

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

Monitor Name: Aiden Carson, Elaine Elam, George Elam, and Cheryl Williams

Date & Time: January 6, 2026 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; Gabrielle Corey, Administrative Coordinator and Clerk to the Board; Neggy Fox, Deputy Director; Aaron Bell, Absentee Coordinator; Devin Whitney, Elections Technical Specialist; Nathaniel Speier, Candidate Coordinator; Karen Rae, Recruiting Outreach; Victoria Pickens, Accounting Technician and Campaign Finance

Location of Meeting: 35 Woodfin Street, Asheville NC

Observers: 8 total: 4 L WV, 1 Democrat, the challenger, 2 others unknown, no one online

I. Approval of Agenda

Following a motion to amend the agenda by adding a closed session with counsel for a personnel matter at the end of the open session, the amended agenda was approved 5/0.

II. Minutes (G.S. § 143-318.10)

Minutes from December 9 were approved without objection.

III. Office Updates –Corinne Duncan, Director

- Ms. Duncan said conducting the elections from 35 Woodfin went well.
- The Office sent out the article on general information and posted it on the website. (<https://www.buncombenc.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=746>)
- Work on proofing the ballots is going well and will be finished soon. Once it is approved the sample ballots will be available.
- Training for Early Voting poll workers starts next week and lasts for 2 weeks. Training for Election Day workers starts once that has finished and lasts for 4 weeks.
- The Office has 22 hired contract staff who started work Monday of this week.
- The Office has received fewer than 30 absentee ballot requests. Consequently, very few Absentee Ballots will be mailed on Friday, January 9. Note: a press release from the State Board says ballots will be mailed beginning Monday, January 12.
- The first Absentee meeting is Tuesday, January 27. Will start processing them and provide updates at meeting about how many are being mailed.

- Ms. Duncan had hoped to update Members about the deadline to file candidate challenges on Thursday, January 8 but about 40 minutes before the start of this meeting, Ms. Duncan received notice of a challenge to one of the candidates. She suggested that the hearing be held on Friday, January 16 at 1 or 2 pm because the deadline to file a challenge is January 8 but candidates who bear the burden of proof must have time to prepare.
 - Ms. Blossman is out of town until about 9 pm. If another challenge is received then both could be heard at the same time.
 - An alternative date would be January 20 at 2:30 pm (which is the date of the next Board meeting). The Board chose January 20 the date of the next meeting.
 - Ms. Duncan will send the relevant documents to each Board Member, notify the County attorney (Curt Euler) and the State Board, legally required notifications, and retain a court reporter.
 - Depending on the outcome of the challenge, the Office may have to reprint ballots.
 - NOTE: A news release from Public Radio on 1/10 said the challenges were to Asheville City Council candidate Antanette Mosley — the city's current vice mayor — and Buncombe County sheriff candidate Victor "Vic" Morman.
- The Office has selected a new Outreach Coordinator and expect them to start on January 14. Ms. Duncan received approval for overlap so that Ms. Rae can train her replacement.
- The next State Board training will be virtual on January 26-27, 2026. All Members will need to log in to get credit for the training. Ms. Corey reserved the training room next door for any Members who want to watch it together rather than at their homes.
 - Ms. Braine brought up that the Board has its first Absentee Meeting right after the conference which might make it difficult to view it remotely.
 - Mr. Quinn thought the timing of the Conference odd since all Counties have a statutorily required meeting on January 27.

IV. State Auditor Liaison Meeting Update – Dr. Glenda Weinert

- At the recent Training of County Board chairs with the State Auditor, Dallas Woodhouse, the special liaison appointed by the State Auditor, the focus was on an overview of the election process. Dr. Weinert offered to share the materials she received including Suggested Procedural Rules for Local Appointed Boards by Trey Allen, of the NC School of Government. Copies have been ordered for all Members.
 - The Chair of the Wake County Board attended.
 - Dr. Weinert said that Ms. Duncan provided an overview of elections in Buncombe County but left mid-way through the 1.5-hour meeting.
 - Mr. Quinn thought the use of the work "rules" was interesting rather than "suggested procedures".

