

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 24, 2026 – 6:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING

The Rockingham County Board of Elections met Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Rockingham County Governmental Center in the Commissioners Chambers.

Board Members Present: Bert Jones, Secretary; Sarah Totten, Member; Wally White, Member; and Ophelia Wright, Member.

Board Members Absent: Don Powell, Chairman.

Staff Members Present: Paula Seamster, Director.

ITEM #1 – MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Secretary Jones called the Board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He added that Chairman Powell was not present at the meeting.

ITEM #2 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Secretary Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3 – INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Rev. Venus Womble, Zion Baptist Church in Reidsville.

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Member Totten moved, seconded by Member White, to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #5 – CONSENT AGENDA

Secretary Jones read the list of the Board Minutes and asked if there was an objection to voting on all the minutes together.

Member Wright stated that she would like to make comment about the Regular Meeting Minutes to set the record straight. Secretary Jones asked which ones. Member Wright stated February 17, 2026, on page 3 of 10. She stated that she served four years as the Chair as the Board of Elections and added that she had never served as the Secretary. She wanted to set the record straight that she had never served as the Secretary which was stated when it was requested for a motion for Secretary. She asked that this be recorded in the minutes that she had never served as Secretary.

Secretary Jones stated to the Director that the minutes look like the original minutes before he as the Secretary approved the minutes and sent them back. The Director responded that what was included in the agenda were the corrected minutes. Secretary Jones stated that when he read the minutes, he saw that he felt when Member Totten made the comments it was unclear whether she said Secretary or an Officer. He added that he knew that Member Wright had served as Chair and he was not aware of whether Member Wright had served as Secretary or not. Secretary Jones stated that he had corrected that statement in the minutes, but it was not in the minutes in the agenda packet. He asked Member Wright if she wanted the Board to correct the minutes to say that she had not served as Secretary but that she had served as Officer. Member Wright responded no, it was not said that she served as an officer it was stated that the motion was made for Secretary Jones to serve as Secretary because she had already served as Secretary. Member Wright just wanted to set the record straight

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since there was no way for her to serve as Secretary if she was Chair for four years. Member Wright stated that she wanted this reflected in the minutes.

Member Totten stated that she did say that, but she had been informed that Member Wright had served as Secretary by another party and that was the reason she had said that and that was why she thought Secretary Jones nomination was pertinent. Secretary Jones responded that he was unclear of what he heard Member Totten say. He thought he heard Member Totten to say Secretary, but he also thought he heard Officer and he knew that Member Wright had served as the Chair.

Secretary Jones stated that Member Wright correction was noted.

Member White moved, seconded by Member Wright, to approve the Consent Agenda containing the Regular Board Minutes of February 17, 2026, the Absentee Meeting Minutes of February 17, 2026, the Budget Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2026, the Absentee Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2026, the Pre-Election Absentee Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2026, the Election Day Absentee Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2026, the Provisional Meeting Minutes of March 6, 2026, and the County Canvass Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2026. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #6 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one signed up for Public Comments.

ITEM #7 – PROS AND CONS OF EARLY VOTING & ELECTION DAY PRECINCT POLLING SITES

Secretary Jones stated that this was an opportunity for Members to state any pros and cons that they had heard or had perceived regarding the Early Voting or Election Day precinct polling sites.

The Director stated that he had placed a packet at the Members' seats from the Chief Judges and Judges regarding the Early Voting and Election Day polling sites. She added that a lot of the comments were that they were pleased with the sites and there were some comments that there were some issues, but the issues improved as Early Voting went on.

Member Totten stated that the sites that she went to and the sites that she audited, everyone was very positive about how things went. There were no negative comments about the new locations. She added that the workers were very positive about the new locations. There were no major issues, overall, a very good day and a good process. Member Totten stated it was a good showing of voters and no personal or personnel issues.

Secretary Jones stated that the vast majority of the comments he received on visiting and speaking to the people about the polling sites were very positive. He knew there were concerns about the Eden Early Voting Site, the access for elderly people in particular with the stairs or the length of the walk so that has been noted. He stated that he believed all the Members of the Board are aware of that and it is something the Board needs to look at moving forward. Secretary Jones stated that early on at Pennrose Mall, they are in the process of renovating that mall and it continues to improve. He thought the first day there was an issue with the plumbing or the bathroom situation, but he understood that it got better. He stated that this had been noted as well. Secretary Jones stated that he understood that

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before the fall there would be more renovations made to the mall. He made the observation that the Pennrose Mall location was the most voted location and much more than before.

Member Wright thanked Secretary Jones for noting that and that was one of the things that she wanted to note as well with the bathroom situation. She stated that situation was taken care of, but it took three to four days or more, but it was corrected and that is the good thing.

Member White stated that he looked forward to reading all the comments because he did not receive a lot of positive comments about the new locations, certainly the Eden Early Voting location. He stated it was not only negative comments, but he believed that the Board needed to look for a new location before the November election. Member White stated that there were several people who had a real challenge, on day one someone fell and he heard it was repeated that it did not have anything to do with the location but he disagreed because he thought the long walk was part of what added to the fall and the injury that the women sustained. He stated that he understood, and he appreciated wanting to move to publicly owned locations instead of private locations and churches but in the case of the Eden Early Voting location a new location needed to be investigated. Member White stated that he had talked to multiple city employees and so far he had not found anyone who has a suggestion of a place that is owned by the City of Eden that would work any better so the Board may have to look at a private location for this voting site for the safety issues alone. He stated as far as Pennrose Mall, for the voters it was a nice layout but the space on the inside was much smaller than what the election workers are used to. Member White stated that one worker stated to him that the worker would work the November election because they had already committed but beyond that if it were to remain at that location they would be quitting after working for years. He stated that the Morehead High School location was problematic, but it was problematic for a different reason, and he understood that this would be taken care of in November. Member White stated that the location was not meant to be in the auditorium but had to because of weather conditions that made the students use the cafeteria and he thought this location would work fine. He stated that most definitely the Eden Early Voting site needed to be changed and the Board needed to find a new location as soon as possible so people could be alerted and not give them a last minute, two-month notice.

