

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Meeting Minutes

October 1, 2024

Start Time: 5:52 p.m.

End Time: 6:53 p.m.

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

Other Attendees: Keisha Smith, Executive Director
Viviane Ernstes, County Attorney
Laura Johnson, Deputy Attorney

ROLL CALL

Chair Swift called the Board of Registration and Elections meeting to order at 5:52 p.m. Ms. Hill read the roll by calling each board member by name. A quorum was met.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Hill 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 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:

- Lynda Holliday

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Ms. Motter to go into executive session for the purposes of litigation. The motion was carried by unanimous vote. The Board entered executive session at 5:58pm.

No action was taken during the executive session.

Motion by Ms. Jester and seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman to adjourn executive session and reconvene in open session. The motion passed unanimously. The Board exited executive session at 6:42pm and resumed the regular meeting.

Ms. Ernstes stated that the need for the special called meeting resulted from the lawsuit discussed in executive session needing to be filed as quickly as possible to be heard and adjudicated. She further stated in addition to holding the special called meeting, a power outage at the normal BRE meeting location at the VRE Headquarters located at 4380 Memorial Drive during Hurricane Helene had not been restored in advance of the special called meeting. She went on to explain that the original notice stated that the meeting would be held at 4380 Memorial Drive; however, due to the inability to restore power at that location, the meeting location had to be changed. She then asked for a motion.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman to authorize the County Attorney to direct the filing of a lawsuit on behalf of the Board of Registration and Elections to challenge certain rules of the Georgia State Election Board that were adopted on or about September 20, 2024. The Executive Director of DeKalb Voter Registration and Elections is authorized to sign a verification of the complaint on behalf of the Board of Registration and Elections.

Mr. Lewis stated that he had several concerns with the process. He stated that the Board of Registration and Elections is an appointed body, and this type of action concerned him as no action had been taken against the Board. He then stated that he had not been convinced that this type of action was within the authority of the Board and further stated that the outcome of the lawsuit is currently unknown and expressed concerns on making the filing without full knowledge of what the Board would be doing in court. He also voiced concern about the cost that the lawsuit may put on the county. He advised that he was not informed of this meeting until after the notice had been posted and that there had been times in emergency situations where the public was able to be notified in a more efficient manner. He said that because of his concerns he did not feel that he could support this motion.

Ms. Jester thanked Mr. Lewis for his thoughtful comments and stated that she agreed with him.

The motion passed 3-2 with Mr. Lewis and Ms. Jester voting nay.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, seconded by Ms. Jester, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.