

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

75 Stamp Act Drive NE · Building H
PO Box 2 · Bolivia · NC · 28422
www.brunswickcountync.gov/elections

Phone: 910-253-2620
Fax: 910-253-2618
elections@brunswickcountync.gov

Board Meeting Agenda **February 18, 2025 · 2:00 pm · Regular Meeting**

This meeting will be held in the Commissioners' Chambers of the David R. Sandifer Building, 30 Government Center Drive NE, Bolivia, NC, 28422.

Members of the public may observe the meeting in-person or via live video feed online using [Zoom](#); no registration or passcode is required.

- 1. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. October 29, 2024 – Absentee Meeting
 - b. November 4, 2024 – Absentee Meeting
 - c. November 5, 2024 – Election Day Meeting
 - d. November 8, 2024 – Sample Audit Meeting
 - e. November 14, 2024 – Pre-Canvass Meeting
 - f. November 15, 2024 – Canvass Meeting
 - g. November 20, 2024 – Special Meeting
 - h. November 27, 2024 – Special Meeting
 - i. January 14, 2025 – Regular Meeting
- 4. Public Comments**
 - a. [Public Comment Policy](#)
 - b. [Online Public Comment Portal](#)
- 5. Director's Report**
- 6. Old Business**
- 7. New Business**
 - a. Legislative Update Presentation – SB 382
- 8. Adjourn**

See board meeting schedules here: <https://www.brunswickcountync.gov/644/Board-Meetings>

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Meeting Minutes · Absentee Meeting · November 4, 2024 · 4:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, and Member Randy Pelton

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, and Absentee Assistant Christy Souter

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Julie Paladino, Stefanie Ottolini, Myrtle Stevenson, Gwen Causey, Debra Prew-Delekto, and Pat Vandergrift

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Absentee Ballots

There are 1872 ballots for the board's consideration.

Information only: 69 ballots pending cure.

Ballots recommended for approval:

1621 Ballots recommended for approval for board to spot check

- 1454 Civilian ballots
- 2 Overseas ballots returned by mail or will be duplicated during board meeting
- 5 Military ballots returned by mail or will be duplicated during board meeting
- 160 Affidavit review pending (returned with a properly executed Photo ID Exception Form)

Board members spot-checked at least two ballots from the ballots recommended for approval. Mr. Smith made a motion to approve ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

93 Ballots requiring board review

- 34 Accepted Cure

- 33 Overseas (received electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)
- 26 Military (received electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)

Board members reviewed ballots. Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve 93 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rushton noted that there were 10 ballots (5 sets) of CIV mismatch from the same household.

There is one ballot that is a CIV mismatch within the same voter. The voter had asked for a new ballot, a packet was spoiled and reissued. The voter returned the original ballot and the replacement envelope.

There were two ballots that need duplication, one ballot was damaged and one has white out.

There are three envelopes that did not have ballots. Mr. Randall made a motion to disapprove the 3 envelopes that did not contain ballots. The motion carried unanimously. These ballots will be spoiled and reissued.

Ballots requiring board review – pending board decision

97 ballots total requiring board review:

- 78 Civilian ballots received in a sealed return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed or the ballot was loose in the return envelope
 - Numbered Memo 2021-03 provides that when the ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope which is not sealed but the ballot envelope is received in a sealed return envelope, this anomaly is not a deficiency. Staff is instructed to re-seal the return envelope with a notation of “sealed in return envelope” and the county board should open the return envelope and address the ballot at its next absentee meeting.
 - Staff opened the envelopes under board supervision and evaluated the ballots.
 - 61 of these ballots met all requirements and were recommended to be approved.
 - Three ballots were changed to pending cure.
 - 14 ballots were recommended to be disapproved to be spoiled and reissued.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 61 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 14 ballots as recommended by staff. Motioned carried unanimously.

- 10 Civilian ballots where the voter indicated their photo ID documentation was inside the ballot envelope.
 - Numbered Memo 2021-03 states “A voter may respond to a notification that their ballot is missing photo ID documentation by stating that it is in the ballot envelope. If this occurs, staff must defer the review of the photo ID documentation to the next absentee board meeting, when the county board can review the application and, if approved, open the ballot envelope and confirm photo ID compliance.”

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve and direct staff to open the ballot envelopes to evaluate photo ID requirements. Motion carried unanimously.

- 9 Civilian ballots were returned by an unauthorized person.
 - Numbered Memo 2020-23 states that delivery of an absentee ballot by a person other than the voter, the voter’s near relative, the voter’s legal guardian, or a person of the voter’s choice when the voter needs assistance due to disability, is not sufficient evidence in and of itself to establish that the voter did not lawfully vote their ballot. A county board shall not disapprove an absentee ballot solely because it was delivered by someone who was not authorized to possess the ballot.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the 9 ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

61 Ballots recommended for disapproval

- 59 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled and new ballots issued.
- One Civilian ballot not properly notarized. Ballot has been spoiled and a new ballot issued.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 60 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

- One Civilian ballot, voter registration denied, board to enter challenge to ballot. The voter is no longer registered. After the voter registered, the verification card, and its second attempt, were returned undeliverable. The returned card indicates there is no mail receptable at the address registered address.
- Guidance from the state is the ballot be disapproved and the ballot challenged at canvass.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove the ballot. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to challenge the ballot as recommended by staff. Ms. LaVere noted that the challenge process will afford the voter the opportunity to provide testimony, if desired, about their ballot or registration status. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson confirmed the vDrive seal as 34741447 and the ballot count as 3259; Ms. LaVere confirmed this as the seal number and ballot count from the October 22, 2024 meeting.

Approved ballots were opened by the bipartisan team and prepared for scanning.

All approved ballots were scanned.

The board adjudicated overvotes as necessary.

After scanning was complete, Mr. Johnson announced that 1791 ballots were scanned today with the total scanned as 5050.

Ms. Rushton confirmed that the number of ballots approved today was 1791 with total to date of 5050.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Mr. Pelton and Ms. Clarity. The secure vDrive was placed in a storage container and sealed. The following vote count and seal numbers were logged and will be confirmed at the start of the next meeting.

- Ballot count: 5050
- Ballot bin: 37471453 and 34741460
- vDrive storage container: 37471452

The board signed an audit sheet confirming the number of ballots scanned today and seal numbers.

Mr. Randall made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Meeting Minutes · Absentee Meeting · November 4, 2024 · 4:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton, and Member Timothy M. Randall

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, and Absentee Assistant Christy Souter

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Julie Paladino, Stefanie Ottolini, Myrtle Stevenson, Gwen Causey, Debra Prew-Deleko, and Pat Vandergrift

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Absentee Ballots

There are 1693 ballots for the board's consideration.

Information only: 69 ballots pending cure.

Ballots recommended for approval:

1432 Ballots recommended for approval for board to spot check

- 1223 Civilian ballots
- One Civilian ballot received in the VIP – will be duplicated during the meeting
- 5 Military ballots returned by mail and will be duplicated during board meeting
- 203 Affidavit review pending (returned with a properly executed Photo ID Exception Form)

Board members spot-checked at least two ballots from the ballots recommended for approval. Mr. Randall made a motion to approve ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

123 Ballots requiring board review

- 46 Accepted Cure
- 43 Overseas (received electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)

- 34 Military (received electronically, duplicated by the bipartisan team prior to the meeting)

Board members reviewed ballots. Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 123 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rushton noted there are five pairs (10 ballots) of CIV mismatch within the same household. There is one CIV mismatch with no household match; this ballot will be put in a pending status and the voter contacted.

Ballots requiring board review – pending board decision

84 ballots total requiring board review:

- 65 Civilian ballots received in a sealed return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed or the ballot was loose in the return envelope
 - Numbered Memo 2021-03 provides that when the ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope which is not sealed but the ballot envelope is received in a sealed return envelope, this anomaly is not a deficiency. Staff is instructed to re-seal the return envelope with a notation of “sealed in return envelope” and the county board should open the return envelope and address the ballot at its next absentee meeting.
 - Mr. Pelton made a motion to authorize staff to open envelopes and evaluate for further recommendations. Motion carried unanimously.
 - Staff opened the envelopes under board supervision and evaluated the ballots.
 - 56 of these ballots met all requirements and were recommended to be approved.
 - Five ballots had incomplete witness information
 - One did not have a ballot envelope
 - One had an illegible Photo ID Exception Form
 - Two provided IDs from different states, which are not acceptable forms of ID (they had not registered within the last 90 days).

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve 56 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 6 ballots as recommended by staff with three ballots stashed as pending cure. Motioned carried unanimously.

- 10 Civilian ballots where the voter indicated their photo ID documentation was inside the ballot envelope.
 - Numbered Memo 2021-03 states “A voter may respond to a notification that their ballot is missing photo ID documentation by stating that it is in the ballot envelope. If this occurs, staff must defer the review of the photo ID documentation to the next absentee board meeting, when the county board can review the application and, if approved, open the ballot envelope and confirm photo ID compliance.”

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve and direct staff to open the ballot envelopes to evaluate photo ID requirements. Motion carried unanimously.

- Of the 10, 9 are recommended for approval and one placed in a pending cure status as the ID was not readable.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 9 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

- 7 Civilian ballots were returned by an unauthorized person.
 - Numbered Memo 2020-23 states that delivery of an absentee ballot by a person other than the voter, the voter's near relative, the voter's legal guardian, or a person of the voter's choice when the voter needs assistance due to disability, is not sufficient evidence in and of itself to establish that the voter did not lawfully vote their ballot. A county board shall not disapprove an absentee ballot solely because it was delivered by someone who was not authorized to possess the ballot.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the 7 ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

Upon staff review, one of these ballots appears to be witnessed by the voter themselves. Mr. Smith made a motion to disapprove that ballot. Motion carried unanimously.

- Two Affidavit Review Pending (reason on Photo ID Exception Form to be reviewed by Board).
 - Voters returned Photo Id Exception Form in which the voters checked the "other" box and indicated they were not comfortable with supplying identifying information through the mail.
 - The state advised the board could disapprove the form or offer the voter the opportunity to cure the form by bringing their photo ID or copy of such in person to the board of elections office.

Mr. Smith made a motion to put the ballots in a pending status and offer the voters to cure the ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

53 Ballots recommended for disapproval

- 51 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled and new ballots issued.
- One Civilian ballot not properly notarized. Ballot has been spoiled and a new ballot issued.
- One Civilian ballot unsealed. Ballot has been spoiled and reissued.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 53 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson confirmed the vDrive seal as 37471452 and the ballot count as 5050; Ms. LaVere confirmed this as the seal number and ballot count from the October 29, 2024 meeting.

Approved ballots were opened by the bipartisan team and prepared for scanning.

All approved ballots were scanned.

The board adjudicated overvotes as necessary.

After scanning was complete, Mr. Johnson announced that 1626 ballots were scanned today with the total scanned as 6676.

Ms. Rushton confirmed that the number of ballots approved today was 1626 with total to date of 6676.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Mr. Pelton and Ms. Clarity. The secure vDrive was placed in a storage container and sealed. The following vote count and seal numbers were logged and will be confirmed at the start of the next meeting.

- Ballot count: 6676
- Ballot bin: 37471454 and 37471455
- vDrive storage container: 37471457

The board signed an audit sheet confirming the number of ballots scanned today and seal numbers.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Meeting Minutes · Election Day Meeting · November 5, 2024 · 5:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton, and Member Timothy M. Randall

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, and Absentee Assistant Christy Souter

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Stefanie Ottolini, Julie Paladino

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Absentee Ballots

There are 153 ballots for the board's consideration.

Information only: 71 ballots pending cure

118 Ballots recommended for approval for board to spot check

- 83 Civilian ballots
- 8 Overseas returned by mail or will be duplicated during board meeting
- 11 Military returned by mail or will be duplicated during board meeting
- 16 Affidavit Review Pending (returned with properly executed Photo ID Exception Form)

Board members spot-checked at least two ballots from the ballots recommended for approval. Mr. Randall made a motion to approve 118 Civilian ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

12 Ballots requiring board review

- 12 Accepted Cure ballots

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 12 ballots as recommended by staff.

Ballots requiring board review – pending board decision

4 ballots total requiring board review:

- 4 Civilian ballots received in a sealed return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed or the ballot was loose in the return envelope

- Numbered Memo 2021-03 provides that when the ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope which is not sealed but the ballot envelope is received in a sealed return envelope, this anomaly is not a deficiency. Staff is instructed to re-seal the return envelope with a notation of “sealed in return envelope” and the county board should open the return envelope and address the ballot at its next absentee meeting.
- Ballots were reviewed by staff and recommended for approval.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve four ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

- 1 Civilian ballots where the voter indicated their photo ID documentation was inside the ballot envelope.
 - Numbered Memo 2021-03 states “A voter may respond to a notification that their ballot is missing photo ID documentation by stating that it is in the ballot envelope. If this occurs, staff must defer the review of the photo ID documentation to the next absentee board meeting, when the county board can review the application and, if approved, open the ballot envelope and confirm photo ID compliance.”

Mr. Randall made a motion to approve and direct staff to open the ballot envelope to evaluate photo ID requirements. Motion carried unanimously. Staff recommended ballot for approval.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the ballot as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

- 2 Civilian ballots were returned by an unauthorized person.
 - Numbered Memo 2020-23 states that delivery of an absentee ballot by a person other than the voter, the voter’s near relative, the voter’s legal guardian, or a person of the voter’s choice when the voter needs assistance due to disability, is not sufficient evidence in and of itself to establish that the voter did not lawfully vote their ballot. A county board shall not disapprove an absentee ballot solely because it was delivered by someone who was not authorized to possess the ballot.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the 2 ballots. Motion carried unanimously.

16 Ballots recommended for disapproval

- 16 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information. Ballots have been spoiled.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 16 ballots with incomplete witness information. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson verified the seal from the vDrive storage container as 37471457.

Mr. Johnson opened the central scanner.

The bipartisan team opened the approved ballots and removed ballots to be scanned. Mr. Johnson announced the total number of ballots scanned as 6676 ballots scanned; matching what was scanned at the close of the November 4 meeting.

The board adjudicated one ballot as necessary.

Mr. Johnson announced that 137 ballots were scanned at today's meeting. That was confirmed to be the number of ballots approved.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Mr. Randall and Mr. Pelton. The secure vDrive was placed in a storage container and sealed. The following vote count and seal numbers were logged.

- Ballot count: 6813 total
- Ballot bin: 37471458 and 37471459

Ms. Rushton obtained board signatures on absentee poll books.

Closing of Verity Central Scan

Mr. Johnson obtained results from Central Scan of absentee ballots. He also closed the Verity Scans from One-Stop and obtained those results.

Summary of Absentee for Release at Close of Polls:

Absentee by Mail Summary

Absentee by Mail	Verity Central Scan Total	Approved Ballots
Absentee TOTAL	6813	6813

Consider Challenges to Absentee and Early Voting Ballots

Ms. LaVere reviewed the procedures provided by the State Board of Elections to challenge voters that are no longer eligible to cast ballots. Challenges involve voters that died after their ballot was cast but prior to election day, voters whose registrations were denied due to verification returned undeliverable and one voter who has now registered in Mecklenburg County.

[Numbered Memo 2022-05](#) provides guidance for county boards to challenge ineligible absentee-by-mail and early voting ballots. The qualifications for all voters, including early and absentee voters, are judged as of Election Day.

What if a voter dies after voting absentee-by-mail or early voting but before Election Day?

- Prior to taking any action, obtain official confirmation of the death. Permissible sources include the DHHS List Maintenance Reports, death certificate from the local register of deeds, or a written, signed notification from a near relative.

- Follow the Process for Disapproving the Ballot Application (if applicable) and Challenging the Ballot above.
- Remove the voter pursuant to G.S. 163-82.14(b).

Voter Registration Denied

G.S. 163-82.7(g)(2) provides that when a voter verification mailing and second notice verification mailing are “returned as undeliverable after a person has already voted by absentee ballot, then that person's ballot may be challenged in accordance with G.S. 163-89.”

Mr. Smith made a motion to move forward with challenges. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson proceeded to tabulate absentee results under the supervision of the board.

Closing of Verity Scans from Early Voting Locations

At the close of polls, 7:30, Mr. Johnson closed Verity Scans from Early Voting Locations.

The handle seal numbers on each scanner were compared with the seal number which was logged by precinct officials at the end of early voting. The vDrive seal number was compared with the seal placed on the Verity Scan during Logic and Accuracy testing.

Results media was imported into the Verity Count system. From the Verity Count system, there were transferred to the networked computer and uploaded to the State Board of Elections using a new, unopened thumb drive.

Board members signed results tapes from each Verity Scan.

Early Voting Summary

Site	vDrive Seal	Handle Seal	Verity Scan Count (from Saturday close)
Bolivia	0508539	0542780	7,290
Shalotte	0508537	36069796	14,771
Leland	0508538	0542653	22,879
Sunset Beach	0508540	36069798	13,092
Supply	0504498	36069797	12,364
Southport	0504500	0542793	17,378
			87,774

Precinct Results

When all precincts had reported, and tabulations were complete, the unofficial results of the 2024 general election were announced.

Adjournment

Mr. Pelton made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Meeting Minutes · Sample Audit Meeting · November 8, 2024 · 9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. Lewis, Member Randy Pelton, and Member Timothy M. Randall

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Assistant Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, and Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress

Bipartisan Sample Audit Members Present: Sandra Batson, Ron Curley, Spring Harkins, Julia Martinelli, Libby Mackey, Cindy Martishius, Peggy Verlangieri, and Carla Wisniewski

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Sample Audit Count

The sample audit count, required by state law, helps ensure the reliability of election results tabulated by a machine. Bipartisan teams at each county board of elections conduct hand-to-eye counts of all ballots in two randomly selected precincts and compare the results with the results of the machine counts. The process verifies the accuracy of the machine counts. The bipartisan teams tallied the ballots.

The two precincts selected to audit the Presidential Contest were WB03 Longwood and SB03 Mosquito 2.

The seal number was verified with the seal number that was logged on election night by poll workers. The sample audit produced results identical to the machine count results, as indicated below.

Ballot Summary

Longwood

Total Ballots: 274

Election night ballot bin seal: 36069753

Donald Trump	143
Kamala Harris	118
Cornel West	3
Randall Terry	2
Chase Oliver	1
Jill Stein	1
Undervotes	4
Overvotes	1
Write-InsTotal Ballots	1
TOTAL BALLOTS	274

Mosquito 2

Total Ballots: 440

Election night ballot bin seal: 36069732

Donald Trump	251
Kamala Harris	171
Cornel West	4
Randall Terry	3
Chase Oliver	2
Jill Stein	0
Undervotes	5
Overvotes	0
Write-InsTotal Ballots	4
TOTAL BALLOTS	440

Consideration of challenge to absentee ballot

[Numbered Memo 2022-05](#) provides guidance for county boards to challenge ineligible absentee-by-mail and early voting ballots. The qualifications for all voters, including early and absentee voters, are judged as of Election Day.

What if a voter dies after voting absentee-by-mail or early voting but before Election Day?

- Prior to taking any action, obtain official confirmation of the death. Permissible sources include the DHHS List Maintenance Reports, death certificate from the local register of deeds, or a written, signed notification from a near relative.
- Follow the Process for Disapproving the Ballot Application (if applicable) and Challenging the Ballot above.
- Remove the voter pursuant to G.S. 163-82.14(b).

There are 12 voters that are now deceased that cast either an absentee or early voting ballot. Ms. LaVere provided an updated list and challenge forms to the board.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to enter a challenge to be heard at canvass for 12 voters. Motion carried unanimously.

Review of Photo ID Exception Forms

Following guidance in [Numbered Memo 2023-04](#), board members are to initially review ID Exception Forms, noting for staff your initial determination as to the truthfulness of the form.

Staff is not aware of any specific information that may lead you to conclude any of the forms are false.

Board members have been provided with copies of Photo ID Exception Forms for their review.

Adjourn

Mr. Pelton made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Meeting Minutes · Pre-Canvass Meeting · November 14, 2024 · 9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton, and Member Timothy M. Randall

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, Absentee Assistant Christy Souter

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Julie Paladino, Stefanie Ottolini, Myrtle Stevenson, Gwen Causey, Debra Prew-Deleкто, and Pat Vandergrift

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. LaVere clarified that any ballots approved, opened, and scanned today will not be tabulated until the canvass meeting.

Consideration of Supplemental Absentee Ballots

There are 265 ballots for the board's consideration.

Information only: 55 ballots pending cure.

Mr. Johnson opened the central scanner and ran a zero-count report which board members signed.