ITEM #8 – DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

2026 Primary Election Update

The Director stated that there were 10,354 voters during Early Voting, 7875 voters during Election Day, there were 97 Provisional votes that were approved by the Board, and 93 Absentee by Mail ballots that were approved by the Board. She added that the election did run smoothly. The Director stated that the Precinct Officials were ready for any challenge, and she added that Rockingham County had some of the best Precinct Officials in the state if not in the nation. She stated that she was very honored to work with the Precinct Officials and the Staff that she works with as well as the Board. The Director commended the Precinct Officials and the Staff for everything they did during this Election and added that they did a phenomenal job.

Secretary Jones stated that on behalf of himself and the Members of the Board he wanted to commend the Director and her Staff for the job that was done during the election. He added that it was quite a heavy turnout for a midterm election, quite a heavy early voting turnout, and he was impressed and he knew quite a number of people were impressed and he appreciated that very much.

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Secretary Jones as the Board if they have any comments or questions regarding the Director's Updates.

Member White stated that the cost breakdown was interesting to him, and he thought that was the sort of thing that is good for the public to know, that it does cost to do an election. He added that when Early Voting and Election Day are brought together as well as the Recount it worked out to be \$7.31 per voter he assumed. The Director responded that it is per ballot cast. Member White stated that it is interesting information to have and he said thank you.

The Director stated that she would have more updated information from the Recount, etc. added to this. She stated that if the public would like to see this it is available on the Board of Elections website under Agendas and Minutes included in the packet. The Director stated that she tried to do this after every election because elections are not cheap. She added that the more voters that come to vote the less the cost would be per ballot cast.

ITEM #9 – BOARD COMMENTS

Member Wright stated "I think our meeting was short and sweet tonight. We do miss our Chair for being here and thank you Mr. Secretary for sitting in his stead. I do want to take my hat off to Paula and her Team for doing a phenomenal job with the election and the way they handled things with whatever might have come up. We appreciate all that Roy does by putting our information out there with the updates and I think things went well tonight."

Member Totten stated "I want to add to what Ophelia said in recognizing Paula and her Staff and what a great job they do and how much they help us do our job. The election went well I thought, you know, setting aside all the issues that we had. They worked hard, they put in a lot of hours to get everything done and the election runs very smoothly just because of them."

Member White stated "I have a few things. One, I also want to thank Paula and the workers, and I also want to thank everyone who has shown up as observers through all the recounts and through all of those hearings. I think it's really important that people be involved so it's nice to have seen so many people showing up for all of that. Under that, there's...as one of two of the minority party on this Board I find that I think part of my responsibility often is to at least say things to be on the record for clarity and that sort of thing. And in that case, last week I believe it was at the County Commissioner meeting the Republican Chair of the County brought up a concern and I think it was something that I was involved in so I think it is important for clarity purposes to put on the record what was said and what the answer was. What was said was after congratulating Republican winners of their primaries it then went on to say 'it is concerning to me when I see when it comes to the provisional ballots being counted in this room, that this room had a great deal of Democrat attorneys from out of town. I understand our former Democrat governor even sent his attorney here to be here; they were celebrating. I sat behind some of them, one of them was giving hand signals to someone on the Board of Elections that we saw. We could tell that that was happening. We need; we need some healing. We need to come together, and we need to put aside this vitriol. I am asking for that help today from all Republicans, that people who are at home and watching this. If you hear something that is ugly stop it, stifle it, we have good people in this county. Let's go with these. We've got people that were elected to fill these positions, let's support them. Thank you very much and thank you for your time.' So, the hand signal was someone waving at me and it's

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because we had just done the vote for the two people who had been purged and they wanted to let us know that we had not properly cured those ballots as we later discovered. The person who was waving, which I guess is a hand signal, was not in fact an attorney of Governor Cooper, it was a lady named Hilliary Harris Klein who I did not even meet that night, I met a week later at our canvassing meeting. She is an attorney with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, and she specializes in helping with advocacy for voter registration and maintenance and that sort of thing. So, I just wanted to make it clear that although it felt like it was insinuated that something nefarious happened there, it was simply something wanting to make sure that we did the right thing, which we ultimately did. I think it's important for clarity that that be made clear on the record here at this meeting. Thank you."

Secretary Jones stated "I commend the Director and the Staff and seeing the way that people conducted themselves during this election process, going around to different sites, seeing Judges that had been working sometimes for maybe thirty or forty years or maybe for the first time mentioned the fact that we had such a heavy turnout for a midterm election. I have heard a number of people say that for the last couple of weeks or so that we have pretty much been in the center of the universe so I again want to commend everybody involved by showing the state and even the nation how it should be done. It was done as well as it could be and kudos to everyone who was involved."

ITEM #10 – CLOSED SESSION

Member Wright moved, seconded by Member Totten to into Closed Session for personnel pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6)). The motion carried unanimously.

The Director was excused from the meeting.

Member Totten moved, seconded by Member Wright to go back into open session. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM #14 – ADJOURNMENT

At 7:26 p.m. Member White moved, seconded by Member Wright to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula P. Seamster, Director

Bert Jones, Secretary