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, February 12, 2026 **9:30 AM**

Special Called Meeting

Meeting Started At: 9:48 AM

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

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

I. DISCUSSION

Charter Review Recommendations

CRC Recommended changes that may or may not need state action, depending on final language

Committee Recommendations
Section 9 - Powers and Duties of the Commission
MW: Ward courtesy, the current language in the blue book does not match the current process that you all undertake. In practice you all have simply voted. We would modernize the language to match the process. This is a clean up item if you all agree with the suggested language, it does not change any powers.
MDJ: Fine with that change.
TT: Comment for section 18 because a lot has been deleted. Are there any unintended consequences?
MW: We put provision 18 in a different category. Its simplifying the language, it does not affect any powers.
TT: I'm good with the clean-up language.
MW: Regarding Commissioner Terry's concern about provision 18 of section 9, that is a recitation of the powers that you have under state law, this is consolidated and we prefer this language.
Committee consensus on language.

Section 14 – Powers and Duties of the Chief Executive
MW: New subsection a and sentence at the end of subsection d, while these are functions that the CEO currently serves, because they are fresh language, they could be seen as affecting powers and in need of referendum. This language could be adjusted to be within home rule powers.
MDJ: I'm fine with the language.
LB: One of the concerns that I have about this is the CEO is managing relationships with other legislative bodies, I could understand if it was other executives but I think that we should adapt the langue in respect to that because we need to be able to manage relationships with other legislative bodies.
MDJ: Does this prohibit our interactions with other legislative bodies?
MW: It doesn't exclude the Board, but it would mean the CEO's team would take the lead.
LB: NACo example, this language isn't inclusive of the board and the CEO manages, we may or may not be a part of the conversation and planning.
RP: What is the context of the word manage? How does that impact the FAB committee's relationship with the constitutionals, requesting additional information.
NM: I echo my colleagues, I am mindful of where there is a delegation of a change of duties. As it relates to external interactions particularly those in the legislative arm, that that be a function of the board and not the CEO. That we drive policy because it is our responsibility.
TT: I would be ok with this language if there was some recognition of the Board's adoption of the legislative agenda. Wordsmith this section to allow us agency to manage the efforts that we all agree on from a Board approved resolution.
MDJ: Last year we did a joint session, but it was the Commissioners that voted on the legislative agenda, are you saying the CEO doesn't get any input.
TT: No I think I'm saying the term manage is a broader thing and there are some things we don't need to deal with, but I don't want to box us out. If there was a way to massage the language or in another section like commissioner powers, if the Governing authority adopts an agenda, it gives us the agency to advocate for the issues that we all agree on.
RP: Following up on Commissioner Terry's comment, Where do we fit into that equation?
MW: The allowance for the Board to maintain communications with other bodies and addressing a legislative agenda adoption in section 9. Would need referendum as this adjust powers.
NM: If we have to goto the general assembly, I would like for us to be able to have our process with a timeframe, who initiates, priorities methodology and how we present. DeKalb day example, delegation presentation examples.
MW: We will draft new language and circulate.

Section 16 – Chief Operating Officer
MW: Sections b and f. Section b is a clarification and would not need state action. Section f previously said two administrators, the limitation has been removed, we do not believe that this changes powers. If approved as written would not require state action.
No comments.
Committee consensus on language.

Section 17 – Veto Power of Chief Executive

MW: It has always been our interpretation that if an item is not vetoed it becomes effective by operation of law.
NM: I think it should be explicit. Make sure it is clear in the verbiage.
MDJ: is it made clear in state law?
MW: It is in section a as it exists. Moving from one section to the other.
NM: it does not say ‘without the CEO’s approval’.
MW: The language does exist in the current org act. In section 15b instead of 15a.
NM: It needs to be expressed in the particular area that we are speaking about.
Committee consensus on language.

Standing Procedural Rules

Staff presentation of policy review methodology memo.

MDJ: I agree with the memo recommendation and want the additional sponsors for legislation.

LB: There has not been a concrete process, this would be helpful, I don't see getting preliminary feedback from the affected departments. Add to process.

RP: like the policy, very clear. My other suggestion is that we have this as an either or with the sponsoring commissioners. If commissioner feels like the legislation is a rush item then they can go thru the other process.

MDJ: I think that you still need to speak with a department.

RP: there will be an issue that we may want to move on quickly, I wouldn't want to restrict that. So the two sponsors is a way to do that recognizing this is something that is a concern for not th majority but a minority of commissioners.

MDJ: If there is something that needs to be expedited thru central staff is there a process for that?
JM: We can draft language based on the recommendation.

TT: Agree with Commissioner Bolton's point about department feedback being explicitly stated in the policy, but there may be legislation that does not need departmental feedback.
Suggest we adopt right now, and see how it goes. If it doesn't work, i would be open to going to the two sponsors. IT only takes one legislator to create a bill on any level, we would be creating a higher bar.

Comments on process of adopting changes from TT and MDJ.

NM: Comments on proposed policy, support that we at least attest to a review by central staff and departments within 48 hours. Also ensure that it does not violate any civil or federal laws. SMART Goals.

ZW: Under staff analysis with the assistance of the COO or designee or the County attorney or their designee and add an operational review under the bullets.

TT: Would add to this framework, thru our retreat process we create an annual work plan that we come up with what were going to do this year, anything not on the work plan would need a higher bar. Would keep everyone focused to get priorities done first and keep additions to a minimum. Annual work plan approved by board.

MDJ: Agree to an annual retreat, to see what we can agree on. Circumstances dictate what we do, to say that its not within that framework that something can't be presented, I don't agree with that.

RP: Two retreats one at the beginning and at the end. First after budget second before November.
MDJ: Up to two retreats per year.
LB: Comments on retreat effectiveness.

MW: Law agrees with COO and would welcome this process.

MDJ: Define what items this would cover more clearly. Add to procedural rules.

LB: Difference in passing as a resolution vs. part of blue book.
MW: Would caution against passing separately to avoid any conflicts with current rules.

Meeting Concluded At: 11:04 AM

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 H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC