

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Scheduled Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2022

*via zoom platform

Start Time: 12:05 p.m.

End Time: 2:06 p.m.

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

Other Attendees: Keisha Smith, Executive Director
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney
Irene Vander Els, Assistant County Attorney
Tristen Waite, Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Lowman Smith called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Ms. Austin read the roll by calling each board member by name. Vice-Chair Jester, Chair Lowman Smith, and Ms. Motter were in attendance. Ms. Swift joined later in the meeting. Mr. Lewis was absent.

Motion by Vice Chair Jester, seconded by Ms. Motter, to approve the agenda. The motion carried 3-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Vice-Chair Jester to approve the minutes of the October 10, October 13, October 21, and November 7 meetings. The motion was seconded by Ms. Motter. The motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Austin read the rules for public comment:

Public comments may be made in person or submitted by sending an email of one page or less to electionspubliccmnt@dekalbcountyga.gov which must be received between 12:00 P.M. and 12:30 P.M. on the day of the meeting. The body of your email must include your first and last name, followed by your address. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language will not be permitted. By submitting an email for public comment, you agree to have your name, address and the email broadcast on the UStream and entered into the record and minutes. The DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections reserves the right, at the DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections' sole discretion, to (1) add your email to the record/minutes without reading any of it into the broadcast or (2) read all or a portion of your email into the record/minutes.

The following citizens provided public comment:

- Liz Throop
- Judy Sophianopoulos

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- Haqiqa Bolling
- Madeleine Soloway
- Anjali Gokarn
- Shauna Lee
- Jenine Milum
- Deborah Baker
- Beth Ann Frillman
- Saira Draper
- Foris Webb, III
- Bill Newnam

Twenty-eight comments were also received by email. Their contents are included at the end of the minutes.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

A) Certification of the November 8, 2022 General/Special Election

Director Smith presented the election results.

Motion by Ms. Swift, seconded by Ms. Motter, to certify the election.

Vice-Chair Jester thanked the Director and everyone who participated in the election.

The motion carried 3-0. Chair Lowman Smith was temporarily absent.

B) Advance Voting Times and Locations

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Ms. Swift, to approve the advance voting times and locations presented in the agenda.

There was a discussion regarding the legal notice requirements for logic and accuracy testing and the impact of those requirements on the advance voting schedule. Refer to the meeting recording for the detailed discussion. ([November 15, 2022, 26:30](#))

Motion by Ms. Swift to approve advance voting on November 26 at the times and locations identified by staff (with a preference for 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.), subject to the finding of the court in pending litigation regarding its legality. The motion was seconded by Ms. Motter. The motion carried 3-1. Chair Lowman Smith, Ms. Motter, and Ms. Swift voted aye. Vice-Chair Jester voted nay.

Motion by Ms. Swift to approve advance voting on November 27 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., subject to the availability of staff. The motion was seconded by Ms. Motter. The motion carried by a vote of 4-0.

Motion by Ms. Swift to approve advance voting on November 23 and from November 28 to December 2 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the locations identified in the agenda and also Salem-Panola Library, Ousley United Methodist Church, New Bethel AME, Mack Love Center, Old Smoke Rise Elementary School, Tucker City Hall, Lynwood Community Center, Perimeter Center, and Forest Fleming Arena in Honeysuckle Park. The motion was seconded by Ms. Motter. The motion carried by a vote of 4-0.

C) Dunwoody (DF) Election Day Polling Place

Director Smith announced that The Church at Chapel Hill, Dunwoody Campus, which had housed the Dunwoody precinct in November, would be unable to house the precinct in the runoff. She

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recommended moving the precinct back to Dunwoody Library. Impacted voters would receive a letter and there would also be social media and press announcements.

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

In response to a series of questions from Vice-Chair Jester, the Director explained that the church had not been a polling place for very long and that they had notified the department of their decision late last week. Instead, the Dunwoody and Dunwoody Library precincts would vote as a combined precinct on one set of equipment at the library.

Ms. Motter asked if another permanent location would be found for the Dunwoody precinct. The Director responded that if a location could be found it would be considered.

The motion carried by a vote of 4-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A) Director's Report

Director Smith presented a post-election report with statistics about the election and the department's activities.

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Motter congratulated the Director and the staff for a successful election. She thanked her colleagues on the board for the robust discussion. She thanked the Law Department for its work.

Vice-Chair Jester noted that any questions she had had been answered in a timely way. She suggested another retreat or special called meeting to continue refining the department's processes.

Ms. Swift thanked the staff, the legal team, and the public. She suggested working to ensure that all parts of the county have polling places close by.

Chair Lowman Smith thanked the team for handling the high turnout and adapting to the many recent changes to election law. She thanked the poll workers, poll watchers, and the legal department. She thanked the public who had made comments. She thanked her colleagues on the board.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Vice-Chair Jester, seconded by Ms. Motter, to adjourn. The motion carried by a vote of 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m.

EMAILED COMMENTS

1) Betsy Schwalbach

I am positive that, the Board and the Department are doing all they can to have as many days of Advance Voting for the Runoff as possible, despite a last-minute decision by the Secretary of State prohibiting Advance Voting on Saturday, November 26.

And as we all know, Advance Voting increases the opportunities for all people to vote – If there is any way that Advanced Voting is legal on Saturday, November 26, please take advantage of that day.

I'm also urging you to have Advance Voting from 7 am to 7 pm on Sunday, November 27 at as many locations as you can staff, even though those are not the usual Sunday hours.

And, to please have Advance Voting before Thanksgiving on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 22nd and 23rd from 7am – 7pm, at as many locations as possible.

I am pleased to see that L&A will begin this Thursday, November 17, which will hopefully give the department time to complete L&A for Advance Voting before Tuesday, Nov 22.

Extending Advanced Voting is especially important to allow out of state college students to vote, when absentee ballot turnaround times are so tight.

Thank you for all that the Board and the Department have done this year to make voting accessible to all registered voters.

2) Katherine Maddox

I have worked in Dekalb County for six years.

My comments today are as a community advocate on behalf of Protect the Vote GA, a non profit organization working to encourage civic participation in the political process.

We have arrived at a time in our efforts in which the rubber has met the proverbial road- where our community empowerment efforts have been stymied at the state level- a law which has whittled down the previous three week early voting requirement to a single week.

On behalf of Protect the Vote GA and as a voter, I urge you to do everything within your power to provide balance to what amounts to disenfranchisement of students- many of whom have exams on election day and may only be able to vote during Thanksgiving break- just as you have sought to accommodate working people by setting your hours from 7a.m. to 7 p.m. instead of the exclusionary 9-5 time allotment.

Additionally, Sunday voting has been foundational to voting rights in the state of Georgia since Souls to the Polls. We ask that, out of respect for the ministers of color who decades ago utilized this day to make voting more inclusive against insurmountable odds, that you continue to uphold the sacredness of the vote, and offer every possible chance for eligible voters to participate in the process that impacts their lived experience.

I urge you to bear in mind the students of Georgia, our state's great history, and the working people who deserve every chance to be heard at every level of government in making this decision today.

I urge you to fall on the just side of history and include Sunday voting in your early voting time frame.

3) Janel Green

Thank you to the Board and VRE for your tireless efforts to ensure safe and fair elections for the Dekalb County electorate. I live in the Rehoboth precinct in unincorporated Dekalb. I am writing to you to urge you to have the maximum number of early voting days and methods available.

First I request that we have early voting on Tuesday and Wednesday of Thanksgiving Week (Nov 22 and 23) and Sunday, November 27. This will allow people home from school for the holiday to vote.

I also request DeKalb County deploy Absentee ballot clerks to each precinct polling location on Dec 6 (as Cobb County did) to accept absentee ballot drop off. This was a huge success in Cobb and I hope we can follow their lead.

Thank you for your consideration and efforts to ensure maximum civic participation.

4) Beth Levine

Thank you and all your staff for working so diligently to certify the General Election Results in a timely fashion. My own early voting experience at the Memorial Drive office was smooth and efficient, as it has been for many years.

I hope you will be able to maintain that level of support for the upcoming Dec. 6 Runoff. I realize you will be squeezed and that you and your staff are already fatigued from the general election. But please continue preparing for Early Voting and Vote by Mail ahead of the very critical December 6 Runoff. Please ensure that all Early Voting locations have the resources they need to keep the lines as short as possible, as well as ensuring that working voters have access to Sunday voting hours and extended 7am to 7pm voting hours during the abbreviated runoff period. Additionally, I urge you to keep information on the website current and up to date with Runoff Early Vote and Vote by Mail information.

Thank you again for all you have done and continue to do to ensure a safe and professional voting experience in DeKalb.

5) Lilli Lindbeck

I am writing to urge the board to include Sunday, November 27th as an advanced in person voting day. SB 202 and relevant Georgia laws are hampering voting access. I know that you all, like many of us in DeKalb County, value a robust and equitable election system. Please include as many advanced in person voting days as possible.

6) Naomi Bock

My main goal is to express my gratitude to the Board, the Director and staff for your hard work, knowledge, professionalism, and your willingness to communicate with the public. I've spent the last many weeks on the voter protection hotline where I have been exposed to many more of the complexities of our system which you manage.

My main recommendation based on this recent experience which is similar to my experience as a poll worker in the spring is that there is still great confusion about the vote by mail system, including expectations for receiving AB, how to mail them, when they are assured to be counted. We are encouraging people to vote in person; the available ride services for those without transportation have been booked to capacity. Extending hours and days for EV to the maximum amount allowed will be helpful.

7) Lindsay Hodgson

I am writing to urge the board to include Sunday, November 27th as an advanced in person voting day. SB 202 and relevant Georgia laws are hampering voting access. I know that you all, like many of us in DeKalb County, value a robust and equitable election system. Please include as many advanced in person voting days as possible.

8) Jane Mezzoff

What an exciting election season we are having! First and foremost I want to thank the DeKalb County Board of Elections and staff for working tirelessly on behalf of voters and certifying the General Election Results in a timely fashion.

It should not be a surprise that all eyes will be on Georgia as we approach the December 6 Runoff. I strongly encourage the Board to continue preparing for Early Voting and Vote by Mail, and to ensure that all Early Voting locations have the resources they need to keep the lines as short as possible. Also, it is imperative that working voters have an opportunity to participate. Please ensure that there are weekend voting hours (extended 7am to 7pm) during the abbreviated runoff period.

I urge the Board to ensure that their county website is up to date with Runoff Early Vote and Vote by Mail information.

Finally, I also want to encourage the Board to continue processing absentee ballots in a timely manner and notifying voters immediately of any issues with their application or ballot.

As a nearly 30 year resident and voter in Dekalb, I am proud to say I have never had an issue casting my ballot. Most elections I vote early, at the Tucker library location. The staff there has always been courteous and professional, and keeps things running smoothly even when there is a long line (and cold temps). I am grateful to be able to cast my ballot among these wonderful election workers.

9) Lynn Angus Ramos

I am writing to urge the board to include Sunday, November 27th as an advanced in person voting day. SB 202 and relevant Georgia laws are hampering voting access for this very short runoff period. I know that you all, like many of us in DeKalb County, value a robust and equitable election system.

Please include as many advanced in person voting days as possible.

10) Keko Getaneh

My name is Keko and I volunteer with a nonpartisan voting rights organization called Protect the Vote GA. A lot of Protect the Vote's work focuses in DeKalb County, working with neighbors, students, businesses, community orgs and more.

We are kindly and respectfully calling on you to add Sunday voting (November 27) to the early voting period to provide access to the ballot for many people who may not be able to go during weekdays or on Election Day. For example, I know there are many students who will have finals on December 6, which is Election Day, and providing them an additional opportunity on a weekend will support voters across the county tremendously. We are well aware that SB202 has bumped up the voting timeline causing these challenges, however, I am confident we can work through this together and do what we need to do to serve the voters across DeKalb.

Thank you for your time, support and leadership in DeKalb County.

11) David Moriarty

Please put a Runoff Election Notice and clear underlined link on top of the DeKalb County Website. Timely and current information about this important election is critical for voters.

12) Jaclyn Schoknecht

I want to thank the DeKalb Co. Board of Elections and their staff for a very well-run midterm election. My experience voting was extremely easy. There was no line so I walked right into my polling place, voted, and was finished in about 10 minutes total. All instructions from poll workers were very clear, especially with regard to printing and scanning ballots.

I also want to thank the Board for certifying the General Election results in a timely manner. I know all eyes were on Georgia for this election. I've been extremely impressed with the Board members' professionalism and grace under pressure.

Please continue your preparations for Early Voting and Vote by Mail ahead of the December 6 Runoff, and ensure that all Early Voting locations have the human and monetary resources they need to keep the lines as short as possible.

As this is going to be a short run-off period, I'd like to urge the Board to ensure working voters have access to Sunday voting hours and to extend the voting hours to 7:00 AM until 7:00 PM during this important run-off election.

13) Mohinee Mukherjee

My name is Mohinee Mukherjee, and I am a Master of Public Health student at Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. I also serve as the Chair of the Voter Registration and Civic Engagement Committee of Rollins Election Day Initiative (REDI). REDI is a non-partisan organization of Rollins public health students who see voting access as a public health issue. I am also a registered voter in DeKalb County.

