

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

Monitor Names: George Elam, Elaine Elam and Aiden Carson

Date & Time: February 24, 2026, 3:30 PM

Names of Board Members Attending:

Glenda Weinert, Chairman (R)(virtual), 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; Victoria Pickens, Business Administrator; Morgan Chance, Training Coordinator; Aaron Bell, Elections Coordinator; Bria Bailey, Elections Technical Specialist; Amy Broughton, County Attorney

Location of Meeting: 35 Woodfin Street, Asheville NC

Observers: 2 LWV in person, 1 Common Cause, 1 Dem

I. Approval of Agenda – approved by acclamation

II. Minutes (G.S. § 143-318.10) Minutes for February 17, 2026, were approved by acclamation

III. Office Updates (Corinne Duncan)

- Election Day is next week on March 3.
- Saturday is expected to be the biggest day of Early Voting.
- 8 of the 80 poll locations are changed this time around and voters have been notified.
- Photo ID is needed to vote and can be obtained for free from Election Services.
- Rules for second primary were handed out to the board. A substantial plurality of 30% is needed to decide a winner in partisan races. Non-partisan races do not have second primaries. In the event of a tie a method is chosen to determine who wins. If a race is close, it may be canvass to determine the winner.
- This is our first big election since the recent law changes, and it will likely be hard to get to the warehouse on Election Night.
- There will be an Absentee meeting at 7:30 pm. Then results of Early Voting will be printed and flash drives from Election Day will be collected. A quorum is required for both the Absentee meeting and

the collection of flash drives. A video link will be set up to allow Board Members at Elections Services to view the warehouse.

- Ms. Duncan went over the Election Day meeting times. On the Monday before Election Day the Board will meet to count as many Absentee ballots as possible to lighten the load before ED. On ED the Board has to be available starting at 6:30 am
- Mr. Quinn said he has been contacted by community members regarding reading about election irregularities in the news. Ms. Duncan said there were reported irregularities in voter registration drives and she learned of it at the same time the public did. The rules state you can't take compensation for registering voters. Ms. Stein asked if there were rules for hosting registration drives. Ms. Duncan said yes, and the State Board is conducting an investigation. She said Patrick Gannon and Jason Tyson of the State Board are contacts as well as a State Board website to report any issues, plus rules governing drives.
- Ms. Braine asked about a voter's problem at the Black Mountain site. Evidently the voter wanted a paper ballot. Hand marked Ballots (pre-printed) are used at curbside but otherwise the Express Vote machine is used for Early Voting. She then went over the difficulty of providing a choice to voters including the cost and difficulty managing two different voting methods during EV. Ms. Braine said the voter was offered a provisional ballot, but provisionals also use the Express Vote machine. Ms. Blossman asked why can't a voter have a paper ballot. Ms. Duncan noted that Express Vote ballots are paper and fill the legal requirement for paper ballots and the SBOE has confirmed that they are not required to offer regular early voters a hand marked ballot. Ms. Stein suggested we should table this discussion until after the election. Mr. Quinn agreed.

IV. FY2027 Budget Update (G.S. § 163-33(11) , G.S. § 163-37) – Victoria Pickens

- She presented slides (below).
- Ms. Pickens met with the county budget team and the Assistant County Manager earlier this month.
- She will present to the County Manager on 3/16.
- Asked to prioritize, ES prioritized the Provisional Research Team, Seasonal In-house Staff, and Election Day Poll Workers, in that order.
- The County moved the training space rent cost of \$21,000 to contingency, since county space may become available.

- Of the \$20,000 requested for legal counsel, they moved \$15,000 into county contingency
- Ms. Stein asked whether, if the Board needed outside counsel, the County would provide funds over the \$15K? This was discussed with no resolution. Ms. Duncan said that Ms. Broughton supports the Board's choice for legal counsel and Ms. Broughton said she could not advocate for the Board because she is a County employee. Mr. Quinn said he had confidence in the county provided the Board had a reasonable request, and he acknowledged the County faces post Helene difficulties.
- The pie chart shows Early Voting is approaching Election Day voting costs. Ms. Stein asked Ms. Duncan if this trend would continue. Corrine said it would be more efficient if we had voting sites that were larger than we now have. Processing voters would go much faster due to large locations and costs would go down. She said this would be discussed this summer.
- Ms. Braine asked why salaries and benefits were not in the budget. Ms. Pickens and Ms. Duncan tried to explain that the county would go into greater detail when they have the educational meeting with the county and Human Resources. Ms. Braine pressed the issue, asking why the Board doesn't approve salaries and benefits. Ms. Duncan stated they have a MOU with the county and the county takes care of this matter. The county has processes and policies that address salaries for their staff and the Board signed off on this. The MOU was in 2022. Ms. Braine said she thought the MOU needed to be reevaluated. Ms. Stein agreed and said this could be discussed at the meeting with the county.

V. Absentee Ballot Review (G.S. § 163-230.1(f)) – Aaron Bell

- Dr. Weinert was no longer online so Ms. Braine started the Absentee process.
- There were 4 ballots pending Board approval due to issues. A motion to approve the 4 ballots was passed 4/0.
- There were 3 military, 13 overseas, and 211 civilian ballots to review. There was one ballot that did not match the envelope.
- 226 ballots were approved 4/0.

VI. Next Meeting Date

Tuesday, March 3, 3:30 pm at 35 Woodfin St.

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Prioritization Request

- Asked to prioritize provisional research team, in-house seasonal staff and poll worker pay increases requests

- Provisional Research Team**
 - Recent law changes reduced provisional research window from 9 days to 3 days
 - Additional staffing needed to meet statutory deadlines
 - Cost: \$21,612
- Seasonal In-house Staff**
 - Increase lowest hourly rate from \$17 to \$18
 - Addresses ongoing recruitment challenges and unfilled positions
 - Cost: \$14,007
- Election Day Poll Workers**
 - Increase pay to align with early voting hourly rates
 - Improves recruitment
 - Cost: \$30,251

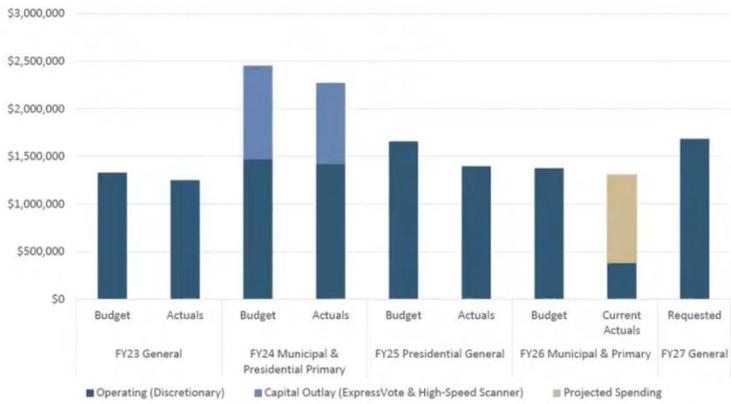
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Budget and Actuals Trends



Year	Category	Operating (Discretionary)	Capital Outlay (ExpressVote & High-Speed Scanner)	Projected Spending
FY23	Budget	~\$1,300,000	0	0
	Actuals	~\$1,200,000	0	0
FY24	Budget	~\$1,400,000	~\$1,000,000	0
	Actuals	~\$1,400,000	~\$800,000	0
FY25	Budget	~\$1,600,000	0	0
	Actuals	~\$1,400,000	0	0
FY26	Budget	~\$1,300,000	0	0
	Current Actuals	~\$400,000	~\$800,000	0
FY27	Requested	~\$1,600,000	0	0

Okay, next slide. Oh, gosh.



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Budget Timeline

1st Presentation to BOE

BOE update following ACM meeting

Commissioners 1st Budget Review

Budget Adoption

Dec. 9 Feb. 4 Feb. 24 Mar. 16 Mar. 24 Apr. 16 June 2

Presentation to ACM and Budget

Presentation to County Manager

Commissioners 2nd Budget Review

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What's Changed?

Budget Item	Requested Budget Adjustments	Amount
Training Space	Move into contingency	-\$21,000
Legal Counsel	Move 75% into contingency	-\$15,000

Okay, next slide. So what's changed

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