

Madison County Board of Elections

Meeting Minutes – Monthly Meeting

October 15, 2025

The Madison County Board of Elections held a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at Suite E, Room 16, 5707 US 25-70 Hwy, Marshall, 28753. In attendance: Dyatt Smathers, Chair; Brian Ball, Secretary; Ray Lewis, Member; Debbie Ponder, Member; Robert Briggs, Member; Jacob Ray, Director; Democratic Party Vice Chair Graeme Frelick; Republican Party Vice Chair Cynthia Davidson; and five members of the public.

Call to Order:

- Chair Smathers called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda:

- **Motion (BB, RB) to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**
- **Motion (DP, RL) to approve the September 17, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

Members' Reports:

- Secretary Ball commented on his review of recent State Board of Elections hearings, minutes, and memos.
- Members Ponder, Briggs, and Lewis thanked the office staff for their hard work and responsiveness.
- Member Briggs referenced the Towns' reviews of their election budgets.
- Chair Smathers delayed his promised book report until the next meeting. He provided information on even numbered year municipal elections.

Director's Report:

- The Director provided the elections calendar and budget updates.
- The Director informed the Board that the first use of the ExpressVote printers will be during the Primary Election in March.

New Business:

Discussion ensued regarding the 2026 Early Voting Plan. The Director presented the Early Voting Plan template and guidance documents. The Chair explained that the plan must be unanimously approved by the County Board. If not, majority and minority plans must be presented to the State Board. Board members provided information from past early stop plans and stated their desires for early voting sites in March.

Chair Smathers provided statistical data on past county elections voter turnout and shared information he had gathered from other counties' early voting plans.

Following more discussion, The Chair called for a motion.

- **Motion (DS, RL) to approve one early voting site in Madison County for the Primary Election 2026. The motion carried (3-2).**

The Chair asked the Board members if they wanted to be open all Saturdays during early voting if one site is approved. Board members requested a majority plan be developed that specifies daily hours of operation.

- **Motion (DS, RB) to open all the early voting dates except Sundays. The motion carried (3,2).**

The Director requested a majority and a minority plan for submission to the State Board.

Party Chair and Public Comments:


Democratic Party Vice Chair Graeme Frelick spoke and referenced the order of the meeting agenda, the Board's effort to reach a unanimous decision, future implications for early voting plans, travel conditions in the county, the information gathered from other counties, and voter suppression perceptions.

Republican Party Vice Chair Cynthia Davidson spoke about the number of ways a voter can vote and the early voting plan.

Five members of the public spoke about the early voting plan and meeting. Topics mentioned were voter turnout, options for casting a vote, the meeting agenda and posting, travel conditions in the county, the early voting site at AB Tech Madison Campus, the turnover in election officials, and voter suppression perceptions.

Adjournment:

Motion (DP, BB) to adjourn at 4:13 p.m. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Chair 

Secretary 