

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

Monitor Names: George Elam, Elaine Elam and Cheryl Williams in person; Aiden Carson virtually

Date & Time: February 10, 2026, 3:30 PM

Names of Board Members Attending:

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

Names of Buncombe Co Staff Attending:

Corinne Duncan, Director; Gabrielle Corey, Elections Administrative Coordinator; Morgan Chance, Training Coordinator; Aaron Bell, Elections Coordinator; Bria Bailey, Elections Technical Specialist; Devin Whitney, Elections Technical Specialist; Joyce Kanavel; Amy Broughton, County Attorney

Location of Meeting: 35 Woodfin Street, Asheville NC

Observers: 3 LWV in person, 1 Common Cause, 1 unknown, 1 LWV online

I. Approval of Agenda

- Agenda was approved with a deletion of item IV Challenge by Director Duncan who reported that the challenge had been withdrawn.
 - Amended agenda passed 5/0

II. Minutes (G.S. § 143-318.10) Minutes for January 20 and February 3, 2026, were approved by acclamation

III. Office Updates (Corinne Duncan)

- Ms. Duncan announced that Ms. Braine had passed her CERA certification.
- Early Voting starts this Thursday, February 12. She will do a Face Book online the same day.
- Nineteen of the Absentee Ballots sent out by the Office to the VA on January 15, 2026 were never delivered. The Office was notified by some of the voters. Staff contacted the US Post Office which did not have any comment. They also checked with the VA which had no comment.
 - The Office reissued the ballots on Feb. 6 and some of those have already been delivered.
 - Director Duncan let the State Board know of the problem.
 - She also said that the USPS had cooperated with the Office in its investigation.
 - Ms. Stein asked whether this was happening across the state. Ms. Duncan said no. Ms. Stein asked further whether Ms. Duncan would be likely to know if was happening elsewhere in the state. Ms. Duncan said yes.

- Dr. Weinert said that by letting everyone know what happened and what the Office had done, there was little else that could be done.
- Tomorrow, February 11 at 10:00 am the State Board will hear the Morman/Lunsford candidate challenge discussed at the February 3 meeting.
- The last two updates are related to the new web format adopted by the County
 - The “old” version used before the move has a different format for calendars than the new version.
 - The County is moving to a new platform for text alerts that differs from the one used in the “old” platform. The new system, called RAZE, will be implemented some time before the General Election.
- Training for Early Voting workers has ended and Election Day training will continue until February 27.
- The deadline to request an Absentee Ballot is Monday, February 17 at 5:00 pm

Dr. Weinert provided 3 updates:

- Regarding the February 3 discussion of whether Board Members had received the unredacted notes from the witness, Ms. Broughton advised Dr. Weinert at the last meeting that she had received the evidence. Dr. Weinert checked her email and found that she had received the information but had not opened it before the hearing.
- She reported there is no update regarding meetings with Dallas Woodhouse, special liaison to the State Auditor. She will report on any changes.
- She said that she and Ms. Stein will meet with Tim Love, Assistant County Manager, on Friday regarding continuing discussions on the facilities.

IV. Administrative Voter Challenge Preliminary Hearing – deleted from the agenda because the challenger contacted Ms. Duncan and withdrew the challenge

Matter of Ms. Braine’s request for information – not on the agenda

- Ms. Braine’s comments were difficult to hear but she said that information she had asked for was or was not shared with the rest of the Board.
- Ms. Duncan said it is good to clarify the process regardless of what method the Board chooses to use. It would help her to know what is being requested and that the information is being used for Board purposes.
- Ms. Broughton said that any Member of the Board or anyone else in the room could request a public record through the request portal. If the Board requests information relevant to an agenda item, then the Board would discuss the request in open meeting and vote on it. Then the request would come through the Director. This particular request happens to be a document, but it could be anything.
- Ms. Braine said she didn’t understand why a request for information needed to be a Board matter because each individual member might have their own reasons for requesting information.
- Mr. Quinn said this matter has been around for a long time, even before Director Duncan joined the team, and it is vital that our requests go through the Director,

not other staff. Matters quickly get confusing. However, when staff present the Director with information that is shared with the Board, then all Members have the same information before them which helps make for meaningful conversation. He agrees with Ms. Braine that each Member has different motivations, but all should have the same information.

- Ms. Blossman said the last thing she wanted to do was to muzzle any Board Member. She believed they should be able to request any information they want because they are in charge, but it should be provided to all Members.
- Ms. Stein said if Ms. Braine wants to ask Ms. Duncan for information, then Ms. Duncan can decide who should provide the information which she would then share with the entire Board. She was less certain that each request needed to be an agenda item discussed at a meeting.
- Ms. Braine said her request was made by email and all Members were cc'd.
- Ms. Duncan's concern is having 5 Members ask for different things and what is the relevance to Board matters, which an email request provided the opportunity to provide.
- Ms. Stein said she understood the concerns about volume inflowing to Ms. Duncan but didn't think she would be generating many, if any, requests. However, she will pay closer attention to emails from Members that might be requests for information. Moreover, knowing how the request relates to matters before the Board would be helpful to everyone.
- Ms. Blossman said that if volume is cause for concern, it should be discussed but she thought the Members would not generate an onerous volume. But, in her view, staff cannot withhold information because it is the Board's information.
- Ms. Duncan said the Board just needed to decide on the process it wants to use.
- Ms. Braine said she would be happy to put her request into a motion but doing so formalizes a process that, in her mind, does not need to be formalized. The Board needs information in order to act.
- Ms. Blossman voiced her agreement with Ms. Braine's position, reiterating that it is all the Board's information.
- Mr. Quinn said value of the discussion that precedes the request is helpful because it provides the context for the request and helps other Members understand the request more fully. He is not disputing the value of the information but is not advocating one method of sharing over another.
- Ms. Blossman said, in her view, context has nothing to do with the request because the context could change once the Board has the information. Members should have any information they want.
- Dr. Weinert said she agrees the Board should have access to the information as a Board but not as individuals other than to say that each request should be an action of the Board, which protects both the Board and the individual Members.
- Ms. Blossman asked why the process had changed.
- Ms. Duncan said she did not think the process had changed but that confusion now surrounds it which makes the discussion of how to process requests important. Her understanding is that requests for information would come to her through the Chair as was covered in the Board orientation. However, if the Board wants to handle it differently, that's fine.

- Ms. Blossman said no one's hands should be tied in requesting simple information in a friendly manner. If requests get overly voluminous or unfriendly it should be discussed.
- Dr. Weinert suggested that Ms. Braine resend her email to Dr. Weinert and request that she pass it along to Ms. Duncan.
- Ms. Stein said that's fine but if she received such an email, she would want to know why it was being requested, i.e. the context behind the request.
- Prior to Ms. Braine's request, the Board had discussed a budget for permanent staff and that led her to request detailed information on salaries, pay grades, and other financial details for each permanent staff, which she said was a matter of public record. However, she felt it was overly cumbersome to expect her to make a public information request for the information.
- Ms. Duncan said, in response to a question from Ms. Blossman, that she wasn't entirely certain who had the specific information Ms. Braine is seeking or whether it has been collated into the form that Ms. Braine seeks, but in general, she would go to the Budget Department with such a request.
- Ms. Blossman said she would be surprised if Ms. Duncan did not know what each individual in her Office makes. Ms. Duncan said Ms. Braine's request was not for current staff but for future staff and future budgets. She has already sent the current information to everyone who can review detailed information about salaries, cost of living allowances, and benefits.
- Mr. Quinn said that when the public requests information through the portal, the County is under no obligation to prepare a report that responds to the request. It is obligated to provide "off the shelf" reports not tailored reports. Requests from the Board are different and can involve additional analysis, which should be shared. He likes Dr. Weinert's idea of everyone sharing in the request even though one person originates it. It will be more open and transparent to discuss requests in open meeting or share in an email round robin.
- Ms. Braine said she had not seen data on current staff, only the current budget. Ms. Duncan said that is what she had provided after consulting the Budget Department.
 - Ms. Braine said it was not responsive because it had salary ranges and not individual salaries even though it said 3 staff were in a given position and salary range.
 - Ms. Blossman said the discussion should be tabled because, in her view, all the data staff possess belongs to the Board and the staff work for the Board while the Board works for the public. All matters should be open and transparent.
 - Ms. Duncan said she wanted to be clear that she felt she was being accused of not providing information that she had provided.
 - Ms. Stein said it sounds as though Ms. Braine wants to see data at the individual level.
- Ms. Blossman said one duty of the Board is to approve the budget but it doesn't see the entire budget. For transparency's sake the Board needs to see it in detail.

