



# DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center  
1300 Commerce Drive  
Decatur, Georgia 30030

## Minutes

### ERPS-Employee Relations & Public Safety Committee

---

Thursday, August 11, 2022

1:00 PM

---

#### Special Called Meeting

*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: 1:00 PM

Attendees: Commissioners Terry, Rader, Bradshaw, Cochran Johnson

**Present**      3 - Commissioner Ted Terry, Commissioner Jeff Rader, and  
Commissioner Steve Bradshaw

#### I. AGENDA ITEM

*Previously Heard Items:*

[2022-1656](#)      Commission District(s): All Commission Districts  
To Amend the Code of DeKalb County, Georgia, As Revised 1988,  
Chapter 20, Article VIII, to Recognize General Election Day as a Paid  
County Holiday.

**MOTION was made by Jeff Rader, seconded by Ted Terry, that  
this agenda item be recommended for deferral to the Board of  
Commissioners, due back on 9/13/2022. The motion carried by the  
following vote:**

**Yes: 3 - Commissioner Terry, Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner  
Bradshaw**

*-Information provided by Commissioner Terry*

*-Additional information provided by Director Ransom*

*-Fiscal Impact information provided by Director Sigler*

*COO Williams: ultimately, the board will make the policy decision. Operationally for us, the idea of offering the time off is much easier than managing the closure of the County*

*TT: I agree I don't think it's necessary to close the County for business on election day but providing 8 hours to employees either on election day or within the early voting period on a week day.*

*JR: My primary interest and concern is continuity of service on an important day, increasingly staff from public safety and County operations have been called upon to supplement resources of our voter registration and elections office. I know we work hard to ensure they have resource in place to provide successful voting operations, such as maximizing the Saturdays and Sundays during the early voting period. I think the logistics of providing an opportunity to vote should be formalized within our personal policies, based upon your own personal circumstances you should have the time necessary that your work will not impair your ability to vote. I do think closing the County would be problematic and I would question if, given other demands, the resources we would apply to this should be applied making voting easier for all eligible voters of the County not just for the employees. And whether or not the expense of closing or of eight hours of PTO would better be deployed towards direct voter support efforts.*

*Question LCJ: Regarding the current policy that provides two hours to vote. I want clarity on whether or not we are limiting what two hours are we providing. Employees have the ability to take those two hours at any time of the day?*

*Director Ransom: That is correct*

*LCJ: Thank you I wanted to verify that. We have made tremendous gains over the past three years as it relates to ease of access. I do feel that if we are not limiting those two hours we give, I'd like to get some data from Board of Elections as to the amount of time it takes to vote, if we find 2 hours is inadequate then I'd be open to adjusting it.*

*TT: As to the operations aspect, when City of Clarkston created a half day we were able to figure it out and continue services. What this resolution is doing is emphasizing that Election Day should be a holiday. This has support on the federal level from former presidents and our current Senators. As referenced other states have approved this. At the end of the day, similar to Juneteenth, we are sending a message of support of this as day as a holiday and recognizing it is hard for people to vote on a work day. I would just you know simply asked for my colleagues to have faith that the administration and the department heads and it will figure out the best solution, just as you know, 15 other State governments and those county commissioners and city councils did.*

*LCJ: My concern is not the administration doing their job, my concern is we do not have just one voting day. If we only had one day to vote I'd feel a lot different but since we have early voting 2-3 weeks prior to election day. To COO Williams and Director Ransom; Have we had individuals or staff that indicated that currently the two hour window for voting is inadequate? I'm not opposed to extending that time and if anyone in district 7 asked for more time there would be no hesitation but I want to know if other Staff has had this issue.*

*COO Williams: I cannot recall any specific concerns. I'd have to go back to past elections. I know we have been able to provide more options in past elections, I recognize this election might have more constraints due to current state law. One of the things about offering eight hours, instead of the day off is theoretically, the date of the election there's going to be a lot less people leaving and they will actually be here to work if they need to be called into service, because they will have been able to take care of their vote during early voting.*

*Question SB: DeKalb offers 11 holidays, correct?*

*Director Ransom: That is correct*

*Question SB: And that is in line with the other metro counties*

*Director Ransom: Yes, Cobb offers 10 days, City of Atlanta and Clayton County offers 10 days, Fulton County has 12 days.*

*-SB: Do we know any of their policies in regard to election day has a holiday?*

*Director Ransom: None of those jurisdictions offer election day as a holiday*

*Question SB: If we get to the point we approve it, what is the implication look like. How much do you need to execute this properly*

*COO Williams: we would be prepared to execute in the upcoming elections*

*SB: I don't remember the last time I've actually voted on the actual election day. The spirit of the resolution is on point and I am fine with it. I agree with some of the points made today from my colleagues; Commissioner Cochran Johnson am I correct you would like someone from Elections to speak towards the data? I'm not certain this is right for action today. Could we defer for a period of time to address some of the issues today*

*TT: yes, could we move to 8/25 Special Call*

*-SB: that seems reasonable*

*JR: Could the administration develop a more formalized policy that revolves around how we are ensuring that the County notifies and encourages our employees to exercise the franchise and then gives them a clear path as to how to take advantage of this commitment in terms of taking the time off. I want to ensure that this does revolve around honoring and enhancing the opportunity to vote and formalize that process. Because what I'm hearing is that, in spite of its symbolic importance, the idea of actually making the Tuesday after the first Monday in November a day that the County is closed and is the holiday and same way that, veterans day would be. That we would want a much more tangible and formalized policy that you know really does allow access.*

*It's been my experience that we even had developed a saying for Martin Luther King Day to remind people that it was a day on not a day off. The advent of, particularly Monday holidays within the holiday scheme an awful lot of symbolic meaning of many of these holidays seems to be somewhat diminished by the fact that people consider it to be simply a you know, an extra sort of collateral benefit. And I do want to make sure that we continue to emphasize the purpose and the utility of our policy to actually get people exercise the franchise. The worst case scenario being someone calls in sick on Monday and then have a four day weekend where they were away from home and they didn't get a chance to vote. So, I really just want to make sure that it is not solely a symbolic type of a thing and then instead it really does have the desired effect.*

*TT: I am looking for coconscious here. I think what Commissioner Rader is going for is suspension of government because if we want to create the true culture of, what the Commissioner said and provide everyone with the opportunity to vote then we should shut down. Similar to Juneteenth where the government is shut down and we have a big event to celebrate. I don't see any reason why we could not do a nonpartisan get out the vote rally and give people the day off and the opportunity to volunteer and celebrate. I'd like to hear what the COO thinks to that aspect.*

*SB: Staff please review to ensure Commissioner Rader and Cochran-Johnson's request are addressed when we reconvene on the 25th*

*JR: recommended deferral to September 13, 2022 BOC meeting, with a preliminary stop in ERPS on August 25th*

Meeting Ended At: 1:38 PM

**MOTION was made by Ted Terry, seconded by Jeff Rader, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes: 3 - Commissioner Terry, Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner Bradshaw**

---

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC