



# County of Dinwiddie Electoral Board

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

BONNIE GHOLSON  
RUTH WHIRLEY  
JAMES TALBOT

---

## **By Laws**

### **Statement of Intent and Purpose**

The intent of the Bylaws of the Dinwiddie County, Virginia Electoral Board is to establish procedures by which the Electoral Board shall follow to ensure legality, consistency, efficiency, and fairness in conducting meetings.

### **Article I: Duties of Board Members**

The Electoral Board will meet annually, in January, to determine by majority vote the officers for the calendar year. The Chair (or Vice Chair) from the previous year will preside pending the election of the new Chair. Detailed duties for each position can be found in the Code of Virginia 24.2 and the GREB Handbook provided by the Department of Elections.

1. The Chair shall:
  - A. Preside at all meetings;
  - B. Approve the agenda for all meetings; and
  - C. Carry out such other duties as assigned by the Code of Virginia.
2. The Vice-Chair shall
  - A. Act in the absence or inability of the Chairman or Secretary to act; and
  - B. Carry out such other duties as assigned by the Code of Virginia.
3. The Secretary shall:
  - A. Preside at all meetings;
  - B. Take accurate minutes of the meetings of the Electoral Board and present for approval in a timely manner; and
  - C. Carry out such other duties as assigned by the Code of Virginia.

### **Article II: Meetings**

1. **The Time and Place** of Board Meetings shall be set and noticed according to the Freedom of Information Act.
2. **Minutes** from the previous meeting shall be delivered to the Board members with the agenda prior to the next meeting. Minutes must be approved by a majority of Electoral Board members prior to posting on the County of Dinwiddie's website.
3. **Order of Business**
  - A. A quorum shall be required for commencement of any meeting.

- B. An agenda shall be approved by the Chair. The proposed agenda shall be adopted by the Board at each meeting. Should the chair or any member of the Board have a matter which he or she feels needs to be brought to the attention of the Board but which is not on the agenda, or if there is an amendment to the order of the agenda, he or she may make a motion that an addition or amendment be made to the agenda. Such amended agenda must be approved by a majority of the Board members present.
- C. For continuity, the order of business of each regular meeting shall be as follows:
  - 1. Call to Order
  - 2. Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance
  - 3. Amendments to the Agenda
  - 4. Approval of Minutes
  - 5. Reports
  - 6. Public Comment
  - 7. New Business
  - 8. Old/Unfinished Business
  - 9. Adjournment, recess or continue.

#### **4. Quorum & Method of Voting:**

Two or more of the members of the Electoral Board shall constitute a quorum of the Board. All questions submitted to the Board for decision shall be determined by a vote of a majority of the board members voting on any such questions, unless otherwise provided by law. The name of each member voting and how he or she voted must be recorded.

#### **5. Procedure for Roll Call of Board Members:**

- A. The Chairman of the Electoral Board shall cast the last vote.
- B. The Chairman shall restate all motions before a vote is taken and the result of the vote shall be announced following each vote.

#### **6. General Rules of Procedure:**

The Board's Parliamentary Procedures shall be Robert's Rules of Order 10<sup>th</sup> Edition as Amended.

- A. Members are not required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking.
- B. Motions need not be seconded. If a motion is not seconded, the Chairman shall decide if a vote is taken on the motion or if a motion is dead.
- C. Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
- D. The Chairman can speak in discussion can vote on all questions, but cannot make motions unless by consent of a majority of Board members present.
- E. No Board member is required to vote on any issue. If any Board member determines, prior to the calling of any issue before the Board, that he/she, because of conflict or otherwise, will abstain from voting on such issue, he shall announce such intention at the time the issue comes before the Board and shall not participate in the discussion on such issue or

question. An abstention shall be counted for the purpose of determining a quorum. An abstention defeats a motion requiring a unanimous vote.

- F. In the incidence of a tie vote, the issue voted upon by the Board is dead and therefore voted down.
- G. Only Board members shall have standing to raise noncompliance with these General Rules of Procedure, and only during the current meeting at the time of violation. Failure of the Board to comply with these General Rules of Procedure shall not invalidate any action taken by the Board.

**7. Board to Sit with Open Doors** - The Electoral Board shall sit with open doors and all persons conducting themselves in an orderly manner may attend the meetings; however, the Board may hold closed sessions as permitted by law and when deemed necessary by a majority vote of the Board.

**8. Citizens Comment Period** - Rules for Citizen Comment Period - To ensure that the affairs of the Board may be conducted in an orderly manner, to ensure that all persons desiring to address the Board on matters pertinent to it are afforded an opportunity to do so, to permit persons in attendance to observe and hear the proceedings of the Board without distraction, and to permit to the fullest extent the Board to conduct business with minimal disruption, the following rules are established:

- A. Each speaker shall be limited to a period of three minutes per comment period.
- B. Speakers may use their allotted time only for themselves and may not donate their time to other speakers.
- C. Speakers will not be permitted to use audiovisual materials or other visual displays, but may present written and photographic materials to the Board members.
- D. Comments must be confined to matters germane to the business of the Electoral Board and shall not be cumulative or repetitive.
- E. Speakers should address the Board with decorum – loud, boisterous, and disruptive behavior, obscenity, and vulgarity should be avoided as well as other words or acts tending to evoke violence or deemed to be a breach of the peace.
- F. The Citizens’ Comment period is not intended to be a question and answer period or time for dialogue with Board Members or General Registrar. Questions which are raised during a comment period may at the discretion of the Board be responded to by the Board or General Registrar after sufficient time for appropriate investigation.
- G. Speakers shall not be interrupted by audience comments, calls/whistles, laughter, or other gestures. Individuals in the audience who do not abide by this policy after a warning will be asked to leave the meeting.