- Dr. Weinert said that the group discussed voting trends and strategic goals, Early Voting site selection, the role of Chairs, and outreach for resources, among other things.
 - Mr. Quinn asked for more elaboration on what strategic goals were outlined.
 - Dr. Weinert said they were not outlined but were really part of a general discussion.
 - Mr. Quinn expressed concern that the folks doing the training lack the depth of experience to discuss such matters. Because they are new, he would like to know what goals they have in mind.
 - Dr. Weinert said that it was a general discussion
 - Ms. Duncan clarified that she was at the first half of the meeting and the discussions she heard were about networking and group cohesion. The discussion of goals overlapped considerably with the goals of the Board Association. Mr. Woodhouse solicited input from the attendees about a range of issues.
 - Ms. Stein asked whether the role of Mr. Woodhouse was described.
 - Dr. Weinert said Mr. Woodhouse was to be a conduit for information, asking questions, and providing answers or information. She said he was hired by the State Auditor, not the State Board, and she has not seen his job description.
 - Ms. Stein asked what sort of accountability does he have and to whom. We are unsure how his role fits into the structure of the Board. Sounds like there might be considerable overlap with what the State Board does. If he is hired by the Auditor and we work under the State Board, the Board needs to know how it all fits together.
 - Dr. Weinert said she would find out and report back.

V. Report on Filling Poll Worker Vacancies (Resolution 2025-09) - Karen Rae

- Ms. Rae passed out a list of vacancies that had been filled and said in total the Office had 130 poll workers for Early Voting with only one vacancy.
 - In some sites, the number of workers was reduced from 5 to 4 and other workers had agreed to move from 1 location to another. However, very busy sites still have 6 per shift.
 - Mr. Quinn said the Office still had the award-winning wait check feature on its web site so voters can see in real time which locations have wait times.
 - It may be too late to recruit a new worker but the office is still reaching out and may yet to fill the slot.

VI. MAT Appointments (o8 NCAC 16.0103(C), o8 NCAC 16.0102) - Aaron Bell

- Mr. Bell said they had found a Republican, Doug Brown, to fill the last empty Republican slot for the MATS teams. Now all teams are fully staffed.

- The motion to approve the staff recommendations for Doug Brown as a MATS worker passed 5/0.

VII. Voting Location Change – Ryan Oliver

- Mr. Oliver said that Emma's Grove Baptist Church has decided to no longer be a polling location. Cane Creek Community Center is available and is only about 1 mile out of precinct.
- The motion to approve the change in the polling location for precinct 57.1 passed 5/0.

VIII. FY 2027 Budget Update (G.S. § 163-33(11), G.S. § 163-37) - Neggy Fox

- At the last meeting, a question was raised as to how much adding 1 or 2 General Election voting locations would cost.
 - Ms. Fox reviewed the basic parameters of a polling location: 2 shifts per day to cover the required hours of 8 am to 7:30 pm; the number of Early Voting and Election Day party judges, chief judges, and poll workers; training; and onboarding with a staffing agency. The total for two additional sites is \$67,280.
 - Ms. Fox will be back in May to discuss the parking at potential sites, which is often a big problem. Using parking attendants helps voters but it does not create additional parking space.
 - Another consideration is dividing the 140 Express Vote machines among the sites they plan to use.
 - Ms. Fox's preference is for very large sites spaced across the County rather than adding more machines.
 - Staffing is the biggest cost for any polling place but they also need equipment and supplies.
- Mr. Quinn raised the issue of the USPS recent change on post marking mail, from the depositories at local postal stations to the processing center unless the customer goes inside the local station to request a post mark or send the ballot by registered or certified mail. This fits into Ms. Fox's focus on process time. How long does it take for a ballot to be requested, reach the voter, and get returned?
 - Ms. Fox said a marked increase in Curbside Voting took place in the Municipal Elections in November 2025.
 - Ms. Duncan said it may have been that voters used Curbside rather than Absentee Ballots to vote.
- Ms. Stein asked whether at the next budget presentation whether Board Members would be able to see the difference in costs between having 12 or 14 locations.
 - Mr. Quinn moved to put the \$67,280 in the budget request to keep the matter in the foreground and in the eyes of the County. Further discussion ensued. Ms. Braine agreed.
 - Dr. Weinert said whether staff can be found is another consideration.
 - Ms. Pickens said that typically if the Office adds funds, the County will insist the Office cover the additions with money already requested. The Office request is already 20 percent higher than last year, so making a case for the extra funds will be difficult.

