

MCDOWELL COUNTY

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Board Members:
Barbara Hilty, Chair
Tracey Bolick, Member
Jimmie Hachadurian, Member
Kay House, Member
Della Watson, Member



McDowell County Board of Elections

Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2026
9:02 a.m. – 9:51 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chair Barbara Hilty, Member Tracey Bolick, Member Jr. Hachadurian, Member Della Watson

Board Members Absent: Secretary Kay House

Staff Present: Elections Director Jane Propst, Deputy Director Baylie Davis

Guests in Attendance: Anna Caldwell, Susan Elliott, and Elizabeth Gibbs

Meeting Opening

Chair Barbara Hilty called the meeting to order at **9:02 a.m.**

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was presented to the Board. Director Jane Propst proposed adding approval of a Student Election Official and the discarding of the 2024 Primary Election ballots to the agenda.

Motion: Hilty

Second: Watson

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous, 4–0

Action: Agenda approved as amended

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the **January 2, 2026** meeting were presented.

Motion: Hilty

Second: Watson

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous, 4–0

Action: Minutes approved as presented.

Old Business

1. Election Officials List

The list of Election Officials was presented. Director Propst stated that additional election officials would be trained for use on an as-needed basis. Tracey Bolick asked whether the list would also be used for the November 2026 Midterm Election. Director Propst explained that Chief Judges and Judges are appointed for two-year terms, while Assistants are approved per election, requiring a new list for each election.

Motion: Watson

Second: Hachadurian

Vote: Unanimous, 4–0

Action: Election Officials list approved as presented on January 22, 2026.

New Business

1. Appointment of Early Voting Officials (Old Fort Early Voting Site)

Director Jane Propst presented the list of Early Voting Officials.

Motion: Bolick

Second: Hilty

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous, 4–0

Action: Old Fort Early Voting Election Officials approved.

2. 2026 Primary Election Absentee Ballot Requests

Director Jane Propst presented the Absentee Ballot Request log indicating **22 requests** were received. **Nineteen** requests were approved and ballots issued. **Three** requests were denied, and voters were contacted with an explanation.

Discussion included questions regarding a denied Libertarian ballot request, signature requirements, consideration of former and current names, and electronic signatures for online applications. Director Propst provided clarification.

Motion: Hilty

Second: Watson

Vote: Unanimous, 4–0

Action: Absentee ballot requests accepted as presented.

3. Public Comment Policy

Director Jane Propst presented the Public Comment Policy. No changes were made; the document was updated to reflect the current Board and Director and was executed accordingly.

4. Student Election Officials

Director Jane Propst presented an additional Student Election Official.

Motion: Hilty

Second: Bolick

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous, 4-0

Action: Student Election Official approved.

General Discussion

1. Voting Equipment Logic and Accuracy Testing

Director Jane Propst reported that Logic and Accuracy testing was completed on **January 21, 2026**, with assistance from Michelle Wyatt, Print Elect. The Mock Election is scheduled for **January 29, 2026**.

2. Winter Virtual Conference

The Board was presented with information regarding the Winter Virtual Conference scheduled for **Monday, January 26, and Tuesday, January 27, 2026**. Access information will be provided via email. Guidance regarding inclement weather will be provided by the State. Director Propst recommended attendance at role-specific sessions.

3. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., if needed**. Director Propst advised that if no absentee ballots are received by Monday, January 26, 2026, the meeting will be canceled. If ballots are received and inclement weather occurs, efforts will be made to form a quorum; otherwise, the meeting will be postponed to the next scheduled absentee meeting.

4. 2024 Primary Election Ballots

Director Jane Propst reported that, pursuant to election record retention requirements under **G.S. § 163-22(s) (S.L. 2023-140, sec. 2)**, the **2024 Primary Election ballots were discarded on January 20, 2026**.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Motion: Watson

Second: Bolick

Meeting adjourned at **9:51 a.m.**

Respectively Submitted,

Baylie Davis

Baylie Davis, Deputy Director

January 23, 2026