



# 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 19, 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: 2:26PM

Attendees: Commissioners Davis Johnson, Rader, Patrick, Johnson, Cochran-Johnson, Terry, Bradshaw

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

#### I. MINUTES

**2021-3214**      Commission District(s): All  
Minutes for the October 5, 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 - Vaccination and Education Efforts

*-information provided by Director Lumpkin*

*-information provided by Chief Ivanov on Police data*

*-Question JR: I would like to further probe the administration on the reservations of vaccination. Many children are required to have several vaccinations in prevention of disease during childhood. These vaccinations are not much different than others. When will we treat this vaccine like we do every other vaccine? I'm also concerned about the increased costs of incremental health costs, and the fact that we provide days off for those that contract COVID but we don't delineate between vaccinated vs. non-vaccinated.*

*J Lumpkin: I agree with the vaccination. I also agree with the workforce issues and the program we have to continue to urge them to vaccinate rather than have them separate and go to another organization. To lose personnel would be detrimental to our organization. If an unvaccinated person became infected, we would not take up their leave time; but if a vaccinated person became infected we would. There are a number of opportunities.*

*-JR: I appreciate the position you are in. I'm looking for a way to bring this under the same sort of framework. Not that it is exactly comparable of course, but Commissioner Terry believes that people ought to not suffer penalties for using marijuana and yet we are going to sanction people substantively for putting not only themselves, but also their coworkers at risk for this highly contagious disease. I understand you need to move with some discretion on this. But I'd be interested - for instance Delta a surcharge to health premiums, other folks give some other sanctions. We need to continue to set our intent to mitigate toward vaccinations. I have a constituency that is very highly opinionated on this, who trust vaccines and are at a loss as to why their county government is not doing everything it can to mandate vaccinations with these fully verified medicines.*

*-Question MDJ: I agree with commissioner Rader. If you don't want to take the vaccine fine, but you will have an additional premiums if our spouses have insurance. I think that if employees have not taken the vaccine, the possibility that they will increase our insurance rates; I think that that is something we should continue to discuss. Director Lumpkin, are these employees required to take testing if they are not vaccinated?*

*J Lumpkin: they are not required to take testing. I believe this is something the administration would be looking at as we go forward and continue to make incremental increases in our vaccination rates. There would be incremental sanctions, such as weekly testing, and also rewards. But that decision has not been made.*

*MDJ: If we follow the science, we are allowing folks that don't want to be vaccinated - they are exposing not only other employees and staff, but they are exposing the general population at large for whom they serve. You don't have to answer that.*

*TT: I agree with your line of thought there. The case of Colin Powell reminds us that even if you are vaccinated and a vulnerable population, you can still die from the complications of COVID. We have Police, Fire, other first responders that will be interacting with the public; the risk is still there is they are only wearing a mask. My greatest fear is front-line responders that may be asymptomatic and may pass COVID to someone that is elderly. At the very least, anyone who is not vaccinated has to get tested weekly; this is following the science. We just declared misinformation a public health crisis. President Biden is proposing a vaccine requirement for corporations over 100 employees; we have 6,000 employees in our payroll, even though we're not a corporation. I don't see evidence that there is a large-scale exodus of public safety officers leaving because of vaccination requirements. In fact in that White House report, the Republican governor of Massachusetts announced that highway patrol personnel in the state would have to get the vaccine; I person resigned because of that. I'm not convinced that if we do a vaccine requirement that we're going to lose police officers. I would argue that officers from other jurisdictions without requirements would want to join DeKalb because they are listening the science and following CDC guidelines, and is a safe working environment. I guarantee if employees knew they didn't have to mask up for work, the vaccination numbers would increase. It would increase workplace productivity, allow us to demask and return to normal. We are public servants, every decision we make should be in the public interest. I feel very strongly that with the right incentives, we should increase our incentives matrix beyond \$100 for internal employees; I believe we have a greater incentive to get our employees vaccinated, so we should increase those levels. The White House report is very clear; vaccine requirements work. Requirement, not mandate.*

*-MDJ: Director Lumpkin if you all could come back toward the end of the year, in December, to inform us of the departmental numbers and let us know if the numbers have improved.*

### III. DISCUSSION

## Workers Compensation: 3 Year Comparison of Claims Count and Costs

*-presentation from Director Jacobs*

*-Question JR: have you seen any impact on the implementation of the automated side loading trucks on our Sanitation workers comp claims? Is Sanitation still our highest frequency of claims?*

*L Jacobs: yes Sanitation continues to lead in severity and claims. The difficulty with the claims themselves, is that the way they are recorded is enough to tell us that side-loading trucks are the cause, for example. We are working with Sanitation to develop that data.*

*-Question TT: you stated you are able to track how many of the workers comp claims as it relates to COVID. Could you provide that information for 2020 and 2021 and how much those claims total up to be?*

*L Jacobs: I'd be happy to; unfortunately we have not seen the medical costs related to those COVID claims that we believe were incurred at work. The cost will essentially be sick leave and what we call COVID-time.*

*-Question TT: so there was no medical costs in terms of health insurance for employees getting COVID?*

*L Jacobs: for health insurance absolutely; for those who tested positive as a result of their working conditions - those have been getting what we call lost-time claims - those that we pay salaries while their out. To be honest it is difficult to say where an individual contracted COVID.*

*-Question TT: it seems that COVID claims are down this year compared to last year*

*L Jacobs: COVID claims are down but costs to medical plans we have not seen a break yet; the latest numbers after June 30 are capturing the Delta variant so the claims costs to the health plans are quite significant.*

*TT: requests COO review nudge units as incentives for departments to reduce workers' compensation costs. What is the departmental benefit to incentivizing and reducing the claims?*

*MDJ: I'm sure the administration has taken these comments into consideration and will do everything to increase vaccinations and encourage those to get vaccinated. That's why I would like the vaccination discussion to come back at the end of the year to see where we are in relation to being over 50%.*

## IV. AGENDA ITEM

### *Previously Heard Agenda Items:*

[2021-3185](#)

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts

Request to pass a resolution to declare Health Misinformation a Public Health Crisis.

