



Washington County Election Administrator Report March 2026

We have continued to be productive in our office serving our state of Tennessee and Washington County citizens. This report is somewhat abbreviated due to the recent February 10 meeting and my work generating a budget for the county Finance Director before March 1. I will have that finalized and submitted to him for review shortly and I will bring that to the commission for feedback as well. We had a final total of 57 candidates submit qualifying petitions for the May 5th elections, with 3 under “Bonafide” review by the Republican party, which must be complete by Thursday Feb 26, which is the withdraw deadline as well. Any R candidate, not Bonafide, would be removed from the ballot.

Non-daily tasks completed by the office were

- Deputy Hawkins has been aggressively working election day workers. We should be in good shape but additional assistance from the parties should be forthcoming.
- The Republican party requested a meeting with me to discuss election workers and our expectations for poll watchers. We, Sheila and I met with them on February 11, where we had good discussions about poll watcher expectations, issued our board’s written policy and encouraged them to participate in recruiting workers. We stressed to them that our expectations are for poll watchers to enjoy the process, help in creating a friendly, professional environment and “observe” but not the interfere in the duties of pol workers. We will present the same information to any other eligible group that wishes to participate.
- Sheila has been working with staff to ensure all voting sites equipment needs are pre-packed and ready to go
- Meredith and Sheila will be visiting nursing homes on Thursday to meet staff, and ensure they are ready for our voting teams. Meredith put together a great packet for each facility which I will have available for your review at our Tuesday meeting.
- Sheila, Veronica and I will be presenting at the WC Federated Republican Women’s club on March 2 since snow canceled the February event. You are welcome to attend.

I visited with staff for the Washington County Schools at the Jonesborough Middle School, to discuss and review that early voting site. There will be some limitations at that site but nothing that will prevent its use. At my suggestion we also walked through the old elementary school to evaluate its potential use as a early voting site. It has very good potential and Director Boyd and Dr. Jarrod Adams expressed their full support in working with us if necessary.

Feel free to call me with any questions

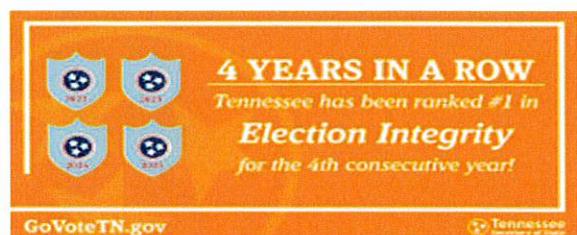
Best regards

Chuck Vest

Washington County Tn Administrator of Elections

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Washington County Election Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: February 10, 2026

Time: 9:30am

Location: Election Office, 2516 East Oakland Ave, Johnson City, TN 37601

Chairperson: Lori Rosenoff

Minute Taker: Veronica Nuckols

Attendance:

- **Commissioners Present:** Lori Rosenoff, Margaret Davis, Mike Elder, Mike Hubbard and Turney Williams
- **Administrator of Elections (AOE):** Chuck Vest
- **Staff:** Steve Yantachka, Sheila Hayes, and Veronica Nuckols
- **Others Present:**
 - Cheryl Richards, East Tennessee Freedom
 - Dave Vollrath, League of Women Voters
 - Ed Wolfe
 - Washington County residents

Call to Order

- **Opening:** Commissioner Rosenoff called the meeting to order
- **Opening prayer and Pledge of Allegiance**

Public Comments

Two public comments:

- **Ed Wolfe** expressed concerns regarding recent U.S. Supreme Court activity, international relations, and the potential for foreign interference in elections. He noted that he hopes the Commission may address these issues in the future.
- **Dave Volrath** complimented the Election Office website, noting improvements over the past year and appreciation for the posting of meeting minutes and the Administrator's report.

Communication from the Chair

- Commissioner Rosenoff reported no new communications.
- She expressed appreciation for the thorough and well-prepared meeting minutes.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **Motion to approve:** Commissioner Elder
- **Second by:** Commissioner Williams
- **Approved unanimously.**

Administrator's Report

Absentee Voting Report (Steve Yantachka):

- Overview of absentee ballot duties and procedures was provided.
- Permanent absentee ballots for medical voters (245 voters) were mailed on February 3, and some have already been returned.
- February 4 marked the first day the office could accept absentee ballot requests for the May election.
- Reviewed 2024 Absentee stats and compared them to 2022 Election year – last county primary.
- Absentee voting eligibility requirements were reviewed, including age (60+), students attending school outside the county, medical reasons, and other statutory qualifications.
- The physician's statement (permanent absentee voting) requirement was explained.
- UOCAVA (military and overseas) voters were discussed, including use of the FPCA form.
- Absentee Counting Board responsibilities were reviewed.

