



DUVAL COUNTY ELECTION ADVISORY PANEL

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

*(These minutes are unofficial until reviewed and approved by the
Election Advisory Panel at a future meeting.)*

**April 15, 2026
3:00 p.m.**

**1 Imeson Park Drive, Bldg. 100
Election Operations Center**

Meeting convened: 3:00 p.m.

Attendance: Panel Members Justin Gicalone, Carmen Martinez, Robert Maldonado, Lanelle Phillmon, Gloria Einstein, Ray Pringle, Austin Kwikkel, Donovan Bradley, and Ed Williams

Excused: None

Absent: None

Also: Jerry Holland, Supervisor of Elections, and Brandon Russell, City Council Research Division

Election Operations Center Tour

Before the Panel meeting, Jerry Holland, Supervisor of Elections, provided a tour of the Election Operations Center.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the December 17, 2025, Election Advisory Panel meeting were approved unanimously.

Supervisor of Elections update

Mr. Holland provided an overview of election administration legislation passed by the Florida legislature. He explained that HB 461 passed unanimously and focused on volunteering at polling locations. The bill allows students who are registered or pre-registered to vote to sign up as poll worker volunteers and earn community service hours that count toward Bright Futures scholarship eligibility.

Another bill that passed was HB 991, known as the Florida SAVE Act. Mr. Holland said that none of this bill's provisions will affect elections in 2026 and will take effect on January 1, 2027. He said that the bill addresses the registration process to prevent non-citizens from voting. He said that starting in January, when obtaining or renewing a driver's license, people must present proof of citizenship, such as a passport or birth certificate. That information is then provided to SOE offices to verify their voter records. People are then

contacted if their voter registration conflicts with citizenship data collected by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and provided an opportunity to demonstrate their citizenship. He said the bill also decreased the number of IDs that can be used to prove identity when voting. He said that student IDs, community center IDs, and credit and debit cards are no longer valid forms of identification.

Mr. Holland then provided an update on voter registration numbers for Duval County. He said there were roughly 7,000 fewer total voters currently than on July 1, 2023. He explained the various causes of that net decrease in voters and the three voter statuses: active, inactive, and ineligible. He said that active and inactive voters can vote because they have not been removed from the rolls. He explained that voters become inactive when they move without updating their address. They determine this by sending non-forwardable mail. If the mail is returned, indicating the voter is no longer at that address, the SOE sends a forwardable piece of mail to the voter notifying them that they must respond within 30 days or be deemed inactive. If the voter goes to vote, they are asked to update their address. If the voter does not vote in two federal elections, the voter is then deemed ineligible. Mr. Holland said that usually indicates the voter has moved out of state. He provided counts of voters who moved between statuses: 61,302 moved from active to inactive since July 1, 2023, and 113,757 were made ineligible during the same period. He added that in some cases, voters move directly from active to ineligible, such as civil rights felons or deceased individuals.

Mr. Holland continued, stating they had added 68,040 voters since July 1, 2023. He then provided an update on vote-by-mail requests. There are a total of 21,354 VBM requests, of which 19,926 are domestic, and 1,428 are UOCAVA VBM requests.

Mr. Holland reported that the City Council intended to honor the poll workers on August 11 with a Poll Worker Recognition Day.

Mr. Holland then provided an update on the August elections. He said that they will be qualifying judicial candidates next week. He said there were currently two open judicial seats. He said they were required to send overseas ballots 45 days before the election. He said that the petition deadline for school board candidates is May 11. He said that qualifying for the November elections is on June 8-12. Domestic VBM ballots will be sent out on July 9. The last day to register for the August elections is July 20. They will test the equipment on July 23. Early voting for the August primary will last 10 days, lasting from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. The early voting period will run from August 6 to August 15. Mr. Holland explained that early voting dates and times are set based on expected demand, and for general elections, they are more likely to have longer days and a 15-day early voting period. The election will occur on August 18.

Old Business

Mr. Maldonado asked for an update on polling locations. Mr. Holland said that more places wanted to be polling locations in the past. He also said that a past lawsuit placed conditions on the number of polling locations in each Council district to ensure equitable access to voting throughout the county. He added that there must be at least 10 and at most 12 polling locations in a district. He anticipated about 8 to 10 changes to polling locations for the August primary.

Mr. Gicalone said that 11 former polling locations have declined to continue as polling locations. The districts impacted by this are Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, and 14. He added that it has been challenging to find places to serve as polling locations, citing the political climate and the administrative requirements for doing so. He said that all but four sites have been secured as polling locations. He also said that places that serve as polling locations have to become suppliers with the City, which comes with a hefty amount of paperwork. He said that the SOE offers to assist locations with this paperwork to reduce the burden. He said the number of precincts will decrease in certain districts due to fewer polling locations. As of now, District 14 was the only district with a confirmed decrease in the number of precincts. They were waiting on two

other sites to confirm.

