



FREDERICK COUNTY ELECTORAL BOARD

Mary Strenko
H. Paige Manuel
Fred Grondhuis
343 Sunnyside Plaza Drive, Winchester, VA

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Secretary
22603

DRAFT Minutes Meeting Frederick County Electoral Board January 6, 2026

The Frederick County Electoral Board met on Tuesday January 6th, 2026. Those present were Vice-Chairman H. Paige Manuel, Secretary Mary Strenko, new Electoral Board member Fred Grondhuis, and Registrar Rich Venskoske

Visitors Present: Pam Kennedy, Linda Whitacre, Dody, Stottlemeyer, Kay Dawson, Lander Manuel, and Sara Eberly

1. Vice-Chairman H. Paige Manuel called the meeting to order at 9.00 a.m.
2. Vice-Chairman H. Paige Manuel made a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed.
3. Vice-Chairman H. Paige Manuel made a motion to accept the minutes from December 9th, 2025. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved without dissent.
4. Old Business:
 - a. Budget – General Registrar Venskoske summarized the budget that was discussed at the last meeting and presented to the county finance dept. A change was requested to move equipment out of the operating budget into the capital budget. The purchase of new equipment is dependent on the State requirements and may be postponed.
 - b. Training Staff/Chiefs, A/C's and OOE's – General Registrar Venskoske presented a plan to do additional training for Chiefs and A/Cs on a Saturday prior to the next election. He mentioned examples of Chiefs helping others and especially new Chiefs, A/Cs with equipment, procedures, etc. There is a concern about retention of personnel. For the last election 87 people withdrew from the roster.

- c. Contingency of Operations Plan update for 2026 – General Registrar Venskoste recounted security measures from 2024 that are no longer funded. We need to start planning again for the midterm election.

5. New Business:

- a. Electoral Board reorganized per para. 24.2 – 106:
Vice-Chairman Manuel welcomed Fred Grondhuis to the Electoral Board. He next nominated Mary Strenko as Chairman, which was seconded and passed. Per the rules, the Chairman and Secretary should represent different parties, unless agreed by the Board members and noted in the minutes. Mary Strenko next nominated Page Manuel for Vice-Chairman, that motion carried and passed. Mary Strenko then nominated Fred Grondhuis as Secretary, seconded and passed. Fred Grondhuis then made a motion for the Chairman and Secretary to be allowed from the same party as an exception to the rules of the EB Handbook. The motion was seconded and passed. At this point Vice-Chairman H. Paige Manuel turned the meeting over to the new Chairman, Mary Strenko.
- b. OOE's for 2026 - Approval / Timeline – will be discussed at the next meeting on February 3rd.
- c. 2026 Elections / Redistricting – redistricting will be one of the high priority topics discussed when the Virginia congress convenes on January 14th.

6. Registrar Business

The General Registrar provided updates:

- a. Emails were sent to both party chairs for new candidates for OOE. The EB will have to approve all candidates for 2026 elections during the February 3rd meeting.
- b. The GR outlined that if there is a voter referendum on redistricting and that if an election is held it could cost up to \$70,000 which is not a budgeted expense. Factors like early and absentee voting will add costs. Timing for preparation of voting equipment is tight and may require the purchase of additional hardware (memory sticks).

c. Goals for 2026:

1. Public Education - Updating the website with announcement for candidates. Public education includes visits to schools, open house on Saturdays about voting, absentee voting, etc. Attendance for open house in 2025 was mediocre. Social media is key, but the Election Office does not have the staff, expertise, or the budget.
2. Streamlining Processes – drive for efficiency
3. Poll Workers Guide – Updates for 2026 – timed to coincide with new laws going into effect in July.
4. OOE Notices / Surveys / Retention – Secretary Grondhuis suggested that Deputy Registrar Lassiter send out text messages to gauge how many OOE's are willing to work a potential April election. This would be helpful information for the next EB meeting on February 3rd.
5. Fewer Dropouts – would be key to maintaining manpower.
6. Finance Committee Meeting – The General Registrar is requesting a \$300,000 funding approval from the Finance Committee for remodeling the facility next door, which functions as the early voting location and training center.

7. Miscellaneous

- a. New EB Training – Two dates in February and March are available for bootcamp training. All new Electoral Board members are required to attend at least one in their first year on the Electoral Board.

8. Citizen Comments:

- a. Pam – Interns might be available for various tasks to support the Election Office.
- b. Linda – Prefers hand-on training for Chiefs and A/C, especially for newly promoted personnel.

- c. Dody – Prefers half day assignments for OOE's, not for the Chiefs and A/C.
- d. Kay – Supports the half day concept for OOE.
- e. Lander – Party supporters outside during early voting need security. Simplify information / use bullet points, not a fan of booklets or structured lists. Big fan of billboards, because they have condensed information. Supports the concept of interns.

9. Next meeting – Feb 3rd at 9am.

10. Motion to Adjourn by the Vice-Chairman, seconded and passed.

Respectfully,

Fred Grondhuis
Secretary

_____ Chairman

_____ Vice-Chairman

_____ Secretary

_____ Date