Commissioner Questions and Discussion:

- Commissioner Elder asked about the physician statement process.
- Commissioner Rosenoff asked who qualifies for absentee voting.
- Commissioner Hubbard asked about college student absentee participation.

- Commissioner Davis noted COVID is no longer a qualifying reason and does not expect a high absentee turnout for the May election.

(AOE Vest)

Candidate Petitions:

- 59 candidates have picked up petitions for the May Primary; qualifying deadline is February 19 at noon.
- 19 petitions have been picked up so far for the August election; deadline is March 10.
- Juvenile Court Judge will be added to the August city ballot for an 8-year term; last time position was on the ballot was in 2018. Current Juvenile Court Judge is retiring.

Office/Community Outreach:

- Sheila Hayes and Chuck Vest met with the new Johnson City School Superintendent, resulting in a positive working relationship.
- The Jackson Theatre event was successful, with over 100 attendees.
 - Max volunteered to entertain with music.
 - Sheila did an excellent job getting the food together/ordered.
 - Commissioner Rosenoff praised what a wonderful event it was.
 - Commissioner Davis was made aware some precinct workers were not aware of the event. Suggests the office needs to improve communication between the office and precinct workers.
- Interest was expressed in hosting similar events in the future to recruit poll workers.

Budget and Planning:

- Budget preparation will begin soon, accounting for two elections.
- Redistricting will begin in the near future with Comptroller assistance.
- Some precincts are nearing capacity, which may require adjustments.
- No regional redistricting meeting has been scheduled yet.

New Business

Appointment of Machine Technician Leads

- Needs to be one Democrat and one Republican representative appointed by the Election Commissioners.
 - **Democrat:** Aaron Bible
 - **Republican:** Jeff Clyburn
- AOE Vest added these gentlemen are two great additions to the team.
- Commissioner Davis would also like to know more information about each Machine Technician.
- **Motion to approve:** Commissioner Hubbard
- **Second:** Commissioner Elder
- **Approved unanimously.**

Early Voting Workers

- Worker list was reviewed – AOE Vest stated worker list is in good shape.
- Early Voting training scheduled for March 18 and 19. Commissioners requested notification of training times.
- Commissioner Davis encouraged public participation as precinct workers and recruitment of backup precinct workers.

Motion to approve: Commissioner Elder

Second by: Commissioner Williams

Approved unanimously.

Early Voting Sites

- Proposed sites: Jonesborough, Freedom Hall, and Gray.
- Jonesborough was mentioned due to building is posted for sale.
- No pending sales at the moment and AOE Vest is in close communication with Washington County School Superintendent.

Motion to approve: Commissioner Davis
Second by: Commissioner Hubbard
Approved unanimously.

Early Voting Hours of Operation

- Recommended hours:
 - Monday–Friday, 9:00AM – 5:00PM
 - Saturday, 9:00AM - 12:00PM Noon
 - Sundays closed
- Late evening hours were discussed but not recommended due to historically low turnout in local elections.
- The Commission agreed to monitor turnout during this election and adjust if needed.

Motion to approve: Commissioner Hubbard
Second by: Commissioner Davis
Approved unanimously.

Voter Appeal Review

- One appeal reviewed involving a voter who mistakenly marked a felony conviction during a second registration at the DMV kiosk.
- Sheila assisted the voter.
- Documentation was provided, and the voter corrected the application.
- Commissioner Rosenoff praised the process.

Motion to approve: Commissioner Elder
Second by: Commissioner Williams
Approved unanimously.

Commissioner Training Overview

- AOE Vest reviewed commissioner duties during early voting and Election Day, including precinct visits, troubleshooting, and oversight of ballot counting.
- Emphasis was placed on bipartisan procedures, chain of custody, secure ballot bags, and checks and balances.
- Commissioners discussed the importance of public transparency and noted that Washington County exceeds minimum standards followed by many other commissions.

Additional Business

- 62 voter registration cards reviewed.
- One card marked both “yes” and “no” for felony conviction is under staff review.
- Training schedules were distributed.

Next Meeting

- **Date:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026
- **Time:** 9:30 a.m.
Purpose includes ballot and candidate approval.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Commissioner Elder
Second by: Commissioner Hubbard
Approved unanimously.