

DEKALB CITIZENS

— ADVOCACY COUNCIL —

EXPECTATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEKALB BOARD OF ETHICS APPOINTMENT PROCESS

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!

According to the legislation, the appointments must be made by December 31, 2020. If the referendum passes in November, appointing authorities must act at a particularly hectic time of year to appoint the new board members. For that reason, and to ensure quality appointments are made, we suggest the following recommendations:

A public call for applications should be made soon after the November election

A public call for applications should be made through a press release sent to DeKalb County's print and social media resources, including the DeKalb Relay, each Commissioner's newsletter, the County website, and the County's official legal organ (The Champion).

The same announcement should also be sent to community organizations throughout DeKalb County.

Could the secretary of the House delegation be charged with this responsibility and act on behalf of the House, Senate, Tax Commissioner and Clerk of Superior Court? Once the initial board is appointed, this responsibility would be assumed by staff within the Ethics Office.

The announcement should include a description of the basic requirements and ask for a resume and statement of interest in the position.

Requirements for Board Members Specified in the Code of Ethics

Shall have professional knowledge or expertise in matters of ethics, finance, governance, or the law

Residency of DeKalb County for at least 1 year

Must remain resident of DeKalb County while serving

No interest in any contract, transaction, or official act or action of DeKalb County within 2 years of appt.

Cannot be a member of any agency or an official or employee of the County within 2 years of appt.

Cannot have been a candidate for or elected to public office within 3 years of appt.

and

Proposed appointments are subject to an education and employment background check as well as a criminal history check

Interviews should be conducted by a combined committee of selected members of the House and Senate delegations, the Tax Commissioner, and the Clerk of Superior Court

Interviews should be conducted by a committee consisting of selected members of the House and Senate delegations, the Tax Commissioner, and the Clerk of Superior Court, followed by a ranking of candidates (anonymously identified) sent for further consideration by all delegation members, the Tax Commissioner, and the Clerk of Superior Court.

Again, for this initial group of board members, could the secretary of the House delegation be charged with organizing the interviews and decision-making process on behalf of the House, Senate, Tax Commissioner and Clerk of Superior Court?

Diversity of members of the Board of Ethics

Attention should be paid to racial, geographic, gender, and professional diversity so that the composition of the Board of Ethics reflects the diversity of DeKalb County.

Transparency

Once the new Board of Elections has been seated, a press announcement should be made listing the new board members.

Board members and their bios on the Board of Ethics website should be updated promptly.

LOOKING AHEAD

In the future, one individual inside the Board of Ethics office should be responsible for administering the appointment process. This individual would:

- notify the appointing officials of upcoming or existing vacancies,
- seek applications for these vacancies through a public announcement process prior to the end of the scheduled terms,
- provide all applications received through the public notice to the appointing officials, and
- work with the appointing officials and the Chair of the Board of Ethics to fill the vacancy in a timely manner.

We recommend that the Board of Ethics consider assigning these responsibilities to the new position of Ethics Administrator. We also recommend that the Board of Ethics develop an application form to be used in the future by all appointing authorities to ensure consistency of process and further instill public confidence in the appointment process.