

Anderson County Election Commission Minutes

**Wednesday, August 19, 2026
4:00 p.m. ET, Room 118A, Courthouse**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Jane Miller. In addition, to Miller, Commissioners Bill Gallaher, Marion Stanford and Bear Stephenson were present with Commissioner David Bradshaw attending by phone. Administrator Mark Stephens, Chief Deputy Kim Eby, Deputy Shawn Rogers, Deputy Rivers Rogers, and Machine Technician Parker Shannon were also present along with members of the public.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gallaher to approve the agenda. Stephenson seconded the motion with all voting in favor.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2026, meeting. Commissioner Gallaher seconded the motion with all voting in favor.

Commissioner Gallaher made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2026, meeting. Commissioner Stanford seconded the motion with all voting in favor.

Administrator Stephens provided a summary of the August election. He stated that poll workers, office staff, and machine technicians had done an outstanding job.

The August election had 13,051 voters (24.43% overall turnout) with Norris and Rosedale precincts having the highest percentage turnouts (35.85% and 35.71% respectively). Administrator Stephens said that he expected a higher turnout of voters for the November elections. He said that the November ballot would be lengthy and that absentee voters would have two-page ballots.

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Administrator Stephens said that the office of Constable District 2, which has two available seats, would be placed back on the ballot in November since there were no qualified candidates for the August election. The special qualifying period will be from September 1, 2026, to September 8, 2026, at 12 Noon.

There will also be three Constitutional Amendments on the November 3, 2026, ballot. Administrator Stephens said that the language for those amendments will be placed in the newspaper (*The Courier News*) and on the Anderson County Election Commission website (acelection.com).

Administrator Stephens distributed information (Attachment A) from CTAS (County Technical Assistance Service) regarding recent changes to the Open Meetings Act public comments at County Election Commission meetings. Stephens has requested further clarification from Anderson County Law Director Jamie Brooks and will provide more information at the September meeting.

Public comments were made by Marsha Livingston, Amy Poteet, Chase Lindsey and Robert Walker.

Commissioner Stephenson read the Official Results of the August 6 Election. Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to approve the results. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bradshaw with all voting in favor.

The Commissioners then signed all certification documents and the Certificates of Election for those candidates who were elected to office. (Commissioner Bradshaw signed all certification documents and the Certificates of Election the next day at the Election Commission office.)

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at 4:00 pm.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Stephenson with a second by Gallaher. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

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Attachments:

Attachment A: Recent Changes to the Open Meetings Act

D. Jane Miller, Chair

William “Bear” Stephenson, Secretary

David Bradshaw, Commissioner

William T. Gallaher, Commissioner

Marion Stanford, Commissioner

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Recent Changes to the Open Meetings Act



News Date 06/15/2026

There were several changes to the Open Meetings Act passed during the 2026 legislative session. Those changes impacted the laws on public comment, agendas, community meetings, and interviews for director-level positions.

The law providing for public comment periods, T.C.A. § 8-44-112, was revised by [Public Chapter 620](#) to require local governing bodies, including county legislative bodies, to allow for public comment on not only matters germane to agenda items but also on any matter germane to the jurisdiction of the local governing body. This greatly expands the items the public is entitled to comment upon during the reserved public comment period. Please note this expansion only applies to local governing bodies such as county legislative bodies and school boards. It does not currently apply to other bodies such as planning commissions or election commissions. It also does not apply to state agencies or entities.

This past legislative session also saw changes to the law on publishing meeting agendas, T.C.A. § 8-44-110. [Public Chapter 699](#) extended the agenda publication requirements to governing bodies of local education agencies and to any other local governing bodies (as defined in T.C.A. § 8-44-102) that have authority to make binding decisions or the ability to appropriate funds.

Changes were also made related to electronic participation. [Public Chapter 895](#) amended T.C.A. § 8-44-108 to allow members of local governing bodies and the public to participate in community meetings by electronic means. The law defines "community meeting" as "the convening of members of a community in a political subdivision to discuss and receive information about community public business." No votes may be taken during community meetings.

Finally, [Public Chapter 1048](#) amended T.C.A. § 8-44-102 to authorize governing bodies to conduct executive sessions for the purpose of conducting interviews for "director-level" employees. Those positions are defined in the law as being "filled by the mayor or a vote of the governing body or by the mayor with confirmation by the governing body, excluding the chief of police" and having "authority over the operation and employees of a department, agency, or division of the governmental entity." While the interviews may be conducted in executive session, the law provides that all deliberation and voting must occur in open, publicly noticed meetings. No hiring decisions may be made in the executive session. The law also sets out certain confidentiality provisions related to the application materials.

If you have any questions on these legislative changes, [please reach out to your county government consultant](#).

Contact Us

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