I am reaching out as a graduate student to respectfully ask that you please consider including Sunday, November 27th 2022 as an Early Voting day in DeKalb County. By inclusion of Sunday, this allows registered voters more flexibility to execute their Constitutional right to vote in the December 6, 2022 US Senate run-off election. For DeKalb voters, limiting voting to weekdays may inhibit their ability to cast a ballot due to their weekday job and educational commitments. We should follow the precedent set by Clayton, Fulton, and Gwinnett Counties in extending Early Voting to allow registered voters to execute their civic efficacy.

14) Jackie Yates

Please open up more dates before November 28th for early voting for the runoff.

15) Annabeth Balance

I am writing to ask that you establish Early Voting for at least two days before Thanksgiving: Tuesday November 22, and Wednesday, November 23, 2022, to allow for college students or others who may be returning "home" for the holiday to vote in person rather than relying on the absentee voting procedure.

This will allow both speedier and less complicated voting, both in the casting of the votes and in the counting of them.

Thank you for considering this request. And Thank You for your service to us all!

As an added benefit, adding one or two days after Thanksgiving, i.e., Friday November 25 and possibly Saturday November 26 would allow early voting by those people who must work or stay in school all

that early part of the week, and who only have that Thursday through Sunday available for their early voting.

16) Carol Gray

I just found out that early voting does not start until Nov. 28th and only goes until Dec. 2nd, with no weekend days.

I am shocked that we only have 5 days to early vote! Please consider starting the early voting sooner.

There is just too much at stake and we are counting on you and your fellow board members to make the right decision.

17) Rose Roberts

It is important that we offer early voting on Tuesday, 11/22 and Wednesday, 11/23.

18) Joy Wasson

Thanks for your hard work. Did you know about this great "Last Call" effort to give Cobb voters more opportunities to return absentee ballots (even when in-person voting wasn't going on)? Please do this for DeKalb voters: <https://www.cobbcounty.org/elections/news/last-call-pre-election-day-absentee-ballot-return>

And if you can have early voting on Sunday, Nov 27th or before, it would be greatly appreciated. I know it's hard to have machines and workers ready, but even just at Memorial it would be helpful to voters, especially college students home for Thanksgiving.

Thank you!

19) Penelope Krump

To all the members of the Dekalb County Board of Elections and Registration. Thank you all for all your hard work as members of the Elections Board---the work you do to ensure every eligible voter in Dekalb County has the opportunity to have their voice heard is

I would like to take this opportunity to ask the board to please add the additional early voting days for the December 6 RunOff, of Tuesday, Nov 22 and Wednesday, Nov 23 and Sunday, November 27 to young people home from school for the Thanksgiving holiday will have the opportunity to vote early---many of the students away at college in GA did NOT receive their ballots for the General Midterm and, as you are all well aware, there is much less turnaround time available for the run off to allow for absentee ballot requests to be received and ballots issued to voters. The additional days for early voting, will also benefit so many others who reside in Dekalb County and may have time off from work for the holidays during Thanksgiving week.

It would also be beneficial if Dekalb County elections would deploy absentee ballot clerks at each PRECINCT VOTING location on Dec 6 to accept absentee ballots as Cobb County did for Nov 8.

20) Anne F. Hughes

I am a long time resident of Dekalb County. I want to make a plea for more days for Early Voting in the runoff election. It 's important to give citizens the full opportunity to vote. Please have the Early Voting open from 7am to 7pm. It is a way to insure the integrity of our system and to defend our democracy.

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Thank you for your service to Dekalb County.

21) Marguerite BoYens

As a voter in Dekalb County for over 50 years, I respectfully request that you allow the maximum number of days for Early Voting, and have Early Voting sites open from 7AM to 7PM, for the integrity of our election and for our democracy. Thank you.

22) Barbara Joye

I am a citizen of DeKalb County, writing to urge you to provide the maximum possible number of days for early voting, to extend from 7am to 7pm. Making it as easy as possible for people to vote is critical to preserving our democracy!

23) Maria Alexandra Smith

I am writing to implore you to open early voting for Dekalb County before the mandated start date of 11/28/22 - as I understand it, the dates of 11/22, 11/23 & 11/27 are allowed as early voting days as well despite "Robert E. Lee's Birthday".

As it is, shortening the time until the runoff from 9 weeks to 4 weeks has made mail-in voting even more flawed than it was for the general election - on a personal note, one of my college students never received his mail-in ballot at school, despite requesting it well before the deadline and tracking progress on the My Voter Page, which said it was sent, but it was never received. I know of dozens of college students who had a similar experiences, and who were not in a position to get home to vote in person (my kids are in FL and CO). With Thanksgiving being less than 2 weeks before Election Day, this process will be even more strained. Opening voting next week and including at least one weekend voting day will allow college students to vote when home for the holiday, and accommodate the many voters who have conflicts with the dates of 11/28-12/2 + 12/6: people with work travel or vacations planned, people who need a weekend option due to their weekday work schedule, people suffering from illness or having surgery which will limit their mobility, childbirth, people with the flu which is spiking right now in GA - a whole host of reasons. A person who tests positive for COVID on 11/28 will unlikely be out of quarantine in time to vote - unless we want them to go to the polls anyway and put all the other voters and poll workers at risk. 11/28-12/2 + 12/6 is just simply not enough time, and neither is there time for mail-in ballots to be requested, mailed out, and mailed back to be received by 12/6 at 7pm.

Dekalb County is one of the best in terms of providing fair and equitable mechanisms that ensure access to the right to vote. Let's continue to lead the way by announcing early voting starting on 11/22/22, in the interest of ALL our citizens. Thank you for your tireless and valuable representation as our board!

24) Pamela J. Epps

I am a long-term Dekalb resident, and I vote regularly. I am concerned about the limited time for Early Voting in the upcoming run-off election for the U.S. Senate seat. Given the state law that does not allow voting on Saturday, 11/26/22, it may be very difficult for many Dekalb citizens to exercise their right to vote before December 6. Many people have difficulty getting to a polling place during the hours of 9-5 on a weekday, because of work or childcare obligations. Allowing early voting on the days preceding Thanksgiving and the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and keeping polling places open from 7 am to 7 pm, would increase access to ALL registered voters in Dekalb County, and would decrease long lines and waiting times on December 6th.

There are 2 people in my own life who will be directly impacted by your decision regarding allowing Early Voting on 11/22, 11/23, and 11/27. My 88 year old mother typically votes using a Mail-In Ballot, but we are concerned that she may not be able to receive her ballot, fill it out, and have it received by mail before Election Day. I also have a daughter who is enrolled in college out-of-state, who used her Absentee Ballot to vote in the November 8th election. She will be here at home for the Thanksgiving holiday, but will be back in class on Monday, 11/28. If you allow extended Early Voting on the dates above, they both will be able to vote Early in-person; the three of us can go to vote as a family. All Dekalb residents deserve the opportunity to cast their votes in this important election, and to be sure that their voices are heard.

I urge you to allow as many days as possible for Early Voting, and to extend voting hours, so that people have the chance to vote!

Thank you for your service to our Democracy.

25) Mary Smarr

We have such a short period of time before the runoff election, and I know that you have decisions to make. I want to encourage you to support a strong voter turnout by giving voters the maximum opportunity with as many days of early voting as possible and with sites opened 7-7. There are voters who do not have time off with pay to vote; Please consider giving all registered voters as much opportunity as possible.

26) Barbara Miller-Murphy

We need the maximum number of days for Early voting. It's important to have Early Voting sites open from 7:00-7:00. This is very important for the integrity of our election and for our democracy.

27) Neva Corbin

I am concerned that DeKalb County's leaders would even think of curtailing opportunities to vote in the upcoming special election.

Therefore, please consider

- Keeping the polls open Nov. 22-23.
- Keeping the hours from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

28) Aliya Epps

I am a Dekalb County resident, and I vote regularly. I am currently an out of state college student that attends Birmingham-Southern College. I am concerned about the limited time for Early Voting in the upcoming run-off election for the U.S. Senate seat. Given the state law that does not allow voting on Saturday, 11/26/22, it may be very difficult for many Dekalb citizens to exercise their right to vote before December 6. Many people have difficulty getting to a polling place during the hours of 9-5 on a weekday, because of work or childcare obligations. Allowing early voting on the days preceding Thanksgiving and the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and keeping polling places open from 7 am to 7 pm, would increase access to ALL registered voters in Dekalb County, and would decrease long lines and waiting times on December 6th.

I will be back home for the Thanksgiving holiday, but will be back in class on Monday, 11/28. If you allow extended Early Voting on the dates above, I will be able to vote Early in-person; with both my mom and 88 year old grandmother who votes by absentee ballot.

All Dekalb residents deserve the opportunity to cast their votes in this important election, and to be sure that their voices are heard.