Ms. LaVere presented supplemental absentee ballots recommended for consideration:

Ballots recommended for approval

180 Ballots recommended for approval for board to spot check

- 104 Civilian ballots
- 13 Overseas returned by mail or will be duplicated during the board meeting
- 10 Military returned by mail or will be duplicated during the board meeting
- 53 Affidavit Review Pending Civilian ballots that were returned with a properly executed Photo ID Exception Form

Board members each reviewed at least two ballots.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the 180 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

19 Ballots requiring board review- approval

- 18 Accepted Cure
- 1 Accepted Cure Military

The board reviewed each of these ballots.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Ballots requiring board review – pending board decision

- 8 Civilian ballots received in a sealed return envelope, but the ballot envelope was unsealed or the ballot was loose in the return envelope
 - Numbered Memo 2021-03 provides that when the ballot is inside the executed ballot envelope which is not sealed but the ballot envelope is received in a sealed return envelope, this anomaly is not a deficiency. Staff is instructed to re-seal the return envelope with a notation of “sealed in return envelope” and the county board should open the return envelope and address the ballot at its next absentee meeting.
 - Mr. Pelton made a motion to authorize staff to open envelopes and evaluate for further recommendations. Motion carried unanimously.
 - Upon staff review, two ballots did not have acceptable witnesses.
- 7 Civilian ballots where the voter indicated that their photo ID documentation is inside the ballot envelope.
 - Mr. Pelton made a motion to authorize staff to open envelopes and evaluate for further recommendations. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 13 ballots recommended for approval. Motion carried unanimously.

Ballots recommended for disapproval

- 5 Civilian ballots with incomplete witness information
- 46 Civilian ballots received after the deadline, which was Tuesday, November 5, at 7:30 pm.

Mr. Randall made a motion to disapprove 51 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved ballots were removed from the envelopes and scanned into the Verity scanner.

Mr. Johnson announced that 212 ballots were scanned at today’s meeting. That was confirmed to be the number of ballots approved.

The ballots were placed in a bin and sealed, with seals signed by Ms. Clarity and Mr. Pelton. The secure vDrive was placed in a storage container and will be sealed with approved provisional ballots later in the meeting. The following vote count was logged.

- Ballot count: 212
- Ballot bin seals: 36069794 and 36069750

Consideration of Provisional Ballots

Ms. Chambers explained the provisional process and presented provisional ballots for consideration.

Provisional ballots being considered today: 1059

Vote Count	Provisional Voting Reason	# Ballots
APPROVED	ID Not Provided (Exception Form Properly Executed, No finding of falsity)	72
	ID Not Provided (No Exception Form, Provided Acceptable Photo ID to BOE)	15
	Administrative/Poll Worker Error	21
	Incorrect Precinct	145
	No Record of Registration (Provisional Application resolved deficiency in existing incomplete application)	15
	Previously Removed	103
	Unreported Move	4
	Voter Already Voted (poll worker error, checked-in incorrect voter)	5
	Geocode Issue	10
	TOTAL (Fully) APPROVED	390

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve 390 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

PARTIALS	Voted out of Precinct (Incorrect NC House District)	49
	TOTAL (Partial) APPROVED	49

Mr. Smith made a motion to partially approve 49 ballots recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

NOT APPROVED	No Record of Registration	521
	Previously Removed	87
	Unreported Move	6
	Geocode Issue (Address does not exist)	3
	Voter Already Voted	1
	TOTAL NOT APPROVED	618

Mr. Randall made a motion to not approve 618 ballots as recommended by staff.

PENDING BOARD DECISION	Voter's Address Unclear	2
	TOTAL PENDING 11.14.2024	2

Mr. Smith made a motion to disapprove the ballot in which the voter's address was unclear. The motion carried by majority.

Mr. Johnson opened the central scanner and ran a zero count report which board members signed.

Approved ballots were opened and duplicated as necessary by the bipartisan team and scanned into the Verity Central Scan.

Upon opening approved ballots, 4 ballots were determined to be only partially eligible to be counted due to voter receiving the ballot of the incorrect NC House district.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to change the status of those 4 ballots from full approval to partial approval as deemed necessary by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

The board adjudicated overvotes as necessary.

Mr. Johnson announced that 439 ballots were scanned which was confirmed as the number of approved ballots.

Ballot bin seals were initialed by Mr. Pelton and Mr. Randall.

Provisional and ballot bin seals: 36069747 and 36069749

Vdrive seal for supplemental absentee and provisional: 36069748

Adjournment

Mr. Lewis thanked the staff and bipartisan team for their excellent work.

Mr. Randall made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

75 Stamp Act Drive NE · Building H
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Meeting Minutes · Canvass Meeting · November 15, 2023 · 11:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton, and Member Timothy M. Randall

Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, Absentee Assistant Christy Souter, County Attorney Bryan Batton

Bipartisan Duplication Team Present: Julie Paladino, Stefanie Ottolini, Myrtle Stevenson, Gwen Causey, Debra Prew-Deleкто, and Pat Vandergrift

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Hearing on early voting and absentee ballot challenges

[Numbered Memo 2022-05](#) provides guidance for county boards to challenge ineligible absentee-by-mail and early voting ballots. The qualifications for all voters, including early and absentee voters, are judged as of Election Day.

What if a voter dies after voting absentee-by-mail or early voting but before Election Day?

- Prior to taking any action, obtain official confirmation of the death. Permissible sources include the DHHS List Maintenance Reports, death certificate from the local register of deeds, or a written, signed notification from a near relative.
- Follow the Process for Disapproving the Ballot Application (if applicable) and Challenging the Ballot above.
- Remove the voter pursuant to G.S. 163-82.14(b).

Voter Registration Denied

G.S. 163-82.7(g)(2) provides that when a voter verification mailing and second notice verification mailing are “returned as undeliverable after a person has already voted by absentee ballot, then that person's ballot may be challenged in accordance with G.S. 163-89.”

Proper notice was sent to all voters and copies were included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Lewis asked if anyone present needed to address the challenges.

Mr. Lewis swore in Ms. LaVere to allow her to provide testimony. Ms. LaVere reviewed the challenges and the how the board of elections was notified of information that would necessitate the voter's ballot be challenged.

Mr. Smith made a motion to sustain all challenges. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration and Tabulation of Supplemental Absentee Ballots

There are 7 supplemental absentee ballots for consideration.

Ballots recommended for approval – Board to spot check

- 3 Overseas Federal Write-in Absentee ballots – to be duplicated during meeting
- 3 Military Federal Write-in Absentee ballots – to be duplicated during meeting

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the 6 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson confirmed the vDrive seal from November 14 meeting as 36069748 and confirmed 212 supplemental absentees were scanned at that meeting; Ms. LaVere confirmed the seal number and ballot count.

Ballots were duplicated as necessary by the bipartisan team and scanned.

Ballots recommended for disapproval

- One Civilian ballot received after the deadline

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove the ballot. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson confirmed 6 supplemental absentee ballots were scanned today for a total of 218; confirmed by Ms. LaVere.

Consideration and Tabulation of Provisional Ballots

Ms. Chambers presented provisional ballots for consideration.

Provisional ballots being considered today: 45

Vote Count	Provisional Voting Reason	# Ballots
APPROVED	ID Not Provided (No Exception Form)	1
	Properly Executed Photo ID Exception Form	1
	TOTAL APPROVED	2
NOT APPROVED	ID Not Provided (No Exception Form)	29
	Proof of Residency to Approve Same Day Registration	11
	Unsigned Photo ID Exception Form	1
	TOTAL NOT APPROVED	41
PENDING	Challenged Ballots	2
	TOTAL PENDING BOARD DECISION	2
TOTAL FOR CONSIDERATION 11.15.2024		45

Mr. Johnson opened the central scanner for scanning of the approved provisional ballot and verified there were 439 provisional ballots scanned at the November 14 meeting.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve 4 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to disapprove 41 ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

The bipartisan team opened the ballots, duplicated as necessary and ballots were scanned. Mr. Johnson confirmed there were 4 provisional ballots scanned.

Retrieval of ballots cast by Same Day Registrants who failed mail verification

[2023-05 Same-Day Registration](#) outlines the process to provide a notice and cure option for voters who use same-day registration and later fail mail verification.

Initial Verification and Return

When a mail verification notice is sent to a same-day registrant and returned as undeliverable, the county staff initiates the cure process if returned before the close of business two days before canvass.

Notification to the Registrant

Within one business day of the undeliverable notice being returned, staff will:

- Send a "Notice to Verify Your Address" by **mail** and **email**.
- Call the registrant if a phone number is available.

Options for the Registrant to Verify Address

The registrant must verify their address by either:

- **Submitting a HAVA Document:** Provide a copy of a HAVA-compliant document to the county board by **5 p.m. on the day before the county canvass**.
- **In-Person Verification at Canvass:** If unable to provide an acceptable document by the deadline, the registrant may verify their address in person at the canvass meeting. At the meeting, the county board will:
 - Take the registrant's testimony under the first oath in G.S. 163-86(c)
 - Consider any documentation provided by the registrant.

Failure to Verify Address

If the registrant does not provide a current HAVA document matching their registration address by the deadline:

- The county board will not register the applicant.
- The applicant's ballot will be retrieved, and their votes will be removed from the official count.

Ms. LaVere requested the board to provide authorization to retrieve those ballots and remove from the vote totals.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to remove ballots as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Removal of provisional ballot inserted into the tabulator on election day

Summary:

A provisional curbside ballot was mistakenly inserted into the tabulator by a poll worker at NB02.

Ms. LaVere outlined the procedure to be followed to retrieve and remove the provisional ballot from the election day vote count.

Procedure:

1. **Verify Chain of Custody:** Confirm seal numbers on the ballot bin.
2. **Retrieve Ballot:** A bipartisan team will locate the provisional ballot within the ballot bin. Reseal the bin with new security seals once retrieval is complete.
3. **Tally and Adjust:** The bipartisan team will tally the provisional ballot. Any ineligible votes will be deducted from the appropriate precinct results using a manual adjustment.

4. **Document the Adjustment:** Two copies of the audit log reflecting this adjustment will be printed—one for attachment to the tally sheet and one for the official canvass report.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to retrieve and remove the provisional ballot placed in the tabulator as recommended by staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Bipartisan teams went through the relevant bins for early voting, absentee, and election day to retrieve the balls that should be removed from the totals.

Once all ballots were located, the team conducted manual tally on each to allow Mr. Johnson to remove votes from appropriate vote counts.

Mr. Johnson will work to tabulate and update results while Ms. LaVere updates the board on Sample Audit and Voter History.

Sample Audit Count and Voter History Audit

Sample Audit Count:

The sample audit count, required by state law, helps ensure the reliability of election results tabulated by a machine. Bipartisan teams at each county board of elections conduct hand-to-eye counts of all ballots in two randomly selected precincts and compare the results with the results of the machine counts. The process verifies the accuracy of the machine counts.

Bipartisan teams did a hand to eye count of the Presidential contest in precinct WB03 Longwood and SB03 Mosquito 2 on November 8. The results matched the machine count.

Voter History Audit:

The voter history audit is an important process to ensure that a voter is recorded as casting a ballot in one of the four voting methods: absentee, early voting, election day, or provisionals. The best practice is to make sure that the voter history audit is reconciled and completed before county canvass.

Currently, voter history on paper appears to be off by 52. However, several processes remain to be finalized, including the removal of ballots cast by ineligible voters. Once these processes are completed today, it is expected that voter history will show three more ballots cast than recorded in voter history.

Finalize Results

Mr. Johnson read in supplemental absentee ballots, provisional ballots from yesterday and today, and manual edits of hand-tallied ballots were removed from election day results, and results were finalized.

Documents were signed by the board.

Adjournment

Mr. Randall made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Meeting Minutes · Special Meeting · November 20, 2024 · 9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. Lewis, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton

Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, County Attorney Bryan Batton

Bipartisan Recount Team: Mark Allen, Sandy Batson, Roger Orman, and Carla Wisniewski

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Recount of the Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court contest

Summary:

The canvassed results for the Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court contest are:

Jefferson G. Griffin	64,410
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Allison Riggs	41,457
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Every ballot included in the canvass total will be scanned by bipartisan teams under the supervision of the board. The procedures outlined in Numbered Memo 2024-08 Statewide Recount will be followed.

Preliminary Consideration of Election Protest

Summary:

Jefferson Griffin filed an election protest on November 19, 2024. Per Mr. Batton's direction, the board will determine (1) whether the protest has substantially complied with the form requirement, and (2) whether the protest establishes probable cause. Evidence may not be heard, the board is deciding if there is cause to move forward and hear evidence at a hearing.

Upon review of the form and deliberations, the board agreed that the threshold for moving forward to a hearing has been met.

Ms. Clarity made a motion to schedule a hearing to hear the election protest. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Ms. Clarity made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Note: The recount continued over several days, with bipartisan board representation present, though not all days had quorum constituting a meeting.

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Meeting Minutes · Special Meeting · November 27, 2024 · 9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward E. Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Timothy M. Randall

Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Elections Computer Technician Butch Johnson, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress, County Attorney Bryan Batton

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Clarity made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Protest Hearing

The board will be hearing a protest filed by Jefferson Griffin regarding the contest of NC Supreme Court Associate Justice.

An opening statement was made on behalf of Mr. Griffin by Preston Hilton. Mr. Hilton noted that the protest was filed with the information available by Mr. Griffin's campaign from the State Board of Elections at the time involving voters that were alleged to be not registered, felons, or deceased.

Mr. Lewis swore in Ms. LaVere. She provided testimony that the votes for the two individuals in the protest not absorbed in the jurisdiction of the State Board of Elections were challenged by the Board and reviewed at its canvass meeting. The board sustained the challenges and removed those two votes from election totals during the canvass process. One voter was determined to have passed away after their vote was cast. The other voter appeared to not be properly registered. Data was provided after election by the state or state sources. She acknowledged that at the time the protest was filed, the status of these votes was not clear to the campaign of Mr. Griffin.

Mr. Lewis asked if Mr. Hilton was satisfied with the information that Ms. LaVere provided.

Ms. LaVere clarified for the audience that list maintenance is continued throughout the election process and if any conflicts meet the deadline challenge, the Board of Elections takes appropriate action.

Mr. Batton clarified the board can find, through its own actions removed the necessary votes according to law. The board could find that there was not substantial evidence that the outcome of the election was not in doubt as the board already took necessary action.

Mr. Smith made a motion to dismiss the protest. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Ms. Clarity made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Meeting Minutes · Regular Meeting · January 14, 2025 · 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Edward Lewis, Secretary Stuart Smith, Member Paula Clarity, Member Randy Pelton

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Adrienne Rushton, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress

Meeting Opening

Mr. Lewis called the meeting to order and everyone in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Pelton made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Ms. LaVere summarized the recent list maintenance activities including jury duty excusals and routine biennial no contact mailings and removal of inactive voters.

Presentation on overseas absentee voting

Ms. LaVere presented the current laws and policies including who qualifies as an overseas voter and identification requirements.

Mr. Pelton made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Agenda Item: Director's Report 2.18.25

Summary:

Departmental goals and objectives overview.

Attachments:

1. January voter registration statistics
2. FY25-26 Goals and Objectives

Brunswick County Voter Registration Statistics Monthly Report

	2025											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total Registered Voters	136,908											
Voters Removed	6,951											
New Registrations Processed	942											
Registrations Processed w/ No Changes	254											
Voter Registration Changes Processed	447											
Total Monthly VR Transactions	8,594											
Verifications Mailed Out	10,182											
NCOA Mailing	0											
Verifications returned undeliverable	9,351											
Voter Returned Confirmation Card Update	5											
Confirmations Mailed Out	9,234											
Democratic	27,065											
Republican	56,320											
Libertarian	692											
Green	35											
No Labels	329											
Constitution	4											
Justice For All	8											
We The People	14											
Unaffiliated	52,441											
Democratic	19.77%											
Republican	41.14%											
Libertarian	0.51%											
Green	0.03%											
No Labels	0.24%											
Constitution	0.00%											
Justice For All	0.01%											
We The People	0.01%											
Unaffiliated	38.30%											
Female	66,934											
Male	57,851											
Undesignated Gender	12,123											
American Indian	396											
Asian	568											
Black	8,896											
Multi-Racial	249											
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	12											
White	113,517											
Other Race	2,563											
Undesignated Race	10,707											
Hispanic	2,380											
Not Hispanic	73,723											
Undesignated	60,805											

Board of Elections

Sara LaVere, Director

75 Stamp Act Drive NE, Building H, PO Box 2,
Bolivia, NC, 28422, 910-253-2620

Department Summary

Finance will complete the Department Summary Section.

Department Purpose

The Brunswick County Board of Elections conducts all federal, state, county, municipal, and special elections in accordance with federal and state law and State Board of Elections policy. Our mission is to maintain the integrity of elections, ensure election results are accurate and include as many residents as possible. We do this by encouraging voter registration and making it easy for registered voters to cast a ballot for the candidates and issues of their choice.

Latest Major Accomplishments

- Successfully conducted the 2024 Presidential Election.
- Adapted quickly to a last-minute ballot change following the preparation of absentee ballot packets, which required coding new ballots, testing them, and preparing new packets for mailing. Despite offices being closed due to the severe impacts of potential tropical storm #8, our team ensured the process continued seamlessly to meet election deadlines.
- Live-streamed pre-election testing of voting equipment as well as post-election audits and recounts to enhance transparency and public trust in the election process.
- Leveraged the previously developed real-time wait time tracker for early voting locations, which proved invaluable during this high-turnout election by enhancing voter experience and reducing frustrations.
- Conducted a full machine recount of over 109,000 ballots and a sample hand-to-eye recount of over 22,000 ballots following the general election.

Goals and Objectives

Goal/Focus Area: Education

- Commissioner Objective 2
 - Promote student engagement by expanding participation in the Student Election Assistant program and offering internship opportunities for volunteer hours.

Goal/Focus Area: Engagement and Connection

- Commissioner Objective 1
 - Identify and implement new outreach strategies to engage citizens who are not effectively reached by current messaging efforts.

- Commissioner Objective 2
 - Enhance staff presence within the community to ensure consistent engagement and availability, particularly during peak election seasons.
 - Develop and implement a plan to record and publicly share board meeting recordings to enhance transparency and accessibility for the public.

- Commissioner Objective 3
 - Implement a public records request tracking system to efficiently respond to requests.

Key Performance Measures (add rows by right clicking in chart, insert, insert rows above or below)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Target
Number of Student Election Assistants (SEA) applied/worked *Law permits two per precinct	Mid-term General: 7 applied, 5 worked	Municipal: 45 applied, 38 worked Presidential Primary: 35 applied, 24 worked	Presidential General: 96 applied, 63 worked	Municipal: 44 worked Mid-term Primary: 54 worked
Number of public speaking engagements	6	15	10	15
Number of outreach events (registration drives, voter ID events, festivals, etc.)	5	6	19	25
Number of interviews with media outlets	*	*	15	25
Number of board meeting minutes recorded	19	35	25	35
Number of Facebook followers	*	*	1,900	2,300
Registered voters	127,053	132,250	140,000	148,000
Registrations processed (new and updates)	27,014	26,119	48,000	27,000
Ineligible voter registrations removed	8,830	4,598	9,000	5,000
Voter turnout	Mid-term General: 73,316 (58.07%)	Municipal: 15,293 (18.74%) Presidential Primary: 36,299 (27.49%)	Presidential General: 109,828 (78.39%)	Municipal: 16,000 (18%) Mid-term Primary: 37,500 (27%)

Early voting sites	5	6	6	6
Main line incoming calls	5,692	5,503	8,500	6,000

Upcoming Opportunities and Challenges

- The county's growing population presents ongoing challenges in securing suitable polling locations for both early voting and Election Day. Gaining support from county administration and commissioners in advocating for assistance from other governmental entities is essential to addressing this need.
- There is a critical need for additional space to support election administration processes and storage. Current facilities are inadequate for organizing and storing 35 precinct supply cages (requiring up to 30 square feet each during preparation), testing voting machines, conducting audits, candidate filing, and poll worker training. Additionally, election documentation—including every ballot, voter authorization form, and absentee envelope—must be securely retained for 22 months, requiring significant storage capacity. Space limitations also hinder our ability to accommodate seasonal staff and anticipated full-time hires.
- S382 recently passed and will significantly compress the timeline for counting absentee and provisional ballots.
- The security of elections and safety of election staff remain pressing concerns nationwide. Our office must prioritize training, collaboration with relevant organizations, and proactive planning to stay informed about potential threats and prepared to respond effectively.