

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

May 19, 2026

9:00 a.m. – 10:12 a.m.

Board Members Present: Member Tracey Bolick, Chair Barbara Hilty, Member Tracey Bolick, Secretary Kay House, Member J.R. Hachadurian, Member Della Watson (virtually) *B.H.* *K.H.*

Board Members Absent: None

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

Guests in Attendance: Susan Elliott, Anna Caldwell, Elizabeth Gibbs, Suzanne Fisher, Janet McGinnis, Trish Williams

Meeting Opening

Chair Barbara Hilty called the meeting to order at **9:00 a.m.**

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the **March 30, 2026**, meeting were presented.

Motion: House

Second: Hilty

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous, 3–0

Action: Minutes approved as presented.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was presented to the Board.

Motion: Hilty

Second: House

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous, 5–0

Action: Agenda approved as presented.

Directors Report

Director Propst reported that staff is working on a report concerning list maintenance and possible upcoming precinct changes.

Old Business

None

New Business

1. Early Voting Plan for the November 3, 2026 Election

Early Voting to be conducted at the Board of Elections office in Marion and at the Old Fort Depot in Old Fort. Proposed schedule included early voting on all three Saturdays, with weekday hours from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday hours from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Motion: House

Second: Hachadurian

Vote: 1 aye-4 nays

Discussion: Hilty stated that all three Saturdays were unnecessary and that offering only the final Saturday would be sufficient. She cited concerns regarding strain on poll workers, budgetary costs, and staff workload. Hachadurian, Bolick, and Watson agreed with Hilty's concerns. House stated that it is the Board's responsibility to serve voters, noting the Senate race is highly contested and that many individuals work outside the county, making expanded early voting opportunities important. Bolick stated that voters already had sufficient opportunities to vote through the early voting period, absentee ballots, and Election Day voting, adding that the Board could not account for every possible circumstance.

Action: The motion failed

Early Voting to be conducted at the Board of Elections office in Marion and at the Old Fort Depot in Old Fort. Proposed schedule included early voting on the final two Saturdays, with weekday hours from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday hours from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Motion: Watson

Second: House

Vote: 2 ayes-3 nays

Discussion: House reiterated her previous discussion points

Action: The motion failed.

Early Voting to be conducted at the Board of Elections office in Marion and at the Old Fort Depot in Old Fort. Proposed schedule included early voting on the statutory Saturday, with weekday hours from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday hours from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Motion: Hilty

Second: Hachadurian

Vote: 3 ayes-2 nays

Discussion: Bolick stated that this was not the first highly contested race the county had experienced.

Action: The motion failed and will be submitted to the North Carolina State Board of Elections for determination.

General Discussion

House thanked Propst and Hilty for their work on precinct changes. Propst noted that a campaign area handout is being developed for distribution to candidates. Propst also stated that Davis and Propst attended new directors training for a week, which was very beneficial. Hilty explained that instead of issuing numbered memos, the Board is now issuing rules, which are released for public comment and then submitted to the legislative rules committee for approval.

Public Comments

Susan Elliott, Suzanne Fisher, and Janet McGinnis each addressed the Board during the public comment period.

Adjournment

Motion: House

Second: Hilty

Meeting adjourned at **10:12 a.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Baylie Davis

Baylie Davis, Deputy Director

May 19, 2026