

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2022

*via zoom platform

Start Time: 4:30 p.m.

End Time: 6:24 p.m.

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Smith called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. Ms. Austin read the roll by calling each board member by name. All members are in attendance.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Mr. Lewis to approve the agenda. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) February 10, 2022 Meeting

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to approve the minutes. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Austin 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 above 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 and address for the record. 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:

Click here to view BRE meetings: [Video On Demand | DeKalb County, GA \(dekalbcountyga.gov\)](https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov)

- James Alec
- Haqiqa Bowling
- S. Collette Frix
- Liz Throop
- Alex Passe
- Jane Mezoff

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A) Director's Report

In the first weeks, Director Smith conducted individual meetings with staff internally and met with members of the administration and some members of the Board of Commissioners. She is in the process of scheduling external stakeholder meetings and facilitating a joint meeting with party leaders.

Director Smith referred to Attachment 2 of the Board's packet to detailing the budget proposal. This document includes the approved budget and breakdown of expenditures.

Ms. Jester asked that the budget regularly be included in the report and requested a budget versus actual statement each month.

Director Smith referred to page 9 of the Board's packet to discuss voting precincts. A total of thirteen (13) precincts that have not been confirmed. The goal is to have all precincts confirmed by March 17 and at that time the department will present an updated list along with early voting sites for the Board's approval.

Ms. Swift is generally pleased with the locations and requests that the department consider two early voting precincts at Emory and Agnes Scott to ensure students have an accessible voting location.

Ms. Swift also inquired about the timeline for locations to confirm. Director Smith explained that some contacts are working to identify additional locations. The deadline to confirm is March 17.

Ms. Motter commented on signage in response to a public comment.

Chairperson Smith asked Director Smith to summarize the qualifications for an election day precinct. Ms. Hart described the criteria for selecting locations. The Board discussed distance and access for voters in a specific precinct. The polling place is simply required to be within the precinct boundary.

Director Smith referred to page 14 of the Board's packet containing the department's analysis of voting location accessibility, proposed advanced voting locations for the primary and a map of drop box locations for the Board's consideration.

Ms. Motter expressed concerns about the decrease in the number of locations to choose from and logistical aspects such as parking, handicap access, and public transportation as it relates to the new locations.

Chairperson Smith echoed Ms. Motter's comments about the number of voters that will potentially be inconvenienced and commented on the lack of locations in the southwest

region of the county. Director Smith is developing maps showing availability of public transit to be published on the website.

Ms. Jester suggested coordinating with MARTA to request more robust transportation options during advanced voting and elections.

Director Smith announced that the department is currently working to supplement poll worker trainings for managers and assistant manager to include additional guidance on poll watching.

Mr. Lewis asked that all new information be shared with the Board. Ms. Swift suggested ways to improve and expand outreach for poll worker recruitment.

Director Smith updated the Board on an inquiry she received regarding poll manager nominees from political parties and is working with staff to prepare recommendations to the Board.

Mr. Lewis is interested in the nomination process and would like to see the nominations, as this a first for the Board.

Director Smith briefly discussed the Georgia's new voter registration system – the Georgia Registered Voter Information System (“GaRVIS”). The platform will launch on March 20. Staff has participated in virtual trainings and Director Smith is coordinating with the Secretary of State to facilitate an in-person training next week.

Mr. Lewis asked for the training date to be shared with the Board and intends to attend.

Director Smith informed the Board that redistricting activities have been completed.

B) Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Terry addressed the Board.

C) Legislative Update

Attorney Vander Els reported there are over two dozen bills that have been introduced this session that relate to elections. Two redistricting bills for both the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education have now passed both houses. Also, a bill to provide an additional date for TSPLOST elections has passed.

A number of other bills cover a variety of topics including instant runoff rank choice voting, drop boxes, election day registration, absentee ballots (expanding/restricting use), line warming, poll watcher qualifications, voter challenge procedures, advanced voting periods, and others.

Ms. Jester asked the Law Department to prepare a memo summarizing these bills. Mr. Lewis asked Law to coordinate with Communications to publish this update. Ms. Swift and Chairperson Smith echo these requests.

D) Communications Update

Mr. Burton highlighted upcoming events and items from his update that is included in the Board's packet. Virtual listening sessions are scheduled as follows:

- Saturday, March 26 at 11:00 a.m.
- Monday, March 28 at 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 29 at 12:00 p.m.

Click here to view BRE meetings: [Video On Demand | DeKalb County, GA \(dekalbcountyga.gov\)](https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/video-on-demand)

Mr. Burton briefly discussed developing a redistricting FAQ, mailing voter registration cards, voter guides for college students and voters with disabilities, and signage at polling places.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

A) Contracts for Approval

i. Profile PR

Director Smith referred to Attachment 4 in the Board's packet to discuss a draft amendment to Mr. Burton's contract. This amendment adds the amount of two hundred fifty-five thousand (\$255,000.00) dollars for services thru June 30, 2022. Director Smith asks the Board to approve the amendment extending the term, expanding the scope of work and price in a form acceptable to the County Attorney.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to approve the amendment for purposes of discussion. The Board discussed the scope of work, services rendered and the need for this extension.

Ms. Jester requested information on the addition of funds and how it compares to what has already been spent.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Swift to approve this amendment to contract #1228295 as presented in the Board's packet today in a form approved by the County Attorney. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

ii. Fort Orange

Director Smith referred to Attachment 5 in the Board's packet regarding services for production of absentee vote by mail materials in the amount of two hundred twenty thousand five-hundred fifteen dollars and seventy-five cents (\$220,515.75). Director Smith is seeking approval of this item and requesting authorization for the Chairperson to approve any necessary documents to procure these services.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to approve for discussion. The Board discussed procurement of services from Fort Orange in the past and the manner in which services are rendered including the process for mailing absentee ballots, postage and other costs.

Mr. Lewis asked if there is recourse available in the event there are issues with the ballots or mailing. Director Smith explained this item is for authorization to purchase services and will need to discuss developing a contractual relationship with the Law Department. Chairperson Smith suggested following-up before this expenditure is finalized to ensure that the issue Mr. Lewis identified and any other concerns are addressed.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Swift to approve these expenditures with Fort Orange Press as detailed in pages 30 and 31, not to exceed \$55,631.25 and \$164,884.50 respectively, and for the Chairperson to authorize any necessary documentation to make this purchase. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

Click here to view BRE meetings: [Video On Demand | DeKalb County, GA \(dekalbcountyga.gov\)](https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov)

Each board member thanked staff, county partners, and the public for their participation in public comment. Board members especially thanked Director Smith for her report and greatly appreciate the level of detail she incorporated into her presentation.

Ms. Motter shared that she has been in the office all week and gave kudos to staff working on candidate qualifications for being so friendly, knowledgeable and transparent when interacting with partisan volunteers this week.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Ms. Motter to adjourn. This meeting is adjourned.