**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 10/26/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

*-resolution presented by Commissioner Johnson*

*-MDJ: this is an opportune time to bring this information forward. A lot of the misinformation is brought forward by public leaders; a lot of the misinformation spread is intentional for self-gratification or their own purposes. I support this resolution and hope the committee supports. I want to do everything I can as a commissioner to stop this spread of misinformation.*

*-Question JR: I noticed that San Diego is doing a resolution such as this. Does NACo have a program that can be plugged into this or resources that we may invest to pursue those goals in the County?*

*LJ: Yes one of the things I'm doing is working with Amazon; Amazon has some new features that allow us to find key words, and automatically it will send a message to people who will be in charge of looking at misinformation coming from DeKalb. We will be able to get in front of it and hopefully bring out the facts. I'm researching this now and will provide more information as I work with our COO Williams.*

*-JR: With many counties adopting similar resolutions maybe we could get NACo to respond to some of these actions in the resolution; the investments we make could pay dividends in the nation elsewhere, and likewise we could learn from some of the other counties. NACo is a great clearinghouse for these shared challenges and this is right up their alley.*

*LJ: I will do that.*

*-RP: regarding paragraph C: Develop targeted community engagement strategies, including partnerships with trusted messengers; I want to encourage us to work with partners externally as trusted messengers.*

*New Agenda Items:*

[2021-3165](#)

Commission District(s): All

REN - Pre-Employment Drug and Alcohol Testing Services (Annual Contract - 4th Renewal of 4 Options to Renew): Contract No. 1082514 for use by the Department of Human Resources and Merit System (HRMS). This contract consists of providing post-offer pre-employment and fitness for duty physicals to candidates for employment and/or employees. Awarded to Caduceus USA. Amount Not To Exceed: \$284,450.00

**MOTION was made by Robert Patrick, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be recommended for approval. to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 10/26/2021. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

*-Question TT: why do we screen for alcohol for our pre-screening?*

*MDJ: it's imperative that no employee be impaired in the performance of their job with DeKalb County.*

*-TT: I agree with that. But this is a pre-screening. Has anyone shown up drunk to a prescreening?*

*MDJ: I had to take the pre-screening for alcohol and drugs. If I know I will take a test, and come in with alcohol in my system, it would say something about me. That's my personal opinion. I believe this needs to continue to be done.*

*Z Williams: I heard that years ago there was an employee; it's not frequent.*

*-TT: if a commissioner were to fail that screening, would they still be able to be hired even though they are elected?*

*-TT: we're also screening for marijuana; we know that, unlike alcohol, marijuana can be in your system for 30 to 60 days.*

*How is that pre-employment screening effective, knowing that it could have taken place over 30-60 days. I would further add that we are actively pursuing a legislative agenda that includes decriminalization of marijuana possession. In essence we are saying using marijuana is not a crime but in essence it's become an HR crime.*

*-MDJ: Let me correct that; decriminalizing marijuana less than an ounce for a criminal crime is not saying that you would not treat it as an offense as a fine. But it would not go with your criminal record. If you have above an ounce that is different. TT: if one was drinking on the weekend, so they're not drinking at work; but if one were using marijuana on the weekend they would still get pinged by this drug test. The theory of decriminalization is to not penalize people punitively with access to employment; we're trying to avoid a criminal record. In essence we are penalizing them with this policy because they can't get a job. I'm not in support of this item because I don't believe it's an effective policy.*

*MDJ: that will be another discussion. Are there any additional comments?*

*TT: I would like a response on this*

*B Ransom: regarding the question on whether we encounter applicants who test positive for alcohol - yes we do. Regarding the drug screening, we have that as well. Some applicants try to hide vials of urine, knowing that they have to be tested.*

*TT: could you provide the data regarding pre-screenings for how many people have not been hired for failed alcohol and drug tests?*

*Z Williams: we can ask Caduceus for that applicant information*

*B Ransom: we have not been tracking that but we can ask*

*LJ: they're not employees, so how can you track this information? Furthermore, drugs are still a federal offense. If you're talking about OSHA and occupations, you go to the tax payer and you ask them, do you want to hire somebody that's on drugs?*

*TT: I just think it's ironic that we have a Democratic party platform talking about decriminalizing and legalizing marijuana.*

*LJ: that is different*

*MDJ: we understand your position*

*TT: I just want to point out that Mayor Lance Bottoms in Atlanta has ended drug and pre-employment screening for the City of Atlanta employees; it's probably a good way to increase recruitment.*

*MDJ: you compare DeKalb with other counties, but most people compare other counties to DeKalb; I believe we are in the forefront in many aspects. I appreciate you looking at other counties, but I believe we have a great County*

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

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Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC