

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

Meeting Minutes · Regular Meeting · September 16, 2025 · 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Randy Pelton, Secretary Edward Lewis, Member Joe Myers, and Member David Smudski

Board Staff Present: Director Sara LaVere, Deputy Director Melissa Chambers, Election Logistics Technician Ryan Childress

Meeting Opening

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

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Smudski made a motion to approve minutes from the August 19, 2025 Regular Meeting, as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Director's Report

August voter registration statistics were provided in the agenda packet.

Staff recognition

Ryan Childress was recognized for five years of service with the county in his position with the board of elections staff.

Municipal Election Updates

- Sample ballots are now available on our website and if a voter searches their registration record, a link to their sample ballot is available. If a voter has no ballot this election, their record will display 'no eligible ballots.'
- We are planning for Logic and Accuracy testing of voting equipment soon, an email will be sent when dates are finalized.
- In-person poll worker training began today.

Board members noted they would like information provided to them about in-person training. Ms. Chambers will send information to all board members.

- Plan to start counting absentee ballots on election day at 2 PM, a resolution will need to be approved at a future meeting. Once the process starts on election day, board members will need to remain on-site until unofficial election results are posted election night.

Ms. LaVere clarified the absentee preparatory steps that can be conducted ahead of the election day meeting and that any absentee and early voting challenges are handled at the canvass meeting.

Ms. Chambers provided information provided by the state that ‘as of January 1, 2024, the parties may appoint observers where the party “has a candidate appearing on the ballot.” G.S. § 163-45.1(b)(1)–(3) (S.L. 2023-140, sec. 7(b)). This means that there must be an official party nominee on the ballot, identified on the ballot with the party. This change in the law means that political parties are no longer entitled to appoint observers in nonpartisan elections.’

New Business

Appoint Early Voting Officials, Municipal Election

Effective January 1, 2024, for each primary and election, county boards of election shall appoint precinct officials for each early voting site, other than the county board office.

- County boards shall work to ensure, if at all possible, that the chief judge and judges working at any site at the same time do not all belong to the same political party.
- Each shift judges are designated to assure party balance, with shift lead, one ballot station, and one help desk serving as chief judge and judges, with machine techs available should there be a change to schedule. Staff also designates a bi-partisan team when closing the voting machines and securing ballots at the end of each day.
- Political parties were provided notice and were required to submit any names for consideration by September 9, 2025.
 - List submitted by Democrat Party was included in the agenda packet
 - Republican Party declined to submit a list
- Staff recommends all election day chief judges and judges that are working in specialty roles be appointed. Staff further recommends that those being trained to serve in specialty roles of Help Desk, Ballot Station and Machine Tech be appointed as judges. Staff recommendations also include those recommended to be appointed as assistants

Mr. Lewis made a motion to approve the list of early voting officials as recommended by staff.

Discussion of Early Voting Locations – 2026 Primary

Summary:

- This discussion is for informational purposes ahead of having to vote on a plan at our regular October meeting.
- Early voting dates: Thursday, February 12 – Saturday, February 28
- All sites must be open on the last Saturday from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm
- By unanimous vote of all its members, board may provide for one or more satellite sites.
- If unable to reach unanimity in favor of a plan, a member or members of the county board of elections may petition the State Board to adopt a plan for the county and the State Board may adopt a plan for that county.
- On each weekday all satellite early voting sites must be open from 8:00 am to 7:30 pm.
- If satellite sites are open on Saturdays or Sundays, then all satellite sites shall be open for the same number of hours on those Saturdays or Sundays.
- These recommended locations have been reserved for use during the early voting period.
 - Leland Cultural Arts Center - 1212 Magnolia Village Way, Leland, NC, 28451
 - Brunswick Center at Supply – 101 Stone Chimney Road SE, Supply, NC 28462
 - Sunset Beach Community Center – 200 Station Trail, Sunset Beach, NC 28468
 - Brunswick County Cooperative Extension - 25 Referendum Drive NE, Building N, Bolivia, NC, 28422
- We do not currently have any viable options for early voting in the Southport and Shallotte areas.
- Sites explored that are not viable options
 - Shallotte area
 - Brunswick Center at Shallotte
 - Focus Broadband Meeting Room
 - Mulberry Park Building
 - Southport area
 - Moose Lodge
 - St. James Community Center
 - Duke Energy Meeting Space
 - Brunswick Little Theater
 - Sacred Heart Church
 - Southport City Gym
 - Brunswick Center at Southport
 - Calabash area
 - Brunswick Center at Calabash
 - Sea Trail Convention Center

Ms. LaVere encouraged additional ideas to be submitted and the staff will explore viability prior to the regular meeting in October.

Resolution to Delegate Administrative Duties Relating to Absentee Voting to the Director and Staff

The current resolution was last adopted on October 17, 2023. Since the composition of the board has changed, staff is presenting it again for adoption by the current board. There have been no changes to the 2023 version that was passed.

Ms. LaVere summarized that all items in the resolution are pulled from the general statutes or numbered memos outlining allowable procedures for advanced preparatory steps for processing absentee ballots. She also clarified that UOCAVA ballots can be duplicated ahead of time with a bipartisan team, while other ballots may need duplicated by a bipartisan team during an absentee meeting (damage, unreadable, etc.).

Mr. Smudski made a motion to table the resolution until the next meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

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