



DeKalb County Government

178 Sams Street
Decatur, GA 30030

Agenda Item Substitute

File #: 2025-1606
File Status: Action

12/16/2025

Public Hearing: YES ☐ NO ☒

Department: Board of Commissioners - District 2

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts

An ordinance to amend the code of DeKalb County, Georgia, to establish The DeKalb County Women's Commission; To provide for purposes, membership, terms, meetings, and duties; and for other lawful purposes

Information Contact: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears

Phone Number: 404-371-2863

PURPOSE:

To adopt an ordinance establishing the DeKalb County Women's Commission, which will advise and make recommendations on issues affecting the well-being and advancement of women in DeKalb County - including health, safety, employment, equity, and community engagement initiatives.

NEED/IMPACT:

The establishment of the DeKalb County Women's Commission is needed to provide a formal, coordinated structure for addressing the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women in DeKalb County. While various county departments and community groups currently support women's initiatives, efforts lack a unified advisory body.

This commission will centralize research, advocacy, and recommendations, ensuring women's voices are represented in county policy and program decisions. By advising the Board, CEO, and departments on issues such as health disparities, wage equity, safety, and access to resources, the commission will strengthen existing programs, identify gaps, and foster collaboration across agencies - thereby sustaining and enhancing the County's capacity to promote gender equity and community well-being.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the ordinance and authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute all necessary documents...

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA,
TO ESTABLISH THE DEKALB COUNTY WOMEN’S COMMISSION;
TO PROVIDE FOR PURPOSES, MEMBERSHIP, TERMS, MEETINGS, AND DUTIES;
AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, the women and girls of DeKalb County play a vital role in the cultural, economic, educational, and civic life of the county, and their contributions strengthen every neighborhood, city and community within DeKalb; and

WHEREAS, DeKalb County recognizes that advancing gender equity is essential to ensuring fair access to resources, opportunities, and representation for all residents, particularly women and girls who continue to experience disparities in health outcomes, economic mobility, and leadership roles; and

WHEREAS, women in DeKalb County continue to face systemic challenges, including the impacts of gender-based violence, wage inequities, barriers to career advancement, and limited access to affordable childcare and healthcare options; and

WHEREAS, the empowerment and full participation of women and girls in DeKalb County is directly tied to the county’s prosperity, resilience, and long-term success, and intentional policies, programs and strategies are needed to remove structural barriers and promote inclusive growth; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Women’s Commission serves as an essential advisory body committed to elevating the voices of women and girls, informing county policy, fostering collaboration, and championing initiatives that promote safety, equity, and opportunity across all communities; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with the Junior League of DeKalb County, the Women’s Commission engaged the community through listening sessions, public tours, and outreach efforts that gathered meaningful data, ideas, and recommendations to guide strategic planning and strengthen services that support women and girls in DeKalb County; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Governing Authority of DeKalb County, Georgia, and it is hereby ordained by the Authority of same, that Chapter 2 of the Code of DeKalb County, as Revised 1988, be amended, as follows:

PART I. ENACTMENT

By adding a new Division 3 to Article V of Chapter 2 to read as follows:

DIVISION (3). – DEKALB COUNTY WOMEN’S COMMISSION

Sec. 2-170. Creation; purposes.

There is hereby created the DeKalb County Women’s Commission (“Commission”). The Commission shall advise and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and department directors on issues pertaining to the wellbeing and advancement of women in DeKalb County.

The Board of Commissioners and the CEO shall each have the ability to annually assign to the Commission topic(s) of study and discussion, on which the Commission shall report at least annually to the Board during a Committee of the Whole meeting as requested. Policy and legislative topics to be addressed may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Developing programs to identify and address disparities in healthcare;
- (b) Developing programs to address wage inequity and employment issues;
- (c) Developing programs to identify and address safety and security issues across communities and industries;
- (d) Developing community-based programs to enhance the quality of life for women in DeKalb County;
- (e) Developing programs to assist women and women’s organizations in accessing federal, state, and local funding opportunities; and
- (f) Identifying areas in which additional study would benefit women in DeKalb County.

Sec. 2-171. Appointment of members.

The Commission shall consist of no fewer than fifteen (15) and no more than twenty-five (25) members, to be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, the Board of Commissioners, DeKalb County’s thirteen municipalities, DeKalb County School District, Decide DeKalb, Junior League of DeKalb County and the Tax Commissioner’s Office. These positions shall be numbered 1 through 25, though up to ten (10) positions may remain vacant.

The Chief Executive Officer shall appoint one member to the commission; each commissioner shall appoint one member, with post numbers to correspond to their districts, posts 1 through 7; the Chief Executive Officer shall appoint one member to posts 8; the DeKalb County School District shall appoint one member to post 9; Decide DeKalb shall appoint one member to post 10; Junior League of DeKalb County shall appoint one member to post 11; each municipality located fully or partially within DeKalb County shall appoint one member to posts 12 through 24 with post numbers being assigned based on the order of initial appointment; and the Tax Commissioners Office shall appoint one member to post 25.

The Chair and Vice Chair are to be elected by majority vote of the Commission members. Terms for both positions are two years and must be elected at the first meeting in January,

Sec. 2-172. Composition; terms of members.

- (a) All members shall be residents of DeKalb County.
- (b) Appointing authorities are encouraged to select members that reflect diversity with respect to race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and professional sector.
- (c) Members shall serve four-year terms, as follows:
 - (1) Odd-numbered positions shall expire January 2, 2030, and every four years thereafter.
 - (2) Even-numbered positions shall expire January 2, 2028, and every four years thereafter.
- (d) Members shall continue serving until successors are appointed.

Sec. 2-173. Meetings.

The Commission shall meet at least four (4) times per year. The Commission may establish rules of order consistent with county ordinances and state law. Special meetings may be held as provided in such rules.

A majority of the total members appointed, but no fewer than 8 members, shall constitute a quorum. No action shall be taken except by majority vote of those members present and voting.

Sec. 2-174. Assistance by county departments.

Subject to the approval of the Chief Executive Officer, the directors of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Community Development, the Police Department, the Fire Rescue Department, the 911 Department, and their staffs, shall provide assistance to the Commission as requested.

The directors of Claratel Behavioral Health, Decide DeKalb, and the DeKalb County Board of Health, and their staffs, may provide assistance to the Commission as requested, but any such assistance requested and provided shall not result in any additional cost to the County.

The Clerk to the Board of Commissioners shall designate a county employee to maintain Commission records and serve as secretary. The Clerk shall maintain all records of the Commission, including attendance, meeting minutes, etc.

Sec. 2-175. Compensation.

Members shall serve without compensation, except that county employees appointed and serving as members in their official capacity shall continue to receive regular compensation while performing Commission duties.

Secs. 2-176—2-180. – Reserved.

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PART 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

PART 3. SEVERABILITY

All laws or parts of laws in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Adopted by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners this ____ day of _____,
2025.

Michelle Long Spears
Presiding Officer
DeKalb County Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

Approved by the DeKalb County Chief Executive Officer this ____ day of _____,
2025.

Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

BARBARA SANDERS-NORWOOD

County Clerk
Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer

TERRY G. PHILLIPS

Interim County Attorney
DeKalb County, Georgia