Ms. Einstein asked about the de-verification form for petition signers for constitutional amendments, reiterating her request for a disclaimer on the form notifying recipients that no action is necessary if they signed the petition. She said she found the actual form confusing and vaguely threatening. Mr. Holland stated that the Division of Elections created the form and cannot be altered by local SOEs. Ms. Einstein asked if they had received any of the forms back. Mr. Gicalone said the state receives the returned forms. He further explained that the SOE accepts petition signatures and notifies petition signers that they have been received. If a person receives a notice but did not sign the petition, then they can return the form, which would be sent to the Office of Election Crimes and Security. Mr. Gicalone stated that of roughly 100,000 signatures received, the Office of Election Crimes and Security has only received returned forms for about 100. Mr. Holland added that the local SOE covered the postage costs for the petition verification process. Ms. Einstein asked if the process was the same for candidate positions. Mr. Holland stated that the process was different, namely that there is no verification process, unlike the issue petitions.

Mr. Kwikkel asked if there would be a potential disruption due to a pending Supreme Court case regarding the counting of ballots postmarked before election day. Mr. Holland said that Florida law already requires ballots to be received by the SOE on Election Day for them to be counted. He also clarified that if a person is in line to complete a mail-in ballot, their ballot cannot be counted if it is not given to the SOE by the closing of the polls, unlike those waiting to cast an in-person ballot, who can remain in line.

Ms. Einstein asked about the rationale for fewer early-voting days in the August elections. Mr. Holland said they consider several factors, including previous turnout. He also said there had been a decline in mail-in voting but noted that those voters are now opting for in-person voting on Election Day rather than early voting. He said there is no indication that demand for early voting would be higher this year and added that they had expanded the number of early-voting locations. He also said that they must be fiscally responsible when making these decisions. Ms. Einstein expressed her disappointment that the Sunday before Election Day was excluded from the early voting period. Mr. Holland said they included at least one Sunday in each early-voting period to accommodate Souls to the Polls events. He also said there was an added benefit of an extra day before Election Day to prepare all the equipment adequately. He said they plan to have that Sunday before Election Day as part of the early-voting period.

Mr. Gicalone provided an update on Ms. Einstein's question from the last meeting regarding the risk-limiting auditing process and said they do not get to choose which precincts to audit. He also responded to an earlier question from Mr. Maldonado about poll workers and informed the panel that they were fully staffed for early voting and Election Day. He said they are still working on filling substitutions and the standby pool. He also said that they were increasing the number of sites with supervised voting, which usually occurs in nursing homes and assisted living facilities with poll workers from both parties present. Mr. Gicalone also said that each polling place is staffed with two poll workers from each party, exceeding the state's requirements.

Ms. Phillmon asked whether there were any concerns about the safety of voters and poll workers at polling locations. Mr. Holland said they work closely with JSO, who would be aware of any potentially dangerous activity near polling locations. He also said they are having a meeting on May 7 at the local FBI headquarters to meet with state and federal law enforcement agencies, be briefed, and open lines of communication. He also added that there was more concern about election systems being hacked than about safety at polling locations. He said they do not anticipate having law enforcement present at polling locations, but if an issue were to arise, then law enforcement may be called to the site, even if undercover.

New Business

Mr. Madonado asked about updates on vacancies. Mr. Russell provided the status of each member's term on

the panel. He also informed first-term panel members whose term had expired that they may continue to serve on the board until reappointed or replaced via legislation. Mr. Holland committed to reaching out to the Council President and Mayor to expedite appointments and re-appointments.

Mr. Gicalone provided an update on their student voter registration drives that occurred in March. He said they visited 28 schools, 11 more than last year, and collected nearly 3,000 applications, including registrations and pre-registrations. He said there is competition among schools, broken down by private and public schools, and then by tiers based on the size of the student population. Winners are determined based on the percentage of the student body that registered. The winners for public schools were First Coast High School (large), Terry Parker High School (medium), and Bridge to Success Academy (small). The private school winners were Bishop Kenny High School (large), Bolles School (medium), and Pace Center for Girls (small). For colleges and universities, the winner was Edward Waters University.

Ms. Phillmon noted that fewer young people are getting driver's licenses than in the past and asked whether the SOE was encouraging younger voters to obtain a Florida ID, with the new identification requirements taking effect next year. Mr. Holland said they make a point of informing students of the identification requirements.

The next meeting will be on June 17, 2026.

Public Comment

None

Meeting Adjourned: 4:46 pm

Minutes: Brandon Russell, Council Research

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Posted: 4.21.26, 3:39 p.m.

