

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2025

Start Time: 12:05 p.m.

End Time: 1:16 p.m.

Board Attendees: Vasu Abhiraman, Vice-Chair
Anthony Lewis
Susan Motter

Other Attendees: Keisha Smith, Executive Director
John Jones, Supervising County Attorney
Tristen Waite, Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Abhiraman called the Board of Registration and Elections meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Ms. Austin read the roll by calling each board member by name. A quorum was met.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the minutes of the May 8 scheduled meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the minutes of the June 9 special called meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the minutes of the June 18 special called meeting. Vice-Chair Abhiraman abstained as he was not present for the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

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 printed page or less at a minimum font of 12 to electionspubliccmnt@dekalbcountyga.gov which must be received between 35 and 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting. The body of your email must include your first and last name. By submitting an email for public comment, you agree to have your name 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. All public comments will be limited to 2 minutes. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, holding up signs, clapping, yelling, standing or laying in the aisles to show support for or opposition to a speaker will

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not be permitted, but a show of hands or quietly standing in place will be permitted to show support for or opposition to a speaker's position.

The following citizens provided public comment:

- Janet Grant
- Ellen Apte
- Cheryl Dudley
- Michael Beach

ITEMS FOR DECISION

A) Certification of the Special Primary Public Service Commissioner Election

Director Smith acknowledged the leadership, vocal advocacy, and integrity that defined the Board's work. She went on to say that this was the final Board meeting for 3 of the members and thanked them for their service, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the community.

Director Smith presented the post-election report detailing election statistics including voter turnout for Election Day, early voting, absentee, and provisional voting. Director Smith thanked the staff, Board, poll workers, community members, poll watchers, and county partners that assisted VRE in facilitating fair, accessible, and accurate elections.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman asked for the breakdown of types of provisional ballots that were accepted. Staff confirmed that the reason for all the provisional ballots was out of precinct (OP).

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Mr. Lewis to certify the June 17, 2025 special primary. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Motter to recess for the purpose of signing election certification paperwork. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Motter to reconvene the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

B) Early Voting Locations, Dates, and Times for Election Runoff

Director Smith presented the proposed dates, times and locations for the July PSC Election Runoff early voting period.

Ms. Motter asked when L&A testing was scheduled to start. Director Smith replied that it was scheduled to begin on Monday, June 30th and confirmed that the notice was posted and published in the legal organ.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman confirmed with Director Smith that the last day to request an absentee ballot for the runoff was July 7th.

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Motter to approve the early voting locations, dates, and times for the Special Primary Public Service Commissioner Runoff for dates July 7th through July 11th. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A.) Date for Pre-Certification Meeting || July Special Election Runoff

Vice-Chair Abhiraman stated that this meeting involved the schedules of Board members who had not yet been seated. Discussion followed surrounding availability as well as if this item should be moved to an item for decision.

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Motter to schedule the pre-certification meeting for the Special Primary Runoff Election for Friday, July 18, 2025 at 10 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

B.) DeKalb County Board of Registration & Elections Bylaws

Vice-Chair Abhiraman stated that this was a discussion about the bylaws and a proposed addition. He further stated that there would be a new Board next month so this item would remain a discussion item.

Mr. Lewis stated that he recommended standardizing the application process for the appointment of the at-large Board member position. He further stated that he proposed an addition to the BRE bylaws, which would require the Board to establish communications with the Chief Judge to know the dates and requirements for applications by residents who would like to serve on the Board in the at-large position. He went on to read the proposed amendment.

Ms. Motter asked the attorneys to review the bylaws and proposed modifications to identify if they are consistent with the enabling legislation.

Mr. Lewis stated that the intent of the proposed amendment was increased communication and to form a relationship with the Chief Judge.

Ms. Motter reiterated that she wanted the county attorneys to bless the form of the bylaws and to confirm what could and could not be done as a Board in terms of communication or assisting the process of selecting Board members.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman agreed to the sentiment of transparency but stated that it may be better served as an informal process rather than voting it into the bylaws.

BOARD COMMENTS

Vice-Chair Abhiraman stated that Ms. Jester was not able to attend the meeting due to a personal emergency. He then read comments on her behalf stating that she was grateful for the opportunity to have been of service for the past 4 years and that she wished everyone the best and enjoyed working with everyone even when they disagreed.

Mr. Lewis thanked everyone who was involved with the election process. He thanked the staff and commented on how the staff had grown and said he was happy to see how engaged with the public the department had become. He stated that he was happy to see the relationship with the Board of Commissioners strengthened and was grateful for the funding they provided to grow the department. He thanked all of the county partners with special thanks to DCTV, the legal staff, security staff, and warehouse staff. He commented on how much public engagement has grown and how it has brought about positive change. Lastly, Mr. Lewis stated that he was very proud and happy to have been able to serve his County in this way and was grateful to everyone for being part of it.

Ms. Motter stated that she had served on the Board for 6 years and was very thankful to the DeKalb community for offering her the opportunity to serve in this capacity. She said she was most proud of the increase in transparency and noted that the budget and materials had previously not been available to the

public. She said she agreed with Mr. Lewis in being proud of the growth of the department as well as increased pay and the improvements to training efforts. She said she was proud of the department's reaction to her many requests to review ADA issues, particularly at schools. Ms. Motter further stated that she was proud of the work that had been done on language translation to make sure certain communities within the County had access to translated materials so that they, as American citizens, could exercise their right to vote and participate in democracies. She thanked the staff and the poll workers and asked the future Board members to help educate the public by asking questions because there is a lot of disinformation, misinformation, and gaps in voter knowledge and it is up to the Board to fill the gap. Lastly, she stated that she was thankful to the Board members and that they really appreciated one another.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman said that it was a pleasure serving with Ms. Motter and Mr. Lewis for the last 2 years and that he had learned from them both as well as Ms. Jester. He proceeded to stand and give the outgoing Board members a personal standing ovation. The public and the staff joined him in applauding the transitioning members.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m.