- Ms. Duncan said the request did not indicate that the data were to be provided at the level of the individual staff for the present year. She also said if the Board wants that level of detail, she will request it.
- Dr. Weinert said that one reason to have a Chair in a 5-member Board is to have a point of contact to facilitate the flow of communications between the Board and the Director.
- Ms. Blossman said the job of the Chair is to set the agenda and conduct the meetings.
 - Dr. Weinert said there was more to the job than that.
 - Ms. Blossman said that according to the State Board the Chair's job is set the agenda and conduct the meetings.
- Ms. Stein wondered whether, now that the type of data Ms. Braine desires is known, the Board could move forward even though she does not know what Ms. Braine's agenda is in requesting it.
 - Ms. Brain replied that she wants to see a detailed budget (although Ms. Stein helped her clarify that it is not all detail, just detail on employees) so that she can know how to vote on the budget request.
 - Dr. Weinert asked Ms. Braine what the Board's MOU with the County says with respect to what human resources does for the Board.
 - Ms. Braine said that her understanding was that the County HR is to facilitate the Board with payroll but that with regard to hiring, firing, promotions, and demotions the Board is exempt from County policy in these matters. So, in order to approve the budget, she believes the Board needs to see it all.
- Mr. Quinn said that his concern is that members of the Board want to micromanage Elections Services and, in his view, the Board should not do that. If Members want to discuss with the Director decisions that have been made, that is fine. He does not want to see the Board second guessing decisions made by the Director.
 - The purview of the Director is to manage the Office human resources. It is not the purview of the Board. The Board delegated to the one Director the authority to manage human resources and he does not want to limit that authority.
 - He thinks Ms. Duncan does a good job of managing that authority and informing the Board of her decisions.
 - He does not know whether the intention of the request is leading toward micromanagement of Election Services, but he sees a yellow flag.
 - He agreed with Ms. Blossman to table the discussion.
 - Ms. Blossman said the red flag for the Board, in her view, is not being able to simply request information and get it. Moreover, she does not believe that Members should have to go through the Chair to get information.
 - Mr. Quinn disagreed saying the lack of a process would promote inefficiency in the Board's actions.
 - Ms. Stein agreed, adding that independent requests would create confusion.
- Dr. Weinert asked for a motion to table the discussion.
 - Ms. Blossman asked what was being tabled; not Ms. Braine's request.

- Dr. Weinert said not the request, which has already been shared by email cc with Members and to which Ms. Duncan has provided the most current available information, not the future information. What is being asked for in a motion is to table the discussion of the request at next week's meeting.
- Members can respond to Ms. Braine's email and be ready to finish the discussion next week.
- Ms. Duncan said she is concerned that individual's responding in that manner might violate open meetings laws because, as Mr. Quinn noted, one can't cc the general public. The crux of the matter is trying to keep everything within the public view and that it doesn't have Members acting individually.
- Ms. Blossman asked Ms. Braine what she wanted to do with her request.
 - Ms. Braine made a motion to request a personnel report on Election Services staff with details on salary and classification. Further that the information will be shared with all Members. Ms. Blossman seconded.
 - The motion carried with 3 yes votes, 1 no vote (Ms. Stein), and one abstention (Mr. Quinn).
- Ms. Blossman said she did not believe the Board should have to go through all "this" whenever anyone wants some information.
 - Ms. Stein said it is not "just" information but is a report of existing data that has to be designed.
 - In addition, she is concerned about where this request is leading and about the potential for micromanaging staff by the Board.
 - Ms. Blossman said it was not about micromanaging but about the Board approving a budget that it has not seen in detail. It's simple transparency by the Board.
 - Ms. Broughton said that, from a legal standpoint, she prefers that all information requests come from the Board make it clear that it relates to matters before the Board. If individual requests are allowed, there is no assurance, legally, how the information will be used. Members have lives and interests outside the Board for which such information might be useful but not used in the interests of the public.
- Dr. Weinert said that the MOU addresses the Board's relationship with the County HR but neither it nor its members are qualified HR professionals. It is not their job to manage the Office HR which is why the MOU exists. So, the Board needs to be very careful not to step into the HR role.
 - Ms. Blossman said she believes the Board has a fundamental disagreement about what information the Board is entitled to which she sees as a red flag. Whatever information anyone wants should be made available to everyone and she doesn't want to micromanage anyone.
 - In addition, at last week's State Board training, the State Board said one of their roles is to approve the budget.
 - Ms. Duncan said the Board does not approve the budget. The Board approves a budget request that is voted on by the County Commissioners.
 - Ms. Blossman continued to say it was their budget and they needed the information.

- Dr. Weinert said it was the Commissioner’s decision, and the Board operates within the money that is given to it.
- Ms. Blossman said that the Commissioners are kind and are mandated by the state to fund the operations of Elections Services. [Note; the legal decision requires Commissioners to “adequately” fund the operations.]
- Dr. Weinert asked whether Ms. Braine wanted to table her second request until next week. She said yes.

V. Absentee Ballot Review (G.S. § 163.230.1(f)) (Aaron Bell)

- There were 89 Absentee Ballots to review (81 Civilian, 7 Overseas, and 1 Military).
- 1,156 Absentee Ballots have been sent out (1,072 Civilian, 80 Overseas, and 4 Military).
- Two had to be duplicated, one of which required the Members to decide on voter intent. After duplicating, the team (Bria, Joyce, Devin, and Morgan) affirmed that heard all the candidate calls, observed them being recorded, and were satisfied with the results. They answered yes. They were also asked whether they had any concerns or questions about the process. They said no and were dismissed.
- The 89 ballots were approved 5/0.

The meeting recessed at about 5:15 pm to reconvene at the Warehouse at 50 Coxe Avenue for Election Day Machine Testing - Agenda item VI.

Next meeting Tuesday, February 17 at 3:30 pm at 35 Woodfin St. (Absentee meeting for 2/11/2026 cancelled)