussed the security features provided by that platform.

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Director Smith stated that the system would be streamlining the storage of the same information that the department needs to collect to hire poll officials; but that it would not store bank account information.

Chair Lowman Smith commented that the procedures used in the past had not been systematic and that this system was intended to ensure that poll workers could be paid on time and that their information could be organized.

B) November Meeting Schedule

Director Smith informed the board that the certification date for the November 8 election had been moved to Tuesday, November 15 and suggested considering a new time for the board meeting.

C) Commissioner's Comments

No Commissioners offered comments.

D) Legislative Update

Ms. Vander Els reported on a ruling involving the line-warming prohibition of SB 202. The case remains in court, but the existing rules will be used for the November 8 election.

The other recent ruling of note involved the Public Service Commission. That case is also still in court, but due to a ruling by the Supreme Court, the PSC election will not be held in November.

**ITEMS FOR DECISION**

A) Chamblee/Chamblee 2 Polling Place Change

Motion by Ms. Swift to move the Chamblee/Chamblee 2 polling place to the North DeKalb Senior Center. The motion was seconded by Ms. Motter.

Ms. Motter stated for the benefit of the public that the polling place change had been published twice prior to the meeting as required by law and that the change was being made within the allowed timeframe. She asked Director Smith what notifications were being sent to affected voters. The Director responded that all voters affected by polling places changes would receive updated precinct cards.

Mr. Burton added that the press and stakeholders would also be informed, and that signs would be posted at the previous location.

The motion carried by a vote of 4-1, with Vice-Chair Jester voting nay.

B) Advance Voting Times and Locations

Motion by Ms. Swift, seconded by Ms. Motter, to approve the advance voting times and locations provided by the department.

Director Smith presented four new advance voting locations: the former Sam's Club at Stonecrest and the Wade Walker YMCA to run for three weeks, and Beulah Missionary Baptist Church and Clarkston Library to run from October 29 – November 4.

The Director stated that two other sites considered had been unavailable.

Ms. Motter restated for the public that the maximum number of drop boxes is set by law based on the number of active registered voters in the county.

Ms. Swift thanked the Director for filling out the map of advance voting locations. She asked the Director to elaborate on the difficulty of finding sites in the southeast part of the county.

The Director responded that SB 202 introduced a requirement that advance voting sites be either government-owned or serve as election day sites. She reported that there are relatively few facilities in that area with adequate space and relatively few county-owned facilities in general.

Chair Lowman Smith added that two sites in that area which had been used in the past were not available for this election.

Ms. Motter asked how soon advance voting locations could be scheduled for the runoff. The Director responded that all the November sites had confirmed their availability for the runoff.

Mr. Lewis asked how much impact Beulah Baptist Church was expected to have given its close proximity to the South DeKalb Mall location. The Director responded that South DeKalb had been very busy in the past, especially in the last week. The addition of Beulah was expected to relieve some of that burden.

The motion carried unanimously.

#### C) Election Day Managers

Director Smith presented a list of election day managers for approval, noting that one precinct was currently vacant and further changes could possibly become necessary.

Motion by Ms. Swift, seconded by Ms. Motter, to approve the list.

Ms. Swift asked a series of questions about the list. The Director responded that so far none of the managers on the list had notified the department that they were unavailable; that staff was working to fill the one known vacancy in the manager positions; that the total number of workers was typically expected to be between 1,500 and 1,700; and that she would be able to provide a number for vacancies in the other positions in the next week.

Ms. Swift asked a series of questions about election training. The Director responded that training would be at the VRE office, South DeKalb Mall, and Stonecrest; that the area managers were being notified; and that training would begin September 19.

Ms. Swift asked if the board would receive the training materials. The Director responded that board members could receive the training materials and go to training classes if they desired.

Ms. Motter commented that it had been helpful to her to attend training classes in the past.

The motion carried unanimously.

#### D) Profile PR Contract Amendment

Motion by Vice-Chair Jester, seconded by Ms. Motter, to amend the Profile PR Contract.

The Director announced that she had been asked by Profile PR to shift to a direct-pay process for various services, including canvassing, translation, promotion, and printing. Profile PR would continue to oversee those processes, but the department would procure and pay for them.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **BOARD COMMENTS**

Ms. Swift thanked the staff and the Director for changing the Chamblee location and expanding the advance voting locations. She commented that she was glad the department was taking steps to be more efficient with its poll worker management system. She emphasized that the same system was used by major cities around the country; that the data would be housed in the United States; and that this was an administrative system, not connected to the state's election system.

Ms. Swift continued that she had heard of potential challenges from observers who intended to disregard election rules. She stressed that this was unacceptable and that it was important for voters and poll officers to feel safe.

Mr. Lewis thanked the staff and the citizens who had provided public comments.

Ms. Motter thanked the Director and staff and reminded the public that there was always work going on in the office between elections. She also thanked the public for their participation and her colleagues on the board for their discussions.

Vice-Chair Jester thanked her colleagues, the staff, and the Director. She commemorated the death of Queen Elizabeth.

Chair Lowman Smith thanked the Director and staff for their responsiveness to questions. She thanked the Director for putting together the strategic planning retreat and the board for attending.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Ms. Swift, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.