



# WASHINGTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION

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## Washington County Election Administrator Report May 2026

Our office conducted a successful May 5<sup>th</sup> County Primary election, thanks to a committed staff, our 5 commissioners, and hundreds of poll workers from our community ensuring we operated with integrity, accuracy and excellence. We will still look for opportunities to improve our processes, and those discussions started the morning after the election, which was a 16-hour day for all involved. Since this was the first election under my leadership, I was very thankful to have an experienced and conscientious staff. Chief Deputy Sheila Hayes and IT Deputy Veronica Nuckols were invaluable. We finished with more than primary 9,600 voters, >a 10.4% turnout, which is less than comparable years, 13,000+ in 2022 and 11,000 in 2018. The main reason would be contributed to only 4 contested races on the 2026 ballot, which unfortunately diminishes the necessity to vote by many registered voters. May elections are driven by contested races, especially for the major offices of Mayor and Sheriff. The August County General election with a full slate of Republican, Democratic and Independent candidates, combined with a contested primary for Governor, State Senate, State House offices, and possible federal offices, should generate triple the turnout.

Non-daily tasks completed by the office were

- Developed ED Sample Ballot notice, to be published April 30<sup>th</sup>. TCA §2-5-211
- Programmed, tested, loaded over 140 voting machines which were used during the election
- Conducted the election close to budgeted dollars, \$92,972 actual versus \$99,785. Deputies Maxwell Hawkins and Meredith Zebracki did an outstanding job tracking this expense and ensuring we were fully staffed.
- For the May 5<sup>th</sup> election we have sent out 345 approved Absentee ballots, with 279 votes cast or 81% returned. That is a very good result, and we appreciate the work Deputy Steve Yantachka superb work overseeing this duty.

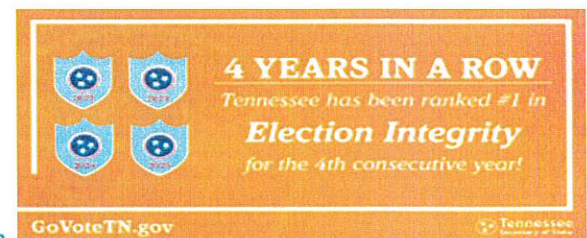
Feel free to call me with any questions

Best regards

Chuck Vest

Washington County Tn Administrator of Elections

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## **Washington County Election Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** April 7, 2026

**Time:** 9:30 AM

**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: Sheila Hayes, Veronica Nuckols
- Machine Techs: Aaron Bible, Jeff Clyburn
- Others in attendance:
  - Dave Vollrath
  - Ed Wolff
  - James Reeves
  - Daniel Goodrich
  - Cheryl Richards
  - Mark Dolan
  - Mike Edmonds
  - Other community members

### **Call to Order:**

- Commissioner Chair Rosenoff called the meeting to order.
- Opening prayer and pledge

### **Public Comments:**

- **Dave Vollrath**
  - Expressed concern regarding the lack of progress on Convenience Voting Centers (CVC)
  - Requested consideration of more funding and planning for possible implementing CVCs in 2028
  - Spoke with the AOE previously on learning more about CVCs but also finding another early voting location site to replace Washington College Academy - wants to encourage voter turnout.
- **Mark Dolan**
  - Asked questions regarding voting machine verification procedures and how machine accuracy is verified across precincts.

### **AOE Response:**

AOE, Chuck Vest, explained that machines can be selected randomly by the commissioners to test. Commissioners can choose as many or as few as desired.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

- **Motion to approve:** Commissioner Elder
- **Seconded by:** Commissioner Hubbard
- **Approve unanimously.**

### **Administrator's Report:**

- Chuck reviewed voter registration statistics, office activity, and election preparations.
- Nursing Home voting begins April 8 – Sheila and Meredith have been doing an excellent job preparing and coordinating the process.
- Recruitment efforts for precinct workers are ongoing.
- Absentee by-mail ballots are already being mailed back to the office. Deadline to file a request is April 25.
- Sample ballot publication was April 6 in the Johnson City Press
- Spoke on information regarding school board filings, recall elections, and write-in candidate deadline for the August Election is June 17 at 12:00 PM.
- Discussed the June Election Law Seminar

### **New Business:**

#### **August Candidate List Review:**

- AOE Vest noted that there appeared to be an increase in independent candidates this election cycle.
- Commissioner Elder asked whether any candidates had been rejected by their parties
- AOE Vest stated that all qualifying candidates either remained with their party or chose to run as Independents
  
- **Motion to approve** (August candidate list): Commissioner Elder
- **Seconded by:** Commissioner Hubbard
- **Approve unanimously.**

#### **Financial Report:**

- AOE Vest provided a budget update:
  - Budget remains in good standing – office is 75% through the fiscal year.
  - Discussed election personnel expenses, line-item adjustments, and future equipment needs (laptops and printers).

#### **Write-In Candidate Name Review:**

- Commissioners reviewed the proposed certified write-in candidate names – proposed spellings and variations of write-in candidate names.
- Discussed the importance of voter's intent.
- Write-In candidates have until April 30 to withdraw.

- **Motion to approve:** Commissioner Davis
- **Seconded by:** Commissioner Williams
- **Approved unanimously.**

**Voter Registration Review:**

- Commissioners reviewed 46 registration cards.
- No cards required correction or rejection.

**Machine Certification & Inspection:**

- AOE Vest explained that commissioners review machines and candidate selections on randomly selected machines (some early voting machines and some election day machines)
- James Reeves and Daniel Goodrich asked additional questions regarding which machines were being reviewed and whether all machines had been checked prior to certification.
- Machine Techs, Aaron Bible and Jeff Clyburn, explained the testing process included verifying every button, candidate selection, party ballot style, and zero tally tapes were completed on all machines.
- AOE Vest noted that bipartisan teams consisting of Republican and Democratic representatives had reviewed and tested every machine.

**Commissioners Inspected Machines**

- Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Williams paired together for the review process.
- Commissioner Hubbard and Commissioner Elder paired together for the review process.
- Commissioner Rosenoff assisted with overseeing the review process.

**Election Day Precinct Assignments:**

- Commissioners reviewed their assigned precincts to visit on Election Day.
- Assignments are intended to ensure precincts operate smoothly and to assist poll workers with any questions or concerns throughout the day.

**Adjournment:**

- **Motion to adjourn:** Commissioner Elder
- **Seconded by:** Commissioner Hubbard
- **Approved unanimously.**