

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Special Called Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2022

*via zoom platform

Start Time: 1:00 p.m.

End Time: 1:53 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
Tristen Waite, Assistant County Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Lowman Smith called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Ms. Austin read the roll by calling each board member by name. All members are in attendance.

Motion by Ms. Motter and seconded by Mr. Lewis to approve the agenda. 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 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:

- Liz Throop
- Jane Mezoff
- Sonya Collette Frix
- Victoria Webb

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ITEMS FOR DECISION

A) Election Day Polling Place Locations

Director Smith referred to Item 3A included in the Board's packet detailing the Election Day polling place locations. Pages 2-5 of the packet contain information regarding polling place changes and pages 6-19 contain the full listing of polling place locations.

Director Smith stated that the polling place listing included staff recommendations for the thirteen (13) precincts that had not been confirmed before the March board meeting. She further explained that staff worked diligently to identify polling places and that changes were based on site availability and accessibility.

Ms. Motter asked if the proposed polling locations would be posted on the VRE website and published in outlets including the Legal Organ. She went on to recommend highlighting the permanent versus temporary changes when providing the information to the public. Ms. Motter then stated that it would be helpful for the public to hear the timing of communications to voters to hear about the changes. Director Smith stated the first notice of the proposed changes were published in the Legal Organ on March 24, 2022 and the second would be published again on March 31, 2022. Director Smith also stated the information would be on the VRE website. She went on to state the precinct cards are ordered from the Secretary of State and stated the site was currently offline and the expectation is for orders to be made the following week.

Ms. Swift inquired if the permanent changes listed were due precinct changes because of redistricting. Director Smith stated the locations are not based on redistricting outcomes but based on site precinct location availability.

Mr. Lewis asked if there were updates regarding South DeKalb Mall and North DeKalb Senior Center. Chairperson Lowman Smith recommended deferring the inquiry until the Board Item 3B which covers advance voting times and locations was discussed.

Chairperson Lowman Smith followed up on a statement made during the public comment regarding the Cofer location and asked for clarity. Director Smith replied the original location was unavailable, so the new recommendation is Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library.

Ms. Motter provided history on polling place changes indicated as permanent and stated the locations in 2020 were temporary. She further stated the changes proposed were in her view changes that were temporary to now proposed as permanent. Mr. Lewis suggested to include a reason for the changes to alleviate confusion regarding why the changes are made.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to approve the changes contingent upon the advertising period. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

B) Advance Voting Times and Locations

Director Smith shared new developments not included in the packet regarding North DeKalb Senior Center and South DeKalb Mall. She went on to state that both sites are now confirmed. She also informed the Board that staff would be speaking with the city of Stonecrest to inquire about Browns Mill as a potential site.

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Mr. Lewis inquired about Wade Walker. Director Smith stated that staff had yet to receive a response from the Wade Walker contact. Mr. Lewis asked for clarity around the total number of proposed advance voting locations. Director Smith stated a total of fourteen (14) which includes the change from Salem Library to Browns Mill and the addition of North DeKalb Senior Center. Chairperson Lowman Smith stated her interest in Browns Mill as an early voting site because of nearby parking.

Ms. Motter asked about proposed dates and times for advance voting.

Staff recommends the following:

Early Voting Dates: May 2 through May 20, 2022

Voting Hours:

Monday through Friday 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Saturday May 7 and 14, 2022 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Sunday May 8 and 15, 2022 noon to 5:00 PM

Dialogue ensued around the proposed dates and times. Mr. Lewis expressed concern with staff having to work on Mother's Day. Other Board members shared the same concern. Ms. Swift suggested notifying staff that hours are reduced on Mother's Day. Ms. Shelly Momo advised to make the motion subject to the legal department reviewing the dates to ensure the dates are appropriate under the law.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Mr. Lewis to approve the advance voting plan contingent upon confirmation of approval by the legal department with regard to the dates. Motion carries 4-0. Ms. Swift is not present at this time.

C) Drop Box Locations

Director Smith referred to Item 3 in the Board's packet containing the proposed drop box locations. Chairperson Lowman Smith asked Director Smith to provide the qualifications for drop box locations. Ms. Twyla Hart described the requirements site must meet as well as the rationale for selecting locations.

Staff recommends the following drop box locations:

Memorial Drive

Dunwoody Library

Tucker Library

South DeKalb Mall

Briarwood Recreation Center

New Birth Baptist Church

Motion by Ms. Motter and seconded by Ms. Jester to approve the drop box locations for the General Primary. Motion carries 4-0.

Ms. Swift is not present at this time.

Chairperson Lowman Smith acknowledged Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson and yielded the floor for comments. Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson thanked the Board and staff for ensuring citizens are

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engaged and have access to the ballot box during the election. Commissioner Davis Johnson went on to announce District 5's upcoming Voter Registration Drive and Vaccination Clinic and invited everyone to attend which will be held on March 31, 2022 at 5:30 PM in the parking lot of the Voter Registration and Elections office located at 4380 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA 30032.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Lewis thanked Director Smith and other VRE staff for attending the GOP Open House and stated that they were very appreciative of VRE's participation.

Ms. Motter provided information about § 21-2-90 and requested Director Smith and staff to help the Board perform their duties under the particular Code section by providing information on the length of service for DeKalb's current poll managers, assistant managers as well as poll workers. Ms. Motter also asked the County's law department to continue to work with VRE to provide recommendations on this as well. Ms. Swift supported Ms. Motter's comments.

Chairperson Lowman Smith acknowledged the participation of Board members and VRE staff who attended the Georgia Association of Voter Registration and Election Officials (GAVREO) conference and summarized information shared. She went on to thank all VRE staff for their efforts in adjusting to the changes resulting from SB 202 and the registration system migration.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 PM.