

**Buncombe County Board of Elections
Asheville/Buncombe County Board of Elections**

Monitor Name: Aiden Carson and Cheryl Williams in person

Date & Time: October 7, 2025 3:30 PM

Names of Board Members Attending:

Glenda Weinert, Chairman (R)	Mary Ann Braine, Secretary (R)
Jake Quinn, Board Member (D)	Sally Stein: Board Member (D)
Courtney Blossman, Board Member (R)	

Names of Buncombe Co Staff Attending:

Corinne Duncan, Director; Neggy Fox, Deputy Director; Gabrielle Corey, Administrative Coordinator and Clerk to the Board; Karen Rae, Recruiting and Outreach Coordinator; Devin Whitney, Elections Technical Specialist

Location of Meeting: 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville NC

Observers:

None online. 10 observers in total: 2 LWVAB, 2 Democrats; the others unknown. One left just after the hearing concluded and the other left just after the discussion of early voting sites for the 2026 primary.

I. Approval of Agenda

Approved without objection.

II. Minutes (G.S. § 143-318.10)

Approved without objection.

III. Office Updates –Corinne Duncan, Director

- Gabrielle Corey is the new Administrative Coordinator and Clerk to the Board. This is her first Board meeting.
- Reminders for the November 4 election:
 - October 10 at 5 pm is the deadline to register for voting in this election.
 - Early voting is October 16 through November 1 at the Warehouse at 50 Coxe Avenue
 - The last day is Saturday, November 1, when there will also be voting at the Weaverville Community Center.
 - Typically, in municipal elections there is low turnout and low use of absentee ballots.
 - Same day registration is permitted during early voting in the municipal elections.
 - If folks are unsure of where to vote, they should check the State Board's Voter Search tool and publications such as Mountain Express.

- October 21 at 5 pm is the deadline to request an absentee ballot.
- Completed absentee ballots must be returned to the Elections Office by 7:30 on November 4.
- Polls will be open on Election Day from 6:30 am to 7:30 pm.
- The election covers 9 precincts and voters must vote at their assigned precinct on Election Day.
 - Mr. Quinn asked whether anyone had mentioned poll observers.
 - Ms. Duncan said no.
- The appreciation day for Chief Judges held last Friday was quite successful, with 85 attending.
- Training for poll workers starts next Monday with early voting poll workers first on Monday and Tuesday, then Election Day poll workers on Wednesday through Friday.
- An assisted living facility has requested a visit by MAT team.
- Staff have completed the Logic and Accuracy testing. The data from that test will be used in the mock election.
- The search for an Absentee Coordinator has been narrowed to three candidates. The second round of interviews will start next week.
- Mr. Quinn asked for an update on the registration repair project.
 - Ms. Duncan said that staff are working through the files but the number for Buncombe County has not changed. She also mentioned that the State Board has a search tool for people to use to see if they are on the list. The process is moving very slowly.
 - She also said, in response to a question from an observer, that voters on the list can register during early voting to supply the data.
- Mr. Quinn complimented Ms. Duncan and Ms. Ray for their work on the judge appreciation event. Such efforts are well rewarded with enhanced team work and greater willingness to serve.
 - Ms. Duncan said that one judge has served 37 times.

IV. Absentee Ballot Review (G.S. § 163-230.1(f))– Neggy Fox

- Ms. Fox said there were no absentee ballots to review.
- However, by way of an update, she said that as of last Friday, October 3, staff had received 13 civilian request forms and 44 for overseas civilian request forms, and 6 military request forms.
- In total staff had received more absentee request forms this year but many of them were from folks who aren't in the covered jurisdictions but who had checked the box on their request from last year to receive future absentee ballots. Beginning in January 2026, the "clock" will start again for voters who may need absentee ballots for both the primary and the general election. Specifically, the 44 overseas ballots were from voters who had requested an "extension" on their 2024 absentee request form.

V. Voter Challenges Hearing (G.S. § 163-85 (d)) -- Corinne Duncan

- At the last meeting, the Board reviewed documentation during the preliminary hearing related to 25 challenges on the grounds that the voter has died. Today the Board will decide on whether to sustain the challenges and remove the voters' names from the rolls after reviewing the staff research and hearing any additional testimony.
- Ms. Duncan read the basic requirements qualifying a person to vote including must be a citizen of the US, must have resided in the county for 30 days prior to the election, and must not be serving any supervised release related to a felony conviction. She said further that the household for each challenged voter has been contacted and offered the chance to respond.
- Dr. Wienert read the names of the 25 challenged voters and asked the assembled audience whether any one wanted to respond. No one came forward.
- Staff contacted each household, but in no case found the voter. Staff separated the 25 names into two categories, those where all data points matched and those where they did not. In some cases, staff found that a name was included on a list of deceased residents from the Department of Health and Human Services but had not been removed from the voting records. The last name on the list of challenged voters did not appear on any lists.
- The Board reviewed all 25 files. Upon completing their review, it moved to sustain the challenges and remove the names from the voting records. The motion was seconded and passed 5/0.
 - Ms. Duncan said staff would process the challenges tomorrow and remove the names citing the reason as a sustained challenge.
- Ms. Stein asked whether this is part of routine list maintenance.
 - Ms. Duncan said yes.
- Ms. Braine asked whether anything could be done when staff first discover a mismatch to flag the record.
 - Ms. Duncan said that is a state function and she thought the State Board was working on a solution.

VI. Early Voting Implementation Plan Feedback – Neggy Fox

- In her power point presentation, Ms. Fox reviewed the 10 proposed sites discussed on August 19 for 2026 early voting in March. The proposed weekend days of Saturday, February 20 and Sunday February 21 will be open from 10 am to 3 pm which compromises a single shift for poll workers. The last Saturday before the Primary, February 28, the early voting hours will be from 8 am to 3 pm as required by law.
- The survey to gather public input on the proposed sites opened on August 20 and closed on September 26.
 - There were over 1,912 views, which represent unique IP addressed but may not represent everyone who made a response. Some views resulted in multiple responses.
 - Staff received 2,117 responses and over 932 comments.

- All ten of the sites have been used for voting in the past.
- A general discussion of the sites and their prior use ensued. Ms. Duncan said this was the most robust response from the community since they began the survey, possibly because the public has come to expect it.
 - 61 percent of viewers approved the plan as is.
 - 23 percent approve the plan with minor changes.
 - 10 percent approve the plan with major changes.
 - 7 percent do not approve of the plan at all.
- Comments from the public regarding a site in North Asheville included:
 - Consider UNCA.
 - Ensure ample parking.
 - Utilize vacant retail space.
 - Consider the North Asheville Branch library.
 - Consider Reynolds Village – but it does not allow for candidate signage so it can't be used again.
- Regarding site research in North Asheville, Ms. Fox said that:
 - The Big Ivy Community Center, which is currently closed due to Helene damage, may be open in time. However, they are a very active community center and would have to move their activities to accommodate Election Services.
 - The Jupiter Fire House has a big space but was only lightly used when it served as a polling place. Specifically in 2012 1,400 voted there while 909 voted there in 2014.
 - The Board opined that Big Ivy was more likely to draw voters from Jupiter than Jupiter was to draw voters from Big Ivy.
 - Ms. Fox has reached out to UNCA but has not heard back to date. It was used in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014.
- Mr. Quinn asked how many sites the Board can afford.
 - Ms. Fox said 11.
- Regarding site research in West Asheville, Ms. Fox said that:
 - The Upper Hominy Fire Station is ready to serve again. In 2012 1,232 voters used the site. Then it decided not to be a polling place, but has changed its mind.
 - Ms. Fox noted that the Candler area has grown substantially since 2012.
 - Ms. Braine said the Board had approved it for 2024 but Helene stopped that.
- Next week Ms. Fox will bring more data for the Board to consider.
- Ms. Blossman asked how staff let the public know its decisions on the Early Voting Plan for 2026.
 - Ms. Fox mentioned a range of methods including posting lawn signs at each site, posting a notice on its website, asking the parties to share the information with their members, palm cards to pass out at public functions, press releases, facebook postings, and radio announcements.
 - Ms. Stein asked about the availability of the 10 sites.
 - Ms. Fox said they have almost all been reserved.

- The deadline to submit Early Voting Plans to the State Board is in November.

VII. Legal Agreement Review

- Dr. Wienert said the hourly rate quoted in the engagement letter were \$350/hour for our attorney's time (Brandon) and \$375/hour for the paralegal's time. The \$500/hour rate is for Mr. Bo Carpenter's time should he need to be involved. The Board would receive advance notice of any matter needing Mr. Carpenter's attention.
- Mr. Quinn said that he had great confidence in Brandon and in Mr. Carpenter and wanted to make sure that the Board would receive advance notice if anyone other than these two were to work on its issues.
 - Dr. Wienert said she had asked that question earlier today and Mr. Carpenter assured her the Board would receive advance notice.
- Ms. Blossman moved to approve the letter of engagement. The motion was seconded and passed 5/0.
- Ms. Braine suggested that the Board send to Mr. Carpenter in addition to the signed letter of engagement, the two resolutions the Board passed regarding the move to 35 Woodfin Street and the current Memorandum of Understanding.
- Mr. Quinn mentioned a webinar he had participated in during which he learned a lot, including how he had erred in not approaching the Commissioners to describe the Board's needs; the risks inherent in its operations; and how staff mitigate those risks. He suggested the staff and Board put together a packet of materials for the Commissioners using the move to 35 Woodfin Street as a case study.
 - Ms. Blossman agreed that input from the Board would be essential.
 - Dr. Wienert said the mandates under which the Board and staff operate need to be communicated clearly because our past efforts have not been heard.
 - Ms. Stein thought that perhaps staff could pull information from the various informational packets they provided during the consideration of a move to 35 Woodfin Street.
 - Mr. Quinn thought the Commissioners might be surprised to learn just how many counties provide stand-alone buildings for Election Services Offices.
 - Ms. Duncan agreed that past data transmissions would be very helpful because they were often distributed to difference people. She also thought the staff could develop or use past data to suggest the cost in staff time and dollars.
 - Ms. Braine suggested that staff be very specific about how and why 35 Woodfin Street falls short of the Office's needs.
 - Ms. Stein suggested that the public and political fallout from a failure to "make things work" in less than adequate space needs to be considered as well.

- Ms. Stein also suggested that a floor plan from the County be provided. For the move to 35 Woodfin Street, by the time input was requested on the floor plan, no changes could be made.

VIII. Early Voting and Election Day Machine Testing (08 NACA 04.0307)

- Meeting Recessed at 5:25 pm to reconvene at 5:50 at 50 Coxe Avenue for the testing, after which the meeting would adjourn.

IX. Next Meeting Date

- Tuesday, October 14, at 3:30 PM at 59 Woodfin Place.