Albemarle County Electoral Board Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2026

Location: Albemarle County Office Building, 5th Street
Attendance: Jim Heilman, Valerie Dormady, Bucky Walsh, Jonell McFadden, Ryan Weathers, Andrea Tolk (at closed session), Counselor Andrea Ruege
Members of the Public who spoke: Doug Earle, Laurie Jones, Clara Belle Wheeler, Lettie Bien, Kent Schlussel

The meeting began at 9:00 am.
The agenda was approved with modifications.

Public Comment. Doug asked about our plans for the November 18 meeting with the Board of Supervisors concerning Ranked Choice Voting. The Board reported that we have not yet heard about this meeting. Laurie asked how many mail ballots for the August Primaries were not cured. Jonell said that she could provide that information later; she also noted that in order to cure some of these, staff were calling or emailing the voters though this is not required. Lettie asked about signage (during the construction at the entrance to the County Office Building) to make sure that voters know that early voting is here. Jonell said that she has discussed this with County Facilities Management, and we may be able to get an electronic sign showing voters where to turn for Early Voting. Discussion ensued.

The minutes for August 13 were approved.

Old Business.

- Election Office Finance Report. Jonell said that there were no major changes in expenses. There may be more expense for some planned new signage for polling places.
- Election Official Pay. Jim moved that we request a $20 increase in pay for Officers of Election – increasing the pay for Chief Officers to $245, Assistant Chiefs to $210, all other Officers of Election to $185. The motion passed unanimously.
- Polling Place Signage. Jonell said that staff is taking a look at signage issues at all our polling places (including early voting). She is working with Bailey Printing on getting new signs and new colors and will test these at our early voting site. Ryan has, with Chief Officers, visited 8 polling places so far to determine needs. Laurie noted that there is voter confusion at some sites curbside voting. Lettie said that it would be good to have someone stationed outside the door to early voting for the Sunday and Monday before Election Day to direct voters who come to early vote (which is not going on those two days) to their polling place for Election Day. Clara Belle asked about having something to hold down signs which tend to blow down.
- 40 foot and 100 foot lines. Jim suggested using small orange cones with a sign in them to demarcate the 40' line. Laurie asked about marking the 100' line (beyond which guns are not allowed to be carried). The Board consensus was that, since there is no way to "police" the 100' line, it's not feasible to have a marker out at 100 feet.

New Business.

- Issues about federal cases concerning mail-in ballots. Jonell said that ELECT is working with the Attorney General's office to monitor the situation on these issues.
- Official information/explanation of Constitutional Amendments. We still have no state-produced informational brochures/posters concerning these. We discussed having an insert in mail ballots to direct voters to these explanations. We will be sending out about 6,800 ballots by this Friday.
- Polling Place Contacts. Ryan said he has contacted all our polling places to ensure that they know we will be voting on November 3.
- Staffing Early-in-Person (EIP) voting. Jonell said we will have 12 election officers working all shifts.
- Central Absentee Precinct (CAP) Staffing. Jonell said she plans to have 8 teams to work CAP. She is working on reaching political parity on these teams.
- Wi-fi Issues. Ryan said that the County IT Department is working on solutions to wi-fi disruptions we are having in Room A and in the warehouse.
- Passwords. To avoid the confusion we have been having, Jonell said she plans to have one password for everything at the polling places.
- Hand-Counting Ballots. Jonell distributed guidelines for implementing the new hand-counting law. Bucky said that we will need to train the CAP officers in using these.
- Training Calendar. Jonell went over the calendar for training.
- Newsletter. Jonell said she is going to start a newsletter for election officers and the Board.
- Risk-limiting Audit. Bucky gave a short presentation on how this will be done if we have to do it.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Bucky has created a series of these SOPs for each activity (primarily dealing with starting up and closing down optical scan machines and poll pads).
- EIP Manual for EIP Officers. It was reported that this is largely complete.

Executive Session. Bucky moved the following: I move that the Albemarle County Electoral Board convene a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia: Under subsection (1): to discuss and consider applications of prospective candidates as officers of election and assignment of Chief Officers, Assistant Chief Officers, and election officers to their precincts. The motion passed unanimously. The Board went into the closed meeting at 10:59 am.

The Board came out of the closed meeting at 11:37 am. (The Board, Andrea, and and Counselor Ruege participated in all the meeting. Bucky moved the following: RESOLVED, that the Electoral Board certify by recorded vote that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Jim moved appointment of 25 new Officers of Election for terms of one year beginning March 1, 2026. The motion passed unanimously. Their names are appended to these minutes. Bucky moved approval of the current list of Chief and Assistant Chief Officers as currently modified. The motion passed unanimously. Bucky also moved the approval of the current list of election officers and their precincts for the November 3 election. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 am.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Heilman
Secretary, Albemarle County Electoral Board

New Officers of Election Appointed:

Ball, Alyson

Billcheck, Helen

Burruss, Kelly C.

Combs, Krisanne

Cotton, Benjamin

Davis, Jeffrey S.

Freitas, Lorri

Graves, Carolyn S.

Heathcock, Karen

Howard, Kirsten

Huggins, John Eric

Keppel, David

Lescault, Sarah E.

Malinowski, Marcia

McCarthy, Michelle

McIntire, Pamela

Posch, Karen

Rourke, Valerie

Shields Jr., John R.

Signori, Dorothy

Sloan, Stephanie M.

Stephens, Bryan

Vizcaino, Carlos

Whitlow, James

Yehia, Ayatollah Sherif