DeKalb County Government

178 Sams Street
Decatur, GA 30030

Minutes - Draft

OPS-County Operations Committee

Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson(Chairperson)

Commissioner Robert Patrick

Commissioner LaDena Bolton

Thursday, January 22, 2026	**12:00 PM**	**1300 Commerce Dr., Decatur GA 30030 (5th Floor Multipurpose Room)**

Meeting Started At: 12:05 PM

Attendees: Commissioners Davis Johnson, Patrick, Bolton, Long Spears, and Massiah (Zoom)

Present 3 - Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, Commissioner Robert Patrick, and Commissioner LaDena Bolton

I. DISCUSSION

Charter Review Recommendations

Committee Recommendations

Section 2 – The Commission
Updates the Census year when the org act was adopted it referred to an earlier Census.
Committee consensus on recommended changes. Updating Census year.

Section 3 – Establishment of the Commission
MW: Census references in the Org act changed. The changes the start dates to a more recent date, rather than the original date. There is no change to the terms or the cycle of elections.
LB: How will we archive the changes? There will still be a record of what is previously adopted.
MW: The existing org act will remain in the archives, and this will simply be updates.
RP: Is there a sense of why this got attention?
MW: The charter review report does not go into reasons, it just gives recommendations.
MW: All amendments of the Org act are published when they are adopted, we can provide you a history of the changes at your request.
Committee consensus on recommended changes. Updating dates.

Section 10 – Annual Financial Audits
MW: The auditing firm shall be selected by a list selected by the AOC, the main change is that the results of the audit shall be shared with the Board as well as the CEO. Previously the results only had to be shared with the Board.
Committee consensus on recommended changes. Adding CEO to report distribution.

Section 11 – Independent Internal Audit
MW: The first bullet report would be a new requirement to provide the report directly to the Legislative Delegation.
The second requires posting on the website.
The third bullet puts more structure on the response process for departments.
LB: Was there any indication that the delegation expects to receive the report?
No
Consensus on bullets two and three, eliminating bullet one.

Section 15 – Appointments to Public Office
MW: Currently the Org act is silent, in practice it is a responsibility of the Clerk, but does believe that all copies of that roster should be provided to the CEO, COO, and Law.
Consensus on Clerk maintaining a roster of all appointments and vacancies. Additionally copies of this roster shall be provided to the BOC, CEO, COO, and Law Department.

Section 17 – Enactment of Ordinance and Resolutions
MW: That section was simply titled veto power of the CEO, the suggestion is that it be renamed to encompass what is in the section. It speaks to how resolutions are enacted by this government, and more than just veto powers.
It is recommended that the title of the section change to "Enactment of Ordinances and Resolutions; Veto Power of the Chief Executive"
Consensus on change in Section title to "Enactment of Ordinances and Resolutions; Veto Power of the Chief Executive"

Section 19 – Budgeting; Control of Expenditures
MW: CRC suggested October 1st, CEO recommends November the 1st like Fulton.
LB: Is Fulton able to approve their budget by the top of the year?
MW: We will have to check.
RP: I'm good with the CEO's recommended change, is it still 60 days so we would be looking at the end of January for adoption?
MW: Concern about the compressed meeting schedule in Nov/Dec, and the committee review process.
MDJ: We can always hold special called meetings.
Consensus on the November 1st budget presentation date, still need to determine adoption date.
LB: move to January.
MW: First business meeting in January?

RP: Would like to look at in depth.
ZW: Is the concern the date of receipt or the length of the time into the fiscal year?
MDJ: how long into the fiscal year.
NM: Should we consider a date certain, the recommendation is 12/31 the year prior. Suggest we think of contingencies.
MDJ: We will discuss and come back to this.

Section 21 – Department of Finance
MW: This is an example of where things have changed since the Org Act was put in place, the recommendation is that financial statement information be shared on the website. The second recommendation is to remove the advisory language making it a legal requirement to post on the website.
RP: If we are to look at City of Suwanee, you can see the tax information and where dollars are being spent based on your address, is this section where language that addresses that type of information would be covered?
MW: This language only requires the June and December statements be posted, there is nothing precluding additional information.
ZW: Comments on how to implement Commissioners request.
RP: Would like to have further conversation.
Consensus on requiring County financial statements to be placed on the website, and the removal provisions of the section are advisory only.

Section 22 – Records; Minutes
MW: We had some concern with this recommended change. Legally the minutes are the recorded version of what has taken place in the meeting. We have concerns with the way this is written that implies that we would attach contracts and other documents that were not presented to you. We suggest that this be discussed with the Clerk. The change may need some wordsmithing.
RP: Recommends that we do not make this change. I think this adds difficulty.
LB: This is specifically for the minutes and not other items the Clerk keeps record of?
Committee will bring back for further discussion after discussion with the Clerk.
NM: there are some other areas 22c references OCGA section 50-18-71c incorporating that statutory language and adding a section e referencing OCGA 15-18-99 for a records retention program.
MW: this is not part of the summary chart.
MDJ: is this a recommended change?
MW: in section 22 c it is recommended to reference the state law an added reference that is included, section e this is already a requirement in state law that is simply being added to the Org Act.

Section 24 – Officials not to have financial interests in County contracts
MW: This is a change in title for accuracy. One additional small change that includes a reference to the state law that addresses this.
Consensus to accept recommended changes.

Start with section 4 at next meeting.
MDJ: Dan, should we send what we have completed for Home Rule or wit until the entire review is done?
DB: You will meet with the Delegation soon, and you can discuss then.
MDJ: We will give a status update.

Standing Procedural Rules

f. Proposed new section - MLS
Any agenda item assigned to a committee shall be heard by the committee within 30 days of its assignment.

CJ: If an item has not been heard in committee within 60 days of assignment, sponsor has the right to request that the item be heard before the COW and made an action item for the next regularly scheduled BOC.

MDJ: Sometimes a committee cannot get to completion within 30 days, I would not be in support of bring an item to COW, if the item is not out of committee in 90 days I think that reasonable. I think we should have a time period on it. Would not like to see us spend time in COW if it a committee item.

LB: Would like to hear from Commissioner Spears on this suggestion.

MLS: Requested this item be added to rule book is because there were instances where items were held off of the agenda for many many months, understand a chairs control over their agenda, but I think we need guardrails to ensure that items are addressed. I do like Commissioner Johnsons suggestion of hearing it in COW and a compromise of 60 days.

MDJ: Would it come before COW with no recommendation?
MLS: Yes and it would encourage committees to hear items.

LB: Here you both reference it being heard a certain number of days within assignment, not the fact that it may have been heard once and not heard again? Is that the concern?

MLS: Comments on current process.

LB: This indicates that the delay is for the initial time an item is held in committee, but my experience is that an item may be heard initially but then not heard again for an extended period of time.

MLS: Great distinction, maybe there needs to be a part b to this rule. An item has to goto committee within an x number of days, but if it goes to committee and has not been heard for some number of months that an item just needs to be heard.

MDJ: Some items can not be heard in 90 days without unintended consequences. I agree if its not heard then it should be heard, but the completion should be based on what we have in front of us.

TGP: Would like to suggest that we develop a framework to think about this. Items should go on the agenda for the commission and would have an automatic return to the BOC agenda, then the committee could speak to why it might need go back to committee. In addition you could think about a time when an item may be renewed.

NM: Comments on suggestion.

RP: I don't like either version that has been proposed. Undermines the value of the committee system. Prefer to see a quarterly special called meeting and any item not heard would be heard there. Some committees require more discussion.

MLS: Not intended to try to rush an item through committee. Regarding a quarterly special called meeting, I like that idea and accomplish the same thing.

MDJ: I like that idea as well. After a quarter if it hasn't been heard you have to have a sc meeting or explain why you don't think you need one at COW.

TGP: As I understood what you described Commissioner Patrick, there would be a mandatory sc meeting every quarter and the agenda for that meeting would be those items that have been on the agenda for a full quarter? Example of potential process. Another clarifying component would be to address how you get an item on the agenda and into the committee.

MDJ: There are other recommendations that may address this issue.

NM: If we are going to put time limits and move it thru committee that its at a point where additional changes are not needed. Request that we consider work groups.

ZW: As the Board contemplates what items make it to the agenda, we ensure some sort of review for all of the potential implications.

Committee: Wordsmith language and review with staff.

g. Proposed new section - MLS
A Committee Chair does not have the right to exclude items from a committee agenda.

RP: Could you explain this one?

MLS: If an item is brought on to the agenda that we can't just decide not to hear it. The previous item takes care of this.

Committee: Remove this section.

2. Superseding Agenda
The agenda as prepared by the clerk may be re-ordered upon official action of the Commission. The chief executive officer or designee, a constitutional officer or designee, or an individual commissioner may, upon motion of any commissioner, withdraw from the agenda an item that he or she has sponsored so long as the withdrawal occurs before the item is finally acted upon by the Commission.

MLS: The agenda as prepared by the Clerk may be re-ordered upon official action of the Commission. The CEO or designee, a constitutional officer or designee, or an individual Commissioner may, upon motion of any Commissioner, withdraw from the agenda an item that he or she has sponsored so long as the withdrawal occurs before the item is finally acted upon by the Commission.

Committee: Consensus on capitalization change.

4. Unanimous Consent
Unless otherwise required by law, any preliminary item may be acted upon as an action item at its first reading with unanimous consent of the Commission. To be acted upon after the reading of its subject by the presiding officer, a motion for action on a preliminary item must be made by a member who has obtained the floor and properly seconded. If the chair hears no objection prior to a call for discussion on the item, then the item shall automatically become ready for action.

MLS: Unless otherwise required by law, any preliminary item that appeared on the published agenda for a particular Commission meeting may be acted upon as an action item during its first meeting only with the unanimous consent of the Commission. To be acted upon after the reading of its subject by the Presiding Officer, a motion for action on a Preliminary item must be made by a member who has obtained the floor and properly seconded. If the Presiding Officer hears no objection prior to a call for discussion on the item, then the item shall automatically become ready for action. If any Commissioner or Commissioners express objection, the item shall not be eligible for action until its next appearance on a Commission agenda.

MDJ: 2/3's vote
TGP: Comments on unintended consequences.
RP: Requests a sidebar with staff.
NM: Requests a sidebar with staff.

Meeting Concluded At: 1:48 PM

MOTION was made by Robert Patrick, seconded by LaDena Bolton, that this agenda item be Adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Commissioner Davis Johnson, Commissioner Patrick, and Commissioner Bolton

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Barbara Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC