



NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

COMPLAINT AGAINST COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS MEMBER

P.O. Box 27255
Raleigh, NC
27611-7255
Mailing Address

legal
@ncsbe.gov
E-mail

(919) 814-0700 or
(866) 522-4723
Phone

(919) 715-0135
Fax

*Submitting fraudulently or falsely
completed declarations is a Class I
felony under Chapter 163 of the
General Statutes.*

Instructions (08 NCAC 03 .0101)

Any voter desiring to bring charges of a violation of the North Carolina Administrative Code or of Chapter 163 of the North Carolina General Statutes with the State Board of Elections against a member of any county board of elections may do so by filing with the Board a written statement, signed and sworn under oath or affirmation of the voter. The statement must contain:

- 1) the name, residence address, and county of the member against whom the charges are brought;
- 2) a statement of the facts constituting the violation alleged, with a reference to the date and place of such misconduct; and
- 3) the names and addresses of persons who have knowledge or information of the matters referred to in the charges as filed.

Visit <https://bit.ly/2Z89VtS> for all requirements.

1 Information About Person Filing Complaint

Neal Driver

Pitt

Name

County

104 N Longmeadow Road

Address

Greenville

NC

27858

City

State

Zip Code

ecupir899@yahoo.com

919-219-9003

E-Mail Address

Telephone Number

2 Information about County Board Member Against Whom You are Filing a Complaint

Etsil Sinclair Mason

Pitt

Name

County

4192 W Lang Street

Address

Farmville

NC

27828

City

State

Zip Code

Date the alleged violation occurred:

4/15/26

Place the alleged violation occurred:

Pitt County Board of Elections Office during monthly public Board Meeting.



NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

PAGE 2 OF 4

3

Description of Violation

Provide a statement of the facts constituting the violation alleged.

Be as specific as you can, providing all relevant facts and circumstances of the potential violations.

You should also include a citation to the applicable rule, law, or duty you believe has been violated. 08 NCAC 03 .0102 states that the State Board shall set a hearing if the charges preferred include prima facie evidence of any of the following: “(1) a violation of these Rules or of any election law under Chapter 163 of the North Carolina General Statutes; (2) a breach of a duty imposed by Chapter 163; or (3) participation in irregularities, incapacity, or incompetency to discharge the duties of the office.” **Attach additional pages if needed.**

See attached document for detailed explanation.



NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

PAGE 3 OF 4

3

**Description of Violation
(continued)**

See attached document for detailed explanation.



NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

PAGE 4 OF 4

4

Names &
Addresses of
Persons who
Have Knowledge
Related to the
Charges Filed

Provide the names and addresses, so far as you know, of persons who have knowledge or information of the matters referred to in the charges as filed.
Attach additional pages if necessary.

Neal Driver

Name #1

104 N Longmeadow Road

Address

Greenville

NC

27858

City

State

Zip Code

Debbie Avery

Name #2

3010 Sapphire Lane

Address

Winterville

NC

28590

City

State

Zip Code

5

Attestation

I hereby swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury and other penalties established by North Carolina law, that the information provided in this complaint is true, correct, complete, and of my own personal knowledge, or if not, I believe the information to be true based upon the following:

I am Board Chair and was present in the meeting that this occurred. This is also documented and confirmed by local media as shown in the complaint details attached.

X

Signature of Complainant

4/22/26

Date

6

Notarization

State of North Carolina, County of Pitt

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me,

This 23rd day of April, 2020

Signature of Notary Public:

Printed Name of Notary Public:

Monique Bunn

My Commission Expires 07/29/2030

MONIQUE BUNN

Notary Public Seal

Pitt Co., North Carolina

My Commission Expires Jul. 29, 2030

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

**COMPLAINT AGAINST COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
MEMBER**

(Narrative Statement and Legal Grounds for Hearing under 08 NCAC 03 .0102)

Complainants	Neal Driver, Chair Debbie Avery, Secretary Kenton Moyer, Member Pitt County Board of Elections
Respondent	Etsil Mason, Member, Pitt County Board of Elections
Date and Place	April 15, 2026 meeting of the Pitt County Board of Elections, together with related public statements and media interviews on April 15-22, 2026
Authorities Invoked	08 NCAC 03 .0101; 08 NCAC 03 .0102; N.C.G.S. 163-30(a), 163-31, 163-35, 163-35.1, and 143-318.11

I. Executive Summary

This complaint arises from a public effort by one member of the Pitt County Board of Elections to force the resignation of the county elections director outside the procedure that North Carolina law actually provides. The issue is not merely that Respondent disagreed with the Director. The issue is that Respondent chose a path the law does not authorize: no majority vote of the Board, no petition signed by a majority of the Board to the Executive Director of the State Board, no waiting period for a response from the Director, no state-level decision, and no lawful action by the Board as a body. Instead, Respondent attempted to use an open meeting and then the media to pressure a resignation publicly.

That conduct undermined the Board in three distinct ways. First, it treated a single member's views as if they were Board action, even though county boards act collectively and only through formal action taken as a body. Second, it publicly aired personnel accusations after Respondent herself acknowledged that the subject belonged in closed session by requesting one. Third, it attacked a personnel decision that the Director was entitled to make under the Board's existing delegation of authority, thereby undermining not just the Director but the Board's own prior action granting that authority.

The result was material harm to election administration. The Chair was forced to issue a public statement of support for the Director, something the Board would not normally do, solely to reassure the public and stabilize operations. The public was left with the impression that the Board was in open conflict over the lawful administration of elections. Staff morale and operational confidence were weakened in the middle of an election cycle. Those facts establish prima facie

evidence of a violation of election law, a breach of duty imposed by Chapter 163, and participation in irregularities or incompetency to discharge the duties of office within the meaning of 08 NCAC 03 .0102.

II. The Governing Legal Framework

North Carolina law provides a specific structure for county election administration. That structure matters here because Respondent's conduct cut across it at each key point.

- County boards are five-member bodies of "good moral character." N.C.G.S. 163-30(a).
- County boards meet, keep minutes, and act through official meetings as a public body. N.C.G.S. 163-31.
- The county board may assign specified duties, responsibilities, and designated authority to the director of elections, and within those delegated limits "the acts of a properly appointed director of elections shall be deemed to be the acts of the county board of elections, its officers and members." N.C.G.S. 163-35(d).
- If a county board seeks termination of its director, it must proceed under N.C.G.S. 163-35.1(a): a petition signed by a majority of the board is sent to the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, the director may reply within 15 days, and the Executive Director then decides termination or retention, subject to possible State Board deferral and hearing. N.C.G.S. 163-35.1(a)-(d).
- Personnel matters may be considered in closed session only upon a motion made and adopted in open session citing a permissible basis. N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6), (c).

Those provisions establish several important legal consequences. A single member cannot remove a director. A single member cannot create a substitute removal process by publicly demanding resignation. And when the subject is an employee's performance, competence, or a complaint against that employee, the law channels that matter into either a properly called closed session discussion or the formal petition process under G.S. 163-35.1, not unilateral public accusation.

III. Narrative Statement of What Happened

On April 16, 2026, during an official meeting of the Pitt County Board of Elections, Respondent publicly called for the resignation of Executive Director Janet Turner. WITN reported: "Board member Etsil Mason called for new Executive Director Janet Turner to resign during a meeting that was set to discuss the county's early voting plan ahead of November's election." That act alone was a serious departure from the law because no majority of the Board had voted to pursue removal and no petition had been signed by a majority and transmitted to the Executive Director of the State Board under G.S. 163-35.1.

Respondent did not merely express a policy disagreement. She publicly leveled personnel accusations and demanded an employment outcome. WITN quoted her as saying: "Her anxious demeanor and almost manic behavior in meetings and workplace activities have added to a hostile workplace environment." WITN also quoted Respondent stating: "My number one concern above everything else is the sanctity of our elections. That the citizens deserve an election that is free and fair and to know that a properly executed ballot will in fact be counted," and further, "the reason

that we're going to, I believe lose a number of our poll workers, our judges which are critical to a successful election is because of how they've been personally treated."

The Daily Reflector then reported that Respondent "read a statement expressing her concerns about the dismissal of [REDACTED] and the performance of Janet Turner since assuming the job of Pitt County elections director in January." It further reported that Respondent read that statement "during the new business portion of the Board of Elections' meeting on Wednesday after her request for a closed session on the matter was denied, she said." Those facts are legally important because they show Respondent knew the subject was a personnel matter and knew she did not have the votes to proceed in closed session, yet she chose to say the same things publicly anyway.

Respondent's own quoted admission is especially important. WITN reported her saying: "I think most things can be handled discreetly, but I wasn't allowed to do that. I had begged for a close session, but I was told clearly that a closed session wouldn't make any difference because I didn't have the votes which is true." That statement is powerful evidence of knowledge. The respondent acknowledged that the matter should be handled discreetly. She acknowledged the lack of Board support. She acknowledged she did not have the votes. Yet she proceeded publicly.

Chairman Neal Driver immediately recognized the problem. WITN reported that "Driver motioned to adjourn the meeting" as Respondent called for Turner's resignation. WITN further quoted Driver as explaining: "The matter that she was talking about wasn't relative to the actual board meeting. A closed session has to be called, she did not put it up for a vote, and she just kind of stood up and started conducting a meeting, which I thought was inappropriate." That statement makes plain that Respondent was not acting through the Board, was not following the procedure to enter closed session, and was instead attempting to seize control of the meeting to press a personnel outcome publicly.

The public attack did not stop there. The Daily Reflector reported that "[i]n a later interview, Mason said" and then recounted additional allegations about staff behavior, internal office dynamics, the March 3 primary, disciplinary write-ups, the pre-termination notice issued to [REDACTED] and other internal personnel matters. In other words, after the public-meeting disruption, Respondent repeated and expanded the same allegations in the press. That repetition materially worsened the damage by extending the public spectacle beyond the meeting itself.

The Chair was then forced to do something boards do not ordinarily do: issue a public statement of confidence in the Director in order to steady the office and reassure the public. WITN quoted Chairman Driver as saying: "Janet Turner has the support of the board." In context, that was not a routine statement. It was a defensive statement made necessary by Respondent's public attack. The Board was forced into a public response precisely because Respondent undermined the Director and, by extension, the Board's own authority in a public forum.

Later after the second news article was published based on the new and highly inappropriate interview in the Daily Reflector, a majority of the BOE felt compelled to issue a public statement, something it would not normally do and under traditional circumstances would never do.

IV. The Director Acted Under the Board's Delegated Authority

A central flaw in Respondent's public attack is that it challenged a personnel decision the Director was authorized to make. Under G.S. 163-35(b) and (d), the Board assigns the Director specified duties, responsibilities, and designated authority, and those assigned duties must be entered in the minutes and filed with the State Board. Within those delegated limits, the statute provides that "the acts of a properly appointed director of elections shall be deemed to be the acts of the county board of elections, its officers and members." N.C.G.S. 163-35(d).

That matters here because the Daily Reflector article placed the dismissal of employee [REDACTED] at the center of Respondent's complaints. But if the Director was acting under a signed delegation of duties document, then the challenged action was not some rogue personal act of the Director. It was, by statute, an act deemed to be the act of the Board within the delegated area. If Respondent believed the Director should no longer possess that delegated authority, the proper path was to seek a change to the Board's delegation going forward. The proper path was not to undermine the Director and the Board's own delegated structure in a public meeting or through the media.

This point goes to the heart of the harm. By publicly attacking the Director for using authority the Board had already granted, Respondent did not merely criticize an employee. She effectively repudiated the Board's own governance structure in front of the public. That directly undermined the Board's authority and created confusion about whether the Board stood behind its own Director and its own delegation of responsibilities.

V. The Statutory Removal Procedure for a County Elections Director

North Carolina law does not leave the removal of a county elections director to improvisation. G.S. 163-35.1 provides a specific, ordered process. The steps matter because Respondent followed none of them.

- Step 1 - Majority petition. A county board may recommend termination only "by petition signed by a majority of the board." N.C.G.S. 163-35.1(a).
- Step 2 - Written reasons. The petition "shall clearly state the reasons for termination." Id.
- Step 3 - Transmission to the Executive Director of the State Board. The petition is sent to the Executive Director, who forwards a copy by certified mail to the county director involved. Id.
- Step 4 - Opportunity to reply. The county director "may reply to the petition within 15 days of receipt thereof." Id.
- Step 5 - Initial decision by the Executive Director. Within 20 days after the reply is received, or after the time to reply expires, the Executive Director decides whether the director will be terminated or retained. Id.
- Step 6 - Possible State Board deferral and hearing. The Executive Director's decision is final unless deferred by the State Board; if deferred, the State Board gives the county director an opportunity to be heard and to present witnesses and information before making the final decision. N.C.G.S. 163-35.1(a).
- Step 7 - Mandatory compliance. The statute closes with the command that "[t]ermination of any county director of elections shall comply with this section." N.C.G.S. 163-35.1(d).

Several things follow from this statute. First, there must be a majority of the Board. Respondent admitted she did not have the votes. Second, the process is petition-driven and state-directed; it is not carried out by a public floor speech demanding resignation. Third, the director is entitled to notice and an opportunity to reply. A public resignation demand is the opposite of that structured process. It attempts to bypass notice, response, and state-level review by forcing an outcome through public pressure.

VI. Every Material Way the Law and Board Authority Were Undermined

Respondent's conduct broke from the governing framework at multiple points. Each failure independently matters; together they show prima facie evidence under 08 NCAC 03 .0102.

A. No majority action of the Board

The statute requires a petition signed by a majority of the Board before a removal request may even be initiated. N.C.G.S. 163-35.1(a). Respondent admitted she "didn't have the votes." That is effectively an admission that the legal threshold to begin a removal recommendation had not been met. By publicly pressing for resignation anyway, Respondent substituted personal will for Board action.

B. No petition, no written reasons in the statutory form, no state-level process

There was no petition signed by a majority. There was no transmission of that petition to the Executive Director of the State Board. There was no statutory notice to the Director through the process prescribed by law. There was no 15-day response period. There was no state-level decision. In short, the procedure the statute commands was not used at all. Because G.S. 163-35.1(d) states that termination of any county director "shall comply with this section," an attempt to force resignation outside that section is an attempt to circumvent the law rather than comply with it.

C. Public airing of personnel accusations after acknowledging the issue belonged in closed session

Respondent's request for a closed session is powerful evidence against her position. She understood this was a personnel matter. Under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6), a public body may enter closed session to consider the "qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness" of an employee or "to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against" an employee. Under subsection (c), that closed session can occur only after a motion is made and adopted in open meeting citing a permissible purpose. The Chair correctly noted that "A closed session has to be called." Because no such motion carried, Respondent was not free to publicly conduct the same personnel discussion in open session. Her conduct took the very subject she admitted should be handled discreetly and exposed it in public anyway.

D. Attempting to remove by public pressure rather than by law

The statute gives the final employment decision not to an individual county board member speaking at a meeting, but to the Executive Director of the State Board, subject to possible State Board review. N.C.G.S. 163-35.1(a). Respondent's open demand that the Director resign was therefore not simply unauthorized rhetoric. It was an attempt to obtain through public pressure

what the law requires to be initiated by majority petition and resolved through a formal state process.

E. Undermining the Board by attacking acts deemed to be acts of the Board

Where the Director acts within delegated authority, those acts “shall be deemed to be the acts of the county board of elections, its officers and members.” N.C.G.S. 163-35(d). Thus, public criticism of the Director for exercising properly delegated personnel authority was also public criticism of the Board’s own governance and authority structure. Respondent effectively told the public that the Board’s delegated administration could not be trusted, even though the Board had not rescinded that delegation and the majority did not support her position.

F. Undermining the rights of the employee and the integrity of the office

The statutory process protects the Director by requiring a written petition, notice, a chance to reply, and a state-level decision. The open-meeting and media route employed here does the opposite. It seeks to damage the Director publicly before any lawful process has been invoked. That is precisely why the statutory process matters and why the public demand for resignation was so damaging. It deprived the Director of the orderly, written, and reviewable process the General Assembly established.

VII. How the Conduct Hurt Election Administration

This misconduct was not abstract. It had practical consequences for election administration in Pitt County.

- It created public confusion about who speaks for the Board and whether a single member can demand the resignation of the Director.
- It weakened confidence in the Board’s ability to manage personnel lawfully and collectively.
- It publicly destabilized the Director during an election year and while the Board was addressing the early voting plan.
- It forced the Chair to issue a public statement of support - “Janet Turner has the support of the board” - when the Board would not normally need to make such a public reassurance absent Respondent’s actions.
- It encouraged the public and staff to view internal personnel disputes through the lens of public accusation rather than lawful procedure.
- It risked chilling the Director’s exercise of delegated authority by signaling that a single disgruntled board member might publicly attack routine administrative action instead of using Board processes.

Election administration depends on clear lines of authority, internal discipline, and public confidence that disputes will be handled by law rather than spectacle. Respondent’s conduct moved the Board in the opposite direction. It made the Board look unstable, invited distrust in the office, and impaired the disciplined chain of responsibility that Chapter 163 is designed to protect.

VIII. Prima Facie Grounds for a Hearing Under 08 NCAC 03 .0102

The facts above establish prima facie evidence under each of the grounds listed in 08 NCAC 03 .0102:

- Violation of election law under Chapter 163: by attempting to force a director's removal or resignation outside the procedure mandated by G.S. 163-35.1, and by undermining the delegated-authority framework of G.S. 163-35.
- Breach of a duty imposed by Chapter 163: because a county board member must respect the Board's collective authority, the Board's minutes and delegated authority structure, and the lawful procedure governing the Director.
- Participation in irregularities, incapacity, or incompetency to discharge the duties of office: because Respondent chose an irregular, publicly disruptive course after acknowledging she lacked the votes and after acknowledging the matter should be handled discreetly.

These are not technical or harmless deviations. They go directly to whether a member of a county board of elections can be trusted to follow the statutory framework governing the Director, personnel matters, and the Board's own authority.

IX. Relief Requested

The Complainants respectfully request that the State Board of Elections:

- Find that this complaint presents prima facie evidence requiring a hearing under 08 NCAC 03 .0102.
- Determine that Respondent exceeded her authority, undermined the lawful authority of the Board and Director, and acted contrary to the procedure established by N.C.G.S. 163-35.1.
- Determine that Respondent knowingly took a personnel matter public after acknowledging the matter belonged in closed session and after acknowledging she lacked the votes to proceed through the Board.
- Impose appropriate disciplinary action, including removal, because the Board majority cannot tolerate this kind of board sabotage and because leaving such conduct unaddressed would normalize public end-runs around the statutory process for handling county election directors.
- Issue any additional guidance the State Board deems appropriate reaffirming that county boards act only through lawful collective processes and that a county elections director may not be forced out by unilateral public pressure from a single board member.

X. Key Quotations for Attached Exhibits

The following quotations are central to the complaint and should be attached as exhibits in full article or transcript form:

"Board member Etsil Mason called for new Executive Director Janet Turner to resign during a meeting that was set to discuss the county's early voting plan ahead of November's election." (WITN)

"Her anxious demeanor and almost manic behavior in meetings and workplace activities have added to a hostile workplace environment." (WITN quoting Mason)

"My number one concern above everything else is the sanctity of our elections. That the citizens deserve an election that is free and fair and to know that a properly executed ballot will in fact be counted." (WITN quoting Mason)

"The matter that she was talking about wasn't relative to the actual board meeting. A closed session has to be called, she did not put it up for a vote, and she just kind of stood up and started conducting a meeting, which I thought was inappropriate." (WITN quoting Driver)

“Janet Turner has the support of the board.” (WITN quoting Driver)

“I think most things can be handled discreetly, but I wasn’t allowed to do that. I had begged for a close session but I was told clearly that a closed session wouldn’t make any difference because I didn’t have the votes which is true.” (WITN quoting Mason)

“Mason read her statement during the new business portion of the Board of Elections’ meeting on Wednesday after her request for a closed session on the matter was denied, she said.” (Daily Reflector)

“A member of the Pitt County Board of Elections this week called for the new elections director to step down over concerns about performance and the dismissal of an employee who trains poll workers.” (Daily Reflector)

“Turner declined to discuss ██████ dismissal, saying it was a personnel issue. Driver also said he couldn’t discuss the issue because it was a personnel matter.” (Daily Reflector)

XI. Verification

I swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Neal Driver, Chair

Debbie Avery, Secretary

Kenton Moyer, Member

Pitt County Board of Elections

XII. Appendix — Documented Public Statements and Media Coverage

XII.A. Pitt County Board of Elections Public Statement Issued Under Duress

XII.B. Pitt County Board of Elections — Delegation of Duties

XII.C. WITN-TV News Article — April 15, 2026

XII.D. *Daily Reflector* News Article — April 18, 2026

XII.E. *Daily Reflector* News Article — April 21, 2026

XII.F. *Daily Reflector* News Article – April 22, 2026

Public Statement issued under duress



Statement of Full Confidence in Pitt County Board of Elections Leadership Staff

April 21st, 2026

North Carolina law requires that personnel matters be discussed only in a properly convened closed session. On April 15, 2026, Etsil Mason, a member of the Pitt County Board of Elections, publicly addressed personnel matters involving Director Janet Turner that should have been reserved for closed session and handled through established board procedures.

The Board will not tolerate conduct that violates the law, disregards the statutory limits placed on individual board members, or infringes upon the rights and professional standing of dedicated public servants. North Carolina law does not permit individual board members to unilaterally interfere in personnel matters, raise such matters publicly outside proper channels, or otherwise undermine election administration outside of lawful board action and established due process.

These legal boundaries exist to safeguard the integrity of election administration, and this Board is committed to upholding them without exception.

Director Turner has served with the Pitt County Board of Elections since mid-2025, first as Deputy Director and, since January 2026, as Director. She was fully endorsed by the outgoing Director, Dave Davis, who retired after more than 20 years of service. Following his endorsement, she was unanimously appointed by all five members of the Board in December.

The Pitt County Board of Elections stands firmly behind Director Janet Turner and will continue to take all necessary and appropriate steps to support her moving forward.



Neal Driver – Board Chair



Debbie Avery – Secretary



Kenton Moyer – Board Member



**Director of Elections
Duties and Responsibilities
2025-2027**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Pitt County Board of Elections, of the State of North Carolina, does hereby execute the authority contained in General Statute 163-35(d) and delegates to David P. Davis, Director of Elections, the following duties, powers and responsibilities:

1. Ensure the citizens of Pitt County have fair, safe, honest, and professional elections.
2. Ensure that you and your staff are non-partisan, non-political and provide exemplary customer service to everyone.
3. Ensure that you and your staff function in total compliance with all Federal and State laws, rules, policies, State Board of Elections numbered memoranda and directives.
4. Keep the Board informed of all operational activities and changes in election laws. Notify Board members of all scheduled and called Board meetings. Attend Board meetings and record minutes of meetings.
5. Supervise the full-time and part-time personnel in their daily duties. Purchase all office equipment and supplies, including all printed materials necessary to the operation of the office.
6. Hire, supervise and remove Board of Elections employees. You are responsible for their performance evaluations, recognition, morale, training, and discipline.
7. Represent the Board of Elections as a county department head. Maintain contact with other county departments and municipalities concerning election matters.
8. Project estimated operational costs and prepare department budget proposal for review and approval by Board. As a department head and the Board's representative, prepare, sign, and submit for the Board all county budget, personnel, finance and other operating paperwork as required.
9. Perform administrative duties related to the efficient maintenance of the permanent computerized registration system: adding all new registrations, effecting changes of address, party or name of existing registrants, and removing names of felons, deceased persons and persons no longer residing in the county. Ensure the proper implementation and execution of all SEIMS (State Election Information Management System) policies and procedures, and compliance with the NVRA (National Voter Registration Act).
10. Prepare and maintain Board of Elections records and documents including registration statistics and election results. Attend to all Board of Elections correspondence; inform

Page 1 of 3



A Pitt County Board of Elections member is calling on the board's new executive director to resign, citing concerns about the lawful management of elections in

By [Charlene Richards](#)

Published: Apr. 15, 2026 at 11:48 PM EDT|Updated: Apr. 16, 2026 at 11:26 AM EDT

PITT COUNTY, N.C. (WITN) - A Pitt County Board of Elections member is calling on the board's new executive director to resign, citing concerns about the lawful management of elections in the county.

Board member Etsil Mason called for new Executive Director Janet Turner to resign during a meeting that was set to discuss the county's early voting plan ahead of November's election.

Turner replaced former elections director [Dave Davis](#), who retired in January after more than 20 years with Pitt County elections.

Mason in a statement, raised concerns over complaints made regarding Turner's behavior toward poll workers and judges at polling sites.

"Her anxious demeanor and almost manic behavior in meetings and workplace activities have added to a hostile workplace environment," Mason said. "Statements like 'You will do what I say, not what you say you need to do,' are delivered with an 'in your face' position and wagging finger."

She said in her statement that she questions Turner's ability to represent the Board of Elections in an official capacity, and its effect on upcoming elections.

"My number one concern above everything else is the sanctity of our elections. That the citizens deserve an election that is free and fair and to know that a properly executed ballot will in fact be counted," Mason said. "And the reason that we're going to, I believe lose a number of our poll workers, our judges which are critical to a successful election is because of how they've been personally treated. They have been embarrassed and humiliated publicly several times. Each one of them has their own personal story."

Poll workers at the meeting voiced concerns over transparency within leadership, after having not been paid from the March primaries and in light of the recent suspension of a staff member who played a role in training poll workers.

"We have not gotten paid yet," Deborah Brothers, a chief judge at one polling site said. "The new person that they put in place as the director, her way of dealing with people in general. We're not in the military, all of us deserve respect and we're not getting it."

Mason, who served as chair for eight years prior, said in a statement that the actions of Turner and Chairman Neal Driver surrounding a staff member's dismissal were in direct violation of election laws.

As Mason called for Turner's resignation during the meeting, Driver motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Driver, who was selected by the State Board of Elections to fill the role as chair after former chair Gary Weaver [resigned](#) said he adjourned because the issue was a personnel matter that should not have been discussed outside of closed session.

“The matter that she was talking about wasn’t relative to the actual board meeting,” he said. “A closed session has to be called, she did not put it up for a vote, and she just kind of stood up and started conducting a meeting, which I thought was inappropriate.”

Driver says Turner still has the support of the board.

“Janet Turner has the support of the board, and the checks for the poll workers were delivered to the county office here yesterday, and Janet is working on getting those out in the mail today,” he said.

Mason said she did attempt a closed session meeting.

“I think most things can be handled discreetly, but I wasn’t allowed to do that. I had begged for a close session but I was told clearly that a closed session wouldn’t make any difference because I didn’t have the votes which is true,” Mason said.

Mason said she recommends that Turner be asked for her resignation as Pitt County Board of Elections executive director, and that a statewide search be conducted for a new executive director for the Pitt County Board of Elections.

The board discussed an early voting plan to keep the same six precincts. That is set to be voted on at an upcoming meeting.



Election board member wants director to step down from post

- Ginger Livingston Staff Writer

- Apr 18, 2026

A member of the Pitt County Board of Elections this week called for the new elections director to step down over concerns about performance and the dismissal of an employee who trains poll workers.

Etsil Mason, who has served more than eight years on the Pitt County Board of Elections, read a statement expressing her concerns about the dismissal of [REDACTED] and the performance of Janet Turner since assuming the job of Pitt County elections director in January.

Mason read her statement during the new business portion of the Board of Elections' meeting on Wednesday after her request for a closed session on the matter was denied, she said.

Chairman Neal Driver moved to adjourn the meeting as Mason spoke. A video feed connecting member Lawrence Rouse to the meeting was ended after a vote to end the meeting, and Driver and board member Keyton Moyer left the room, followed a few minutes later by board member Deborah Avery.

In a later interview, Mason said she supported Turner's hiring as deputy elections director in May 2025. She was appointed to the director's position in January following the retirement of longtime elections director Dave Davis.

"I was her number one advocate," Mason said. "We had 12 applications for the job, and she was the only one with experience at the Board of Elections."

But [REDACTED] began experiencing discord with Turner soon after she was hired, Mason said.

Davis directed Turner to train with [REDACTED] and another elections office worker. [REDACTED] said Turner told her she didn't want to be in her office and didn't think she needed training from [REDACTED]

Mason said Turner appeared anxious when she conducted her first meeting with the board but attributed it to new-job jitters. However, when Mason made other visits to the elections office, she noticed a difference in staff behavior. She said she sensed anxiety, but the staff didn't want to discuss the situation.

During the March 3 primaries, which were complicated when the State Board of Elections ordered a one-hour delay in results because of problems in another county, Mason said she witnessed Turner snapping at a state elections official brought in to help.

[REDACTED] later reported that prior to the primary election, she asked to bring on additional staff to help assemble the kits that went out to voting precincts but was denied, even after the individuals agreed to volunteer instead of accepting pay, Mason said.

After the election, [REDACTED] said Turner directed her to perform tasks that were not typically assigned to her. Turner wrote her up for her performance, Mason said.

Mason said Turner wrote up [REDACTED] for a second time after [REDACTED] sought advice from the state elections board. At that point, the elections board decided to talk with staff members individually during meetings on March 20 and March 27.

In early April, Turner presented [REDACTED] with a pre-termination notice that directed her to appear at a hearing with a county human resources staff member. [REDACTED] said Turner told her to report to human resources at the county office building at noon on April 7.

[REDACTED] Mason and about a dozen precinct judges and poll workers arrived early, only to be told the meeting was being held in the Board of Elections office, about 3 miles from the county office building.

[REDACTED] was advised that if she didn't arrive by noon, her termination would be automatic, Mason said. The location of the meeting was not included on the notice, Mason said.

[REDACTED] and her supporters arrived in time and were allowed in a meeting room. Her supporters were not allowed to speak and were later asked to leave the room, Mason said.

Mason said they gathered in another room, where the precinct judges and poll workers recounted their experiences with Turner.

Mason said [REDACTED] received her final dismissal notice soon after the meeting.

Driver initially said the board could hold a closed session to discuss Mason's concerns. He asked Mason to submit a list of what she wanted to discuss and why. Mason provided her concerns and the concerns poll workers shared with her.

She said Driver did not respond and no closed session was scheduled when Turner sent out the agenda for Wednesday's meeting.

Mason said she's worried that if poll workers decide not to work for Turner, the county won't be able to find enough replacements in time for the November election.

Many are upset because they had not received their pay for working during the March 3 primary election. Some attended Wednesday's meeting.

Turner on Thursday said checks would be mailed the next day.

"Completing the required information for 327 poll workers is a timely task. Once all information was received, it was reviewed, corrected and verified, then the information was sent to (the county finance office) on April 2, 2026. Checks were received by our department (Wednesday) afternoon and are currently being prepared to be mailed in tomorrow's mail run."

