

# DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

## Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2024  
Start Time: 12:07 p.m.  
End Time: 12:54 p.m.

Board Attendees: Karli Swift, Chair  
Vasu Abhiraman, Vice-Chair  
Anthony Lewis  
Susan Motter

Other Attendees: Keisha Smith, Executive Director  
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney  
Shelley Momo, Supervising Attorney  
Michael Petty, Assistant County Attorney

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Swift called the Board of Registration and Elections meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. Ms. Austin read the roll by calling each board member by name. A quorum was met.

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Motter, to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Motter, to approve the minutes of the November 7 special called meeting, November 12 scheduled meeting, and December 6 special called meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Austin read the rules for public comment:

Public comments may be made in person or submitted by sending an email of one printed page or less at a minimum font of 12 to [electionspubliccmnt@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:electionspubliccmnt@dekalbcountyga.gov) which must be received between 35 and 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting. The body of your email must include your first and last name. By submitting an email for public comment, you agree to have your name and the email broadcast on the UStream and entered into the record and minutes. The DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections reserves the right, at the DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections' sole discretion, to (1) add your email to the record/minutes without reading any of it into the broadcast or (2) read all or a portion of your email into the record/minutes. All public comments will be limited to 2 minutes. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, holding up signs, clapping, yelling, standing or laying in the aisles to show support for or opposition to a speaker will not be permitted, but a show of hands or quietly standing in place will be permitted to show support for or opposition to a speaker's position.

The following citizens provided public comment:

- Elizabeth Shackelford
- Gail Lee
- Cheryl Dudley
- Janet Grant
- Michael Beach

## **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

### A) Certification of the December General/Special Election Runoff

Director Smith began by presenting the post-election report. She provided statistics on turnout stating that of the 503,763 active registered voters, overall turnout was 3.56 % with 10,963 electors voting on Election Day (61%), 4,597 electors voting during the advance voting period (26%), 2,369 electors voted via absentee by mail (13%), and 10 electors voting provisionally (0.06%). She stated that Election Day turnout was experiencing a rebound to pre-COVID numbers. She then went on to report on absentee, UOCAVA and provisional ballot statistics, advance voting turnout, election day sites, poll workers, and equipment deployed. Director Smith expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the county partners that worked alongside VRE, the poll workers, the VRE staff, the Board, the poll watchers, and the community. She then presented the election summary report for certification.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman asked for the total number of active registered voters who were eligible to vote in one of the runoff races and for the turnout percentage based on that. Director Smith replied that this was how the information has always been presented based on the output of the system, but that the information requested could be pulled and provided. Vice-Chair Abhiraman also asked what data the Election Day turnout information was based on to show a rebound and if it was apples to apples. Director Smith proposed to follow up with Vice-Chair Abhiraman offline and he agreed.

Mr. Lewis asked for further details on Election Day turnout. Director Smith responded and stated that going forward, more data, including precinct specific detail would be added to the post-election report.

Motion by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, seconded by Mr. Lewis to certify the results of the December 3 General/Special Election Runoff.

Motion by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, seconded by Mr. Lewis to enter recess to sign the necessary certification documents. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, seconded by Mr. Lewis to end recess and resume the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

### B) 2025 Meeting Calendar

Chair Swift asked the Board if they had any questions on the 2025 meeting calendar and there were none.

Director Smith mentioned that according to O.C.G.A 21-2-540 there was the potential for special elections to be called in March and September. She said that known election dates were in June with a potential runoff in July and November with a potential runoff in December. She further stated that if a special election was called, the Board would be informed and the meeting date and time would be revised accordingly.

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman to approve the 2025 meeting calendar. The motion passed unanimously.

### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### A) Director's Report

Chair Swift stated that Director Smith already provided her update with respect to the election so this item could be skipped, and a larger report would be covered in January's meeting.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Lewis thanked the staff and the numerous county departments that assisted VRE throughout the election. He expressed gratitude to DCTV for their flexibility, and highlighted the increased number of attorneys present at the meetings compared to when he first joined the Board and attributed that to the increased amount of work required by the legal team to conduct elections. Mr. Lewis said he appreciated the comments from the public and the variety of opinions shows the variety of thinking in the county. He thanked the Board for their work and referenced an old US Congress meeting stating that although they have disagreed on some issues, he was thankful that no Board member took their cane to another. He thanked Director Smith for the changes she has made in the department, including increasing staffing. He said he hopes everyone has a wonderful holiday season and that he looks forward to seeing everyone in the new year.

Ms. Motter echoed many of Mr. Lewis's comments and highlighted the poll workers for their repeated service to the community. She stated that the poll workers still must do the setup, open up the polls, and do all the records reconciliation at the end of the day, regardless of the number of voters that come so she very much appreciates them. Ms. Motter said she will have comments to share after the department looks into what worked and what did not work for this election and hopes to have a future retreat to continue on the upward trajectory to being the best county in election administration.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman also echoed his fellow Board members and thanked everyone who worked tirelessly on the election. He shared that he was able to observe the advance voting return process for the November election and it was incredible to witness the dedication from so many people in the department. Vice-Chair Abhiraman also recognized the workload on this county for the runoff and noted that it was probably the highest in the State by far as no other county had 113 polling locations open for the runoff. He stated that he hoped everyone involved in elections policy making, including legislators, the Governor, the Secretary of State's office, and the State Election Board would make a concerted effort to make running elections easier and noted what an inefficient burden it is to have to administer runoff elections. He closed by wishing everyone a happy holiday.

Chair Swift thanked the community for their attendance at the meeting and said it was great to have so many people at the meetings that provide comments and feedback. She echoed Mr. Lewis's comments stating that it was important to hear from everyone and that the Board takes their feedback wholeheartedly and tries to implement their suggestions as they could. She thanked Director Smith and the staff and said that there were so many elections and so many new rules that had to be abided by and in spite of that, VRE did an excellent job on administering efficient and fair elections this year. She thanked the thousands of poll workers that come out to participate in the election experience. Chair Swift further stated that as the Board prepares for next year, they would be putting together another Board retreat like they did at the beginning of the year, to come together and plan out the year. She also said that she planned to meet with CEO-elect Cochran-Johnson to keep this department at the forefront of the county. She acknowledged that

this meeting was Ms. Momo's last meeting and thanked her for her guidance and wished her the best in her future endeavors.

Ms. Momo said she knows how hard the department works and it has been great to be part of it. She said it was a pleasure working with everyone.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

DRAFT