- Ms. Stein said that the job of the Board is to request the funds needed to run the elections, so the County should at least help look for a source of funding,
- Mr. Quinn said it is better to ask for it now early in the process rather than to bring it up near the end.
- Dr. Weinert commented that the County's budget is not predicated on the "ask" from the Board of Elections but also on what the County has to give.
- Ms. Pickens said she would put the money in the request she submits to the County on January 26 in the operations line item.
- Ms. Duncan clarified that Ms. Pickens was pointing out that the Office will have to justify the extra costs. The budget request will be brought before the Board to consider in advance of submitting it to the County.
- An observer asked whether the County was the sole source of funding for elections. Ms. Duncan said yes.
- The motion made by Mr. Quinn was read and approved 5/0.

IX. Approve Board Meeting Schedule (G.S. § 163-31, G.S. § 163-230.1(f)) – Corrine Duncan

- Ms. Corey passed out a draft schedule to the Members.
- Ms. Duncan explained that because some meetings are required by statute the draft schedule gives Members notice of when they need to be present for a meeting. However, it can be changed going forward. The last page of the draft schedule is a time table in the case of a second primary.
- A motion to accept the draft schedule was approved 5/0.

X. Voter Challenges Hearing (G.S. § 163-86) Corrine Duncan

- These 25 challenges were brought to the Board just before the November 2025 Municipal Elections. At the December 9, 2025 meeting, the Board determined that the initial research provided cause to move forward with the challenges which is today's event.
- Staff have completed their research on all 25 challenges, copies of which were presented to the Board.
- Ms. Duncan also explained that at today's hearing speakers for the voters would have a chance to address the Board and present evidence. All speakers must be under oath.
- Dr. Weinert read the names of the 25 challenged voters. No one offered to speak.
- Mr. Quinn asked whether the challenged voters had received all the mail notices or other form of notice. Ms. Duncan said yes.
- Ms. Duncan was sworn in by Dr. Weinert.
- The Board Members reviewed the 25 challenges and supporting documentation and were grouped by mismatches in name, date of birth, or both. Staff notes were included in the documentation.
- Dr. Weinert asked whether each Member had reviewed the relevant documents. All said yes.
- The motion to sustain the 25 challenges passed 5/0.

Additional Public Comment:

- The observer who asked about funding earlier in the meeting asked about the timing of the candidate challenges.
 - Mr. Quinn replied that when the General Assembly moved the even numbered primaries from May to March, not all related statutes were changed to reflect the new date which means that if the challenges result in a change to the ballot, the Office must reprint them.
 - He further noted that unlike voter challenges where the burden of proof is on the voter not the challenger, the burden of proof for candidate challenges is on the challenger.

Prior to retiring into closed session, Mr. Quinn noted that the Board was not permitted to act during closed sessions, only in open sessions. The Board will adjourn at the end of the closed session.

**Moved into closed session at 4:55 pm
Per the video the meeting adjourned about 6:20 pm**

**X. Next meeting date: January 20, 2026 at 2:30, 35 Woodfin Street,
Asheville**