



**AIKEN COUNTY BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMISSION**

**1930 University Pkwy**

**February 2, 2026 5:30 pm**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Board Members: Gerry Owen Chairman, Tara Reeder Vice Chairman, Lori Boddy Secretary, Terri Dickert, David Nix, Linda Austell, Tricia Butler

Staff: Dana Burden (on phone), Rob Sims, Nathan Garner, Anthony Hicks

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting of the Aiken County Board of Elections and Voter Registration was called to order by Mr Owen. The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM. The invocation was given by Mr Nix and all joined in for the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr Owen announced that due to the weather and road conditions, Director Burden was not able to travel to Aiken today but was participating via the phone.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Chairman called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented

Made by: D. Nix

Seconded b: T. Butler

Vote: Unanimous – all in favor

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms Boddy stated that no comments were received or changes made.

Motion: to approve the January 5, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

Made by: T. Dickert

Seconded by: T. Reeder

Vote: Unanimous – all in favor

**OLD BUSINESS**

**POLL WORKER PROCESS**

Mr Garner reviewed poll worker process information from a handout provided prior to the meeting. The June 9<sup>th</sup> Primary will require 463 total workers and if a Runoff is required, about 50% of that number will be required.

He provided an update on the poll worker manager tool, Integra indicating the cleanup was complete with about 577 active works reduced from 2000. These people have either worked elections since 2022 or expressed an interest to work in the future. There are an additional 500+ names to be followed up as possible recruits, which include student assistant poll managers ages 16-17.

The student poll worker process has an updated form which were sent out to the Aiken County High Schol Guidance Counselors. The deadline for student applications is May 1, 2026. Mr Owen asked about school programs which may give students credit for participating and Mr Garner clarified the students would be paid like the other poll managers.

Mr Garner provided the tentative poll worker training dates as May 12-13, 15-16 and 18-19. This would include dates for student assistant poll managers and that the session could accommodate about 600 participants. He stated he is still working on the balance between lecture and hands-on equipment training.

Director Burden and board members expressed their positive support of Mr Garners proactive efforts on the poll worker processes.

#### 2026 EARLY VOTING CENTERS

Mr Hicks summarized the proposal for 3 Early Voting Centers for the June Primary and 6-7 Early Voting Centers for the General Election in November. He reviewed the list of locations which was from a handout provided at the start of the meeting. Members stated their support of Couchton Baptist as better solution in District 1, than Windsor and felt confident this would get resolved soon. All EVCs will be finalized at the next board meeting. Mr Owen raised questions about how the new EVC location information would get into the hands of the voters. One idea shared with announcing on the radio using Public Service Announcement. Ms Boddy asked that the EVC location communication plan be added to the next meeting agenda to review and discuss ideas to ensure that actions materialize.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### NEW POLLING LOCATION FOR PRECINCTS 62 & 74

Mr Sims stated that the precincts which voted at Warren Baptist in N. Augusta would need to be moved. Mr Sims reviewed a few options and stated Mr Hixon had recommended Belvedere Fire Department, which had access to the nearby church overflow parking. Four options being examined which were stated include: N. Augusta DOPS#3, Belvedere Fire Department, Highland Springs Middle School and Paul Know Middle School. This change impacts approximately 1800 voters and a resolution is needed in the next few weeks. An update with resolution is expected for the next meeting.

#### NORTH AUGUSTA MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Mr Owen read some prepared comments regarding N. Augusta's recent request to move their municipal elections to even number years. Starting back in October 2024, after a new ordinance was passed, the municipality reached out to Director Burden to inform her. At that time, she shared several concerns with the new proposal. In January, a conference call was held with N. Augusta Municipality, Senator Young, Representative Hixon and the Aiken County Director to discuss the situation and Ms Burden was asked to provide the municipality with viable options. In late January, another call was held with Mayor Briton, Director Burden and Chairman Owen to further discuss the approved ordinance. Despite the stated concerns by Director Burden, the municipality decided to proceed as originally intended to move municipal elections to even years. No confirmation of the transfer of authority from the N. Augusta MEC

(5-15-145) to the county board was made. To be complete, the ordinance would next need to be accepted by the Aiken County Council and was to be drafted by the county attorney. The Aiken County Board of Voter Registrations and Elections will be asked to sign the county agreement.

Mr Owen further mentioned efforts being made by Representative Brandon Newton to modernize SC election laws and standardizing municipal election dates and requested anyone interested in this matter contact Rep. Newton (h4669).

Mr Owen shared the main drivers for this ordinance was to increase the municipal voter turnout. The board members raised questions and shared concerns about this matter including the extra work of having all the extra municipal ballot styles, size of the ballot and voter confusion. Ms Dickert stated she had been invited to the N. Augusta city council meeting where the ordinance was being read and discussed the matter with officials in N. Augusta. She concluded that N. Augusta had not considered the Aiken County election office in their decision. Mr Reeder shared her concerns that if all municipalities decided to move their elections to even election years, this would cause a lot of extra strain on the election staff and confusion. Ms Boddy shared her thoughts that moving N. Augusta elections to the same odd year day as the rest of the county may better help the counties to work together to increase voter awareness and turnout.

Mr Owen stated the original ordinance had some errors and was missing the resolution of the MEC but was being updated when updated.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Burden covered the highlights of the submitted Directors Report (attached). With the resignation of a Wagener Town Councilman there would be a special election on April 14, 2026. Director Burden is working with the SEC to get clarification about their position on who can be Audit Examiners. In the past, there have been contradictory statements made with regard to board members being involved. Additionally, she mentioned the SEC has begun to share plans for Risk Limiting Audit and there would be additional details in the future.

#### BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

The board members share positive comments about the recent SCARE conference, including the training opportunities, networking and groups spirit of teamwork. Specific comments were made about the information shared about the SEC indicating their shift in focus on policies and training under new leadership.

Mr Owen asked everyone to remember Representative Clyburn and his family due to the recent passing of his wife, Beverly.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

M Shelps recalled the SEC stated position on RLA's is they would not replace the hand county audit and that she would volunteer to participate in hand count audits. She also requested the public continue to be involved in the Absentee Ballot opening and requested the newspaper public notices be posted on the election bulletin board.

Director Burden did mention the staff was looking at incorporating “open book” training where Poll Managers who be asked to use their handbook to find answers and resolutions, better preparing them to use the handbooks during the elections.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: T. Reeder

Seconded by: T. Butler

Vote: Unanimous – all in favor    The meeting adjourned at 6:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Lori Boddy, Board Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

**AIKEN COUNTY BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**LOCATION: AIKEN COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUILDING, SANDLAPPER ROOM**  
**February 2, 2026 5:30 PM**  
**AGENDA**

1. *Call to Order*

2. *Invocation*

3. *Pledge of Allegiance*

4. *Approval of Agenda*

5. *Approval of Meeting Minutes*

☐ *January 5, 2026*

6. *Old Business*

☐ *Poll Worker Process*

☐ *2026 Early Voting Centers*

7. *New Business*

☐ *New polling location for Precinct 62/74*

☐ *North Augusta Municipal General Election*

8. *Director's Report*

9. *Board Comments*

10. *Public Comments*

11. *Adjournment*

*The Board shall give a reasonable opportunity to any person or representative desiring to make a presentation or to be heard. An individual shall*

*be allowed up to three (3) minutes to speak. There is no limitation on the number of people who may speak, provided they sign up in advance. Sign up sheets for public comments will be provided. All citizens participation in the citizen comment period shall be subject to recognition by the presiding officer directly. The comment period should not be a debate or question and answer period between Board Members and the public. Written comments may be submitted to the Board or requested by the Board at any time*

Happy Winter!! I hope everyone is doing well and staying warm! We've had a busy time here in the office. Lots of stuff going on! Here is a recap of our month:

- Anthony and Rob have continued to work on EVCs for the primary in addition to having contact with all polling locations to ensure they have us on their calendar for all elections and possible run offs this year
- George Smith, Town of Wagener Town Councilman, resigned from his position. We will be having a special election on April 14, 2026. Public notice of candidate filing has been published and will open noon, February 17 through noon, February 28.
- Attended the SCARE conference in Myrtle Beach. Highlights and take aways from that will be in next month's Director's Report
- Had zoom meetings with some of delegation and North Augusta to discuss their ordinance on moving their municipal general elections to even years. The resolution to this is still pending, and I will give updates as soon as I have them.
- I have been in discussion with the SEC about board members being able to help conduct hand count audits. I have expressed my concern over this and stressed the importance of clarification to all of the counties soon. We need to make sure we have enough counters for June. They have to be approved by the SEC before we can use them, and this is not a quick process. I don't want to be scrambling in May and June trying to have counters certified.
- My team got together lots of door prizes for the SCARE conference. Nathan has done an amazing job of reaching out to businesses, schools, etc and getting them to donate. Kim, Sharon, and Nathan worked hard and put together 6 beautiful baskets to give away. Great way to put Aiken out there!!

We have the greatest Election Office!! We make such a great team and I couldn't be prouder of the work we do!! Thank you for your support and all that you do!

Dana <3

*Dana Burden*