

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

Monitor Names: Elaine Elam, George Elam, Cheryl Williams

Date & Time: June 23, 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; Neggy Fox, Assistant Director; Rachel Wonderlich, Recruiting and Outreach Coordinator; Amy Broughton, County Attorney

Location of Meeting: 35 Woodfin Street, Asheville NC

Observers: 11 total including 1 Common Cause, 4 Democrats, 2 unknown, and 3 LWVAB.

I. Approval of Agenda – passed 5/0

II. Minutes (G.S. § 143-318.10) Minutes for May 19, May 21, and May 28 were passed 5/0 with the amendment noted by Ms. Braine who asked that a quote from Mr. Love be removed based on the policy of not including direct quotes from participants.

III. Office Updates – Corrine Duncan

- Ms. Duncan said the audit by the State Board of Elections will be conducted tomorrow, June 24 beginning at 9:00 am.
- H.B. 958 is being considered by the General Assembly and is rapidly evolving. To her knowledge the bill has not passed but still needs watching.
- The County Commissioners passed a resolution to place 2 bonds on the ballot in November; one addresses affordable housing and the other pertains to schools and open spaces.

- Ms. Duncan and 2 other staff (Victoria Pickens and Amy Meier) will attend the first ever workshop offered by the NC Association of Directors of Elections in Wake County.
- The Association for Election Science Reform and Administration conference in Phoenix that Ms. Duncan spoke at on May 19 went very well.
 - The Association is unique in that it combines academic work with practical experience.
 - Next year their conference will be in Asheville.
 - In addition, the NCSBE conference will be in Asheville next year.
- Ms. Duncan has been invited to speak at the National Association of Counties conference in New Orleans in July.
- Ms. Duncan said to route questions about public records requests to Ms. Corey.
- Ms. Duncan has been asked to participate in a discussion on general election issues to represent the local government perspective.
- The Candidate Coordinator position has been posted. Posting was delayed because additional review required by changing the job description based on changes to the law.
 - The position is posted on the County website and will be open for 3 weeks.
 - Please refer any qualified candidates you know.
 - Mr. Quinn asked whether County Human Resources would be willing to review its processes to better serve its clients.
 - Ms. Duncan said she had talked with the agency about the issue.
- Candidate filing for the Soil and Water Board is currently open and will remain so until July 7. The posting had to be extended due to the July 4 holiday.
- The office will be closed July 3 for the holiday
- Dr. Weinert said she had spoken with Brandon, their attorney, about meeting with the Board in closed session to finalize the MOU with the County next week or on July 14.
 - Discussion followed about availability of the Members. Most agreed that next week is better.

IV. Facilities Update – Dr. Weinert

- Dr. Weinert said Election Services is part of the plan to move into the JC Penney building with Emergency Services. Both the office space and warehouse will be under one roof.
- Depending on the final plan, both parking and accessibility are already in place.
- The warehouse on River Road is no longer on the table for Election Services.
- Mr. Quinn asked about a time table. Dr. Weinert said there will be no move until after the 2028 election although timing could change based on the progress toward building affordable housing and final decisions on grant funding that should be known by September this year.
- Dr. Weinert said that Mr. Love, Assistant County Manager, was very receptive during the discussion but was not in a position to provide any guarantees.
- Ms. Duncan said it was definitely a priority to not have a temporary move before the 2028 election. This solution is good because Election Services and Emergency Services have a great relationship.
 - Mr. Quinn said he favored being co-housed with an agency that also needs high level maintenance for security and technology.

V. Public Input Session for 2026 General Early Voting Plan – Corrine Duncan and Neggy Fox.

- Ms. Duncan said that response to the survey surpassed that of previous surveys.
- Ms. Fox, she said, would summarize the input and suggested changes to the plan based on the input from the survey and from in person comments made today.
- Depending on the number of comments from today, the Board may need to meet next week to consider them and to vote on the plan.
- The full Board has to vote on the plan and anything less than a unanimous vote would mean sending the plan to the State Board to make a plan of its own.
- The Board agreed to meet Monday, June 29 at 3:30 and Dr. Weinert will invite their attorney to come at 4:30 or 5:00 for a closed session.

- Ms. Fox reviewed the timeline for preparing and approving the Early Voting Plan for the General Election, the proposed plan that was submitted for public input, and the list of proposed sites.
- Ms. Fox reported that, since the last meeting, 3 sites had responded that they are available (Big Ivy Community Center - Barnardsville, Upper Hominy Fire Station - Candler, and Bob Lewis Ballpark – Candler (a mobile voting unit)).
- A total of 7 sites reported that they are not available (UNCA, Woodfin YMCA, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Skyland Baptist Church, Enka Baptist Church, Comfort Suites on Brevard Road, and First Baptist Church of Black Mountain).
- An additional 12 sites did not respond at all to outreach from Election Services.
- Ms. Fox said the mobile voting unit was an effort to think outside the box. The Ballpark parking lot is large enough to allow space for voters to park and vote even while weekend games are being held. It is near the clocktower.
 - Dr. Weinert asked about the cost. Ms. Fox said she did not know yet. Moreover, this approach has many logistics that need to be worked out.
- The survey received over 4,600 views and 5,788 responses from over 1,000 participants, which is considerably more than was received in 2022 and 2024.
- Responses were mostly that people approved of the plan (58 percent), approved with minor changes (27 percent), approved but with significant changes (9 percent), and do not approve the plan at all (6 percent)
- Respondents liked the weekend voting, access to public transportation, the flexibility of Early Voting, the focus on improved parking, and accessible voting locations, all of which focuses on the theme of convenience.
- Respondents recommended some other sites to consider: Friendship Center, UNCA, Upper Hominy Fire Station, Stein Mart, and the Asheville Mall, as well as Avery Creek Community Center, AB-Tech Asheville Campus, and Warren Wilson College.
- Staff visited all the sites that were mentioned.
- Additional comments included support for Early Voting, a desire to increase weekend voting hours, accessibility for all voters,

improvements to parking and traffic flow, and concerns about voter intimidation.

- Most respondents live within the city limits.
- Ms. Fox suggested 2 changes to the existing plan: Open all sites an additional Saturday on the first weekend (October 17) and add the Friendship Center as a site.
 - The sites would be open 16 of the 17 days allowed (closed on the first Sunday, October 18) resulting in 3 Saturdays, 1 Sunday, and 12 weekdays.
- Ms. Duncan said the further changes could be made in response to the public comments today.
- Dr. Weinert provided the public with the rules for speaking: state your name, take no more than 3 minutes for your comments, focus your comments on the plan, talk to the Board as a whole, and be respectful.
- A total of 3 people provided comments (no one was online):
 - One person said that North Asheville needs another site and that considering Warren Wilson College is good at a time when County Boards are deleting campus voting sites.
 - The second person said the Friendship Center is a great overflow site for the South Asheville Library.
 - The third person wondered whether the mobile unit could be placed at the UNCA wellness center.
- Ms. Duncan said the comments on the mobile unit merit further investigation to learn about cost and availability. The idea of having someone donate an RV that could be retrofitted was eliminated because state law prevents County Boards from accepting any outside donations in support of voting.
 - The unit would use Buncombe County's voting machines.
 - A mobile unit, if available, could be tested during the 2028 primary.
 - In the face of a growing community with no anticipated expansion of parking, the mobile unit deserves more research.
- Ms. Braine said she is still in favor of including Upper Hominy to help rural residents have the same access as do those who live in the city limits.
- Ms. Stein asked Ms. Fox why she did not favor Upper Hominy.
 - Ms. Fox listed the following reasons: it's hard to staff, it's hard to find, turnout has been low when it was used (specifically, 223

people voted there), local residents favor voting on election day, and it's not convenient.

- Ms. Braine said it's hard for a site to prove its value when it isn't used.
- Mr. Quinn said that Professor Cooper praised Buncombe County's approach to developing Early Voting plans.
- Ms. Blossman suggested investigating tents, similar to those used in 2024 voting in the aftermath of Helene while investigating mobile units.
- The Board passed a motion 5/0 to finalize the Early Voting Plan at the June 29 meeting if all are in agreement.

VI. Next meeting Date: Monday, June 29 at 3:30 pm at 35 Woodfin St.

Adjourned at 7:05 pm.