### **Article III: Amendments**

Any proposed amendment to the bylaws must be made in writing to the Chair, who in turn shall refer to the committee for review.

Changes may be made to the bylaws with affirmative recorded roll call vote of a majority of the members of the board. Changes in the bylaws shall be made only if notice is given at the meeting preceding the date at which the change is to be voted on unless such notification shall have been given in writing to each member of the committee at least seven days in advance of the meeting.

### **Article IV: Electronic Participation Policy**

#### **1. Purpose:**

To establish a policy that provides for the Electoral Board to properly conduct meetings with the electronic participation of its members in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Effective Date: January 7, 2026.

#### **2. General Requirements and Policy Establishment:**

Board members may participate by electronic means in a meeting of the Electoral Board under the following conditions:

- A. The means of electronic participation permits simultaneous communication;
- B. The meeting complies with all other requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and
- C. Subsequent to its adoption by the majority of the Board, this policy is posted on the website normally used for notice of public meetings.

Further, it is the policy of the Board that the Board may hold all-virtual public meetings pursuant to subsection C of §2.2-3708.3.

#### **3. Action During the Meeting:**

When a meeting with electronic communication is conducted, the Board must comply with the following guidelines:

- A. A quorum of two members of the Board must be physically present at the meeting place;
- B. The location in which a member is participating remotely should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting as well as the reason for remote participation; and
- C. Any disapproval of a member's participation from a remote location shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity. Votes must be taken by roll call.

#### **4. Member and Attendance Requirement:**

A member of the Board is permitted to attend a meeting of the Board remotely if, on or before the day of a meeting, the member notifies the Chair of the Board that they are unable to attend the meeting due to—

- A. a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents their physical attendance; a family member's medical condition that requires them to provide care for such family member,
- B. thereby preventing their physical attendance;
- C. or the member's principal residence being more than 60 miles from the meeting location identified in the required notice for the meeting.

Annually, each member of the Board may participate remotely in 2 meetings or 25% of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater.

**5. Does Not Affect Executive (Closed) Sessions:**

This policy does not affect the Board's right to exclude the public from an executive (closed) session in which a member participates by electronic communication.

**6. All-Virtual Meeting Requirements**

When the Board is conducting an all-virtual meeting the Board shall adhere to the following requirements:

- A. An indication of whether the meeting will be in-person or all-virtual shall be included in the required meeting notice along with a statement notifying the public that the method by which the Board chooses to meet shall not be changed unless the Board provides a new meeting notice in accordance with the provisions of § 2.2-3707;
- B. Public access to the all-virtual public meeting shall be provided via electronic communication means;
- C. The electronic communication means used shall allow the public to hear all members of the Board participating in the all-virtual public meeting and, when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the Board as well.
- D. When audio-visual technology is available, a member of a public body shall, for purposes of a quorum, be considered absent from any portion of the meeting during which visual communication with the member is voluntarily disconnected or otherwise fails or during which audio communication involuntarily fails.
- E. Citizens must activate their camera, with their face fully visible, before they will be given the opportunity to participate in public comment. To facilitate a respectful, deliberative exchange, face coverings—which are not worn for religious reasons—are prohibited.
- F. A phone number or other live contact information shall be provided to alert the Board if the audio or video transmission of the meeting provided by the Board fails, the Board monitors such designated means of communication during the meeting, and the Board takes a recess until public access is restored if the transmission fails for the public;
- G. A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of the Board for a meeting shall be made available to the public in electronic format at the same time that such materials are provided to members of the Board;

- H. Votes taken during the electronic meeting shall be recorded by name in roll-call fashion and included in the minutes of the meeting.
- I. The public shall be afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including by way of written comments, at those public meetings when public comment is customarily received;
- J. No more than one member of the Board shall be assembled in any one remote location unless that remote location is open to the public to physically access it;
- K. If a closed session is held during an all-virtual public meeting, transmission of the meeting to the public shall resume before the Board votes to certify the closed meeting as required by subsection D of § 2.2-3712;
- L. The Board shall not convene an all-virtual public meeting (i) more than two times per calendar year or 50 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, or (ii) consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting; and
- M. Minutes of all-virtual public meetings held by electronic communication means shall be taken as required by § 2.2-3707 and include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held.

## **7. Declared Emergencies:**

The Electoral Board may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency in accordance with Va. Code § 44-146.17, provided that:

- A. the catastrophic nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location, and
- B. the purpose of the meeting is to address the emergency.

If it holds a meeting pursuant to this section, the Electoral Board shall:

- A. Abide with the provisions under Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.2;
- B. Give public notice using the best available method given the nature of the emergency, which notice shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to members of the Board conducting the meeting;
- C. Make arrangements for public access to such meeting through electronic communication means, including videoconferencing if already used by the Board;
- D. Make available a recording of the meeting, in addition to the minutes of the meeting posted pursuant to the requirements under Virginia Code § 2.2-3707.1;
- E. Provide the public with the opportunity to comment at those meetings of the Board when public comment is customarily received; and

F. State in the minutes of the relevant meeting the nature of the emergency, the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means, and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held.

**Adoption of Bylaws:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_