



Commissioners, Elections Board, and Contractor Explore Value Options for Elections Building.

Posted on September 30, 2025 by Carey Fauscett-Anderson



TRENTON, Ga. (September 30, 2025) — The Dade County Board of Commissioners gathered for a Special Called Workshop Tuesday morning in the Historic Courthouse to discuss the Elections Building project. *(This meeting was scheduled and posted on the County calendar on September 23, 2025.)* The courthouse was chosen because the Elections team has temporarily filled the Large Meeting Room at the Administrative Building with more than 50 voting machines in preparation for the upcoming election.

The workshop brought together Commissioners Don Townsend, Bill Pullen, Bob Woods, and Melissa Bradford; County Attorney Robin Rogers; Clerk Gidget Knight; EMA Director Alex Case; Roads & Maintenance Director Billy Massengale; and Elections Board Members Carolyn Hixson and Mickey Schrimshire. General Contractor Robert Roberts of Chattanooga led much of the discussion, focusing on ways to reduce costs while keeping the building strong, secure, and efficient.

Balancing Savings and Strength

Roberts explained that his team's approach to "value engineering" is not about cutting corners but about building smart. "We don't want to sacrifice long term savings for short term goals," he said. He recommended reducing the facility to a one-story brick building on a flatter portion of the same site — a change that could save at least \$1 million by lowering structural steel and fire-code costs.

Commissioner Melissa Bradford said she has heard directly from citizens who want the county to invest in a lasting facility. "Many people I've spoken with want a well-built building that will stand the test of time," she noted.

Elections Board Chair Carolyn Hixson stressed that security remains her board's top concern. "Our number one priority is always security—avoiding water leaks, humidity control, having secure doors and a strong building," she said, adding that she and her board members would feel safer in a concrete or brick structure than in a metal one.

Roberts agreed, pointing out that his company has used brick as a ballistic barrier on other public projects. “Although we don’t want to think about the risks of bullets, in today’s society we have to,” he said. Hixson shared that deputies have been called to precincts in the past due to threats, which reinforced her position that the building must be built to protect both equipment and personnel.

Practical Next Steps

Chairman Townsend asked Roberts about the use of Dade County subcontractors, and Roberts confirmed that would be a priority, naming several local companies already considered for HVAC, plumbing, and electrical work.

The group also discussed the importance of humidity control systems, which protect both paper ballots and electronics. Although eliminating some specialized components could save tens of thousands of dollars, Townsend and other commissioners agreed that such systems are essential and must remain in the plan.

Before final design changes are made, a new geotechnical study will determine whether the flatter section of the site is suitable for construction. If not, engineers will revisit the original portion and evaluate options for filling and grading.

Looking Toward the Future

The Board and project team emphasized their shared commitment to reducing costs responsibly while ensuring the new Elections Building will serve the community for decades to come. Roberts expressed confidence in the direction of the project: “This is a very well thought out and designed building meant for long-term efficiency—which is exactly what you want in a public building.”

As the project advances through site studies and revised drawings, officials emphasized that the focus will remain on delivering a building that is secure, efficient, and built to last — while saving taxpayer dollars wherever possible.



Dade County encourages citizens to stay engaged and follow updates on this important project. Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the community’s interest and input, noting that the Elections Building will be a long-term investment in the security and integrity of local elections.