

MINUTES
Wicomico County Board of Elections
345 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury, MD 21804
Wednesday, January 14, 2026

ATTENDEES:

Katrina Purnell, Board President, Democratic Member
Carsten Wendlandt, Vice President/Secretary, Republican Member
Sharon Morris, Democratic Member (present online)
Aundra Roberts, Democratic Member
Nicole Green, Republican Member
Peter Golba, Board Attorney
Dionne Church, Election Director
Nicole Caudell, Deputy Election Director
Rebecca Chalmers, Election Program Assistant

ABSENT:

None

GUESTS:

Adrienne Marshall and Matthew Connelly
Representatives of the USPS (online)

The Wicomico County Board of Elections met on Wednesday, January 14, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Public notice was given, and the Board of Elections office posted the agenda prior to the meeting.

At 2:02 p.m., Katrina Purnell, Board President, called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present. The Board led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Lord's Prayer.

Board President Purnell asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2025, Board of Elections meeting. Board Member Wendlandt so moved, seconded by Board Member Roberts, and the motion carried unanimously.

Under Additions/Changes to Agenda, Election Director Church introduced the two guests, Adrienne Marshall and Matthew Connelly, from the USPS and noted that, as we prepare for the upcoming midterm elections, USPS was invited to share information about their protocol and procedures as it pertains to election mail.

ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Election Director Church referred to the previously distributed budget and noted that all information contained in the document was up to date as of January 2026.

She noted that the office had processed six (6) additional candidate filings since the previous Board meeting, with now a total of twenty (20) filings thus far. At the request of Board Member

Wendlant, Election Director Church reviewed each candidate and the positions they were seeking, all such information is available on the elections.maryland.gov website. She announced that the Election Judges Manual was involved in an open bid process; that the office would soon be visiting Pinehurst Elementary School to determine the viability of its auditorium as a polling site since the formerly-used cafeteria will be under renovation during the election; that, as the representative for Maryland, she would be attending the International Association of Election Officials Conference; and that there were no PIA requests since the previous meeting. In response to Board Member Wendlandt's question about when the new Voter Notification Cards, reflecting changed districts, would be mailed out, Election Director Church indicated that the mailing process would begin by this month/January 2026.

BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Peter Golba reported that the signed consent order is still pending, that Robin Cockey was putting in a call to the judge to determine when we might expect it.

OLD BUSINESS:

Election Director Church reviewed information regarding open meetings account information, closing summaries, votes, and closed meeting sessions, as well as what needs to be written and posted online regarding each Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

As the primary focus of new business, USPS representatives Adrienne Marshall and Matthew Connelly discussed the recent spate of what they characterized as misinformation about the way that mail-in/absentee votes would be handled through the Postal Service. In an attempt to demonstrate election preparedness and a readiness to help in moving election mail, they have made themselves available to discuss USPS practices and procedures. They pointed out that, while network modernization, especially in terms of transportation to regional processing and distribution centers, was part of an ongoing plan, specifically to address the serious decline in mail volume, no actual practices have changed. A proposed rule change about transportation was posted for public review on August 12, 2025, with a close date for comments on September 11, 2025. The results of the proposal were finalized and published on November 25, 2025.

They wanted to make clear that, with regard to postmarks and postal possession, the USPS has not changed anything, and they pointed out that postmarking is now and has always been an operation, not a service, and that voters who request that their mail-in ballots be postmarked simply need to head in to a retail center/post office and ask the clerk to cancel the mail. What has changed is the number of trips (from 2 or 3 in one day to only 1 trip per day) that transfer mail from regional distribution centers to an actual processing facility. If a mail-in ballot is dropped off or left in a place for a local carrier to retrieve, the actual time it takes for such a ballot to be postmarked will likely be delayed at least by a day and perhaps by more than a day. This reduced

transportation reality forms the basis for ongoing discussions about postmarking/postage cancelling and mail-in ballots.

As a recommendation, USPS representatives suggest that voters mail ballots at least seven (7) days prior to a deadline, to ensure that their ballots receive full consideration, OR, as an alternative, they can take it directly to a retail center/post office to get the ballot postmarked/hand-cancelled, an operation that has always been available to people who use the Postal Service. In addition, the USPS has installed ballot-tracking software and, as a part of the Express Mail network, will employ “extraordinary measures” to be certain that ballots arrive at local elections offices on time. A Power Point presentation was included with their information and made available to Board Members.

Election Director Church indicated that the State Board of Elections will send out information to voters, encouraging them to use our specific ballot drop boxes.

At this point in the meeting, at 2:54 p.m., Board President Purnell, called for a motion to move to a closed session. Board Member Roberts so moved, Board Member Wendlandt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Board President Purnell read the specific Subsection of the Open Meetings Act, GP §3-305(b)(1).

Date: January 14, 2026

Time of Closed Session: 2:54 p.m.

Location: Local Board of Elections, Salisbury, MD

Purpose for Closing the Meeting:

The Wicomico County Board of Elections has voted to close this meeting to the public. The legal authority for this decision is found in **General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)**.

The Specific Subsection of the Open Meetings Act Relied Upon Is:

- **GP §3-305(b)(1):** To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Topics to Be Discussed:

1. The performance evaluation of an employee, which as per the general provisions article, is not discussed in a public meeting.

Motion to Close Meeting Made by: Aundra Roberts

Seconded by: Carsten Wendlandt

Board Members who Voted to Meet in Closed Session:	Aye	Nay
Katrina Purnell, President	X	
Carsten Wendlandt, Vice President	X	
Sharon Morris, Board Member	X	
Woody Willing, Board Member	X	
Aundra Roberts, Board Member	X	

Persons Attending the Closed Session: All the voting board members above and attorney, Pete Golba.

Authority Under §3-305 for the Closed Session: GP §3-305(b)(1)

Topics Actually Discussed: Employee performance evaluation.

Actions Taken in Closed Session: Discussion only (no vote).

Each Recorded Vote: No vote taken.

Ending Time of Closed Session: 3:21 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was called back to order at 3:21 p.m., whereupon President Purnell called for a move to adjourn, offered by Board Member Roberts, and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Purnell

Katrina Purnell, Board President

2-17-2026

Date

Rebecca Chalmers

Rebecca Chalmers, Election Program Assistant

2-18-2026

Date