Turner declined to discuss [REDACTED] dismissal, saying it was a personnel issue. Driver also said he couldn't discuss the issue because it was a personnel matter.

When asked about Mason's decision to read her statement, Driver said he wouldn't comment on her actions.

[REDACTED] was unavailable for comment.



Tuesday, April 21, 2026

Official seeks guidance on elections discord

Ginger Livingston Staff Writer

An elections board member calling for the resignation of the county elections director was advised by a state official to work with local authorities to address her concerns, she said.

Etsil Mason, a Democrat who has served more than eight years on the Pitt County Board of Elections, publicly called on Elections Director Janet Turner to step down during a board meeting on Wednesday.

Mason on Friday said she spoke publicly because the elections board chairman did not set a closed session to discuss her concerns, which followed the dismissal of an elections staff member and reports from poll workers about Turner's actions toward them.

"I honestly tried everything to keep it private within the board but was never given the opportunity," Mason said. "I don't like this kind of conflict and it really is disturbing that it has to be this way."

Mason said she contacted the State Board of Elections office for advice on how she should proceed with her concerns. The attorney with the state board advised her to contact Pitt County Attorney Matt Gibson,

bring him up to speed and request that he attend future meetings, Mason said.

The controversy surfaced after Turner dismissed elections staffer [REDACTED] who trained poll workers and managed campaign finance records.

[REDACTED] asked Mason to join her and several precinct judges and poll workers during a predissmissal hearing on April 7. The poll workers and precinct judges said at that time that they also had experienced problems working with Turner.

Pitt County's Human Resources office said [REDACTED] final day with the county was April 10.

On Friday, Pitt County released a social media post advertising job vacancies, including a campaign finance auditor/precinct liaison post with the Board of Elections.

Turner and Board of Elections Chairman Neal Driver said they could not comment on the concerns because they involved personnel issues.

Mason on April 15 read a prepared statement explaining why she thought the board should seek Turner's voluntary resignation.

Driver adjourned the meeting while she spoke and left the room with board member Keyton Moyer. Board member Debbie Avery followed a short time later. All three are Republican members of the board.

Democratic member Lawrence Rouse was participating via video feed. It was cut when Driver called for adjournment.

County boards of election consist of two Republican and two Democratic members appointed by the State Board of Elections. The chairman is appointed by the state auditor.

Prior to the April 15 meeting, Mason was told she didn't have the votes to successfully pursue Turner's voluntary resignation, she said on Friday.

Mason said she is waiting to hear from Driver and Gibson about next steps.

She wants the board to discuss the concerns of poll workers and address what can be done to ensure enough skilled poll workers are available for the Nov. 4 midterm election and its early voting period.

Ginger Livingston can be contacted at glivingston@apgenc.com and 252-329-9570.



Chairman, two board members sign letter in support of Pitt elections director

Ginger Livingston Staff Writer

Apr 22, 2026

The chairman and two members of the Pitt County Board of Elections signed a letter in support of the county elections director and condemning the actions of another board member who called for the director's resignation.

The letter said Etsil Mason publicly addressed personnel matters when she called for Director Janet Turner to step down during a meeting on April 15, even though state law requires such matters to be discussed in closed session.

The letter was signed by Board Chairman Neal Driver and members Debbie Avery and Kenton Moyer and sent to The Daily Reflector on Tuesday in response to recent coverage of Mason and the elections board. Driver previously said he was unable to comment on the matter.

Driver, Avery and Moyer make up the board's Republican membership. Mason and Lawrence Rouse are the board's Democrats.

"The Board will not tolerate conduct that violates the law, disregards the statutory limits placed on individual board members, or infringes upon the rights and professional standing of dedicated public servants," the letter said. "North Carolina law does not permit individual board members to unilaterally interfere in personnel matters, raise such matters publicly outside proper channels, or otherwise undermine election administration outside of lawful board action and established due process."

The letter, dated April 21 and submitted on Board of Elections letterhead, was titled "Statement of Full Confidence in the Pitt County Board of Elections Leadership Staff."

The last sentence says, “The Pitt County Board of Elections stands firmly behind Director Janet Turner and will continue to take all necessary and appropriate steps to support her moving forward.”

The letter did not outline steps the board would take or detail how it would address Mason’s actions.

Contacted Tuesday, Mason said she had not been notified of any statement.

“Even though I don’t know exactly what was stated, I am sorry partisan politics has become involved. In my opinion, a well-run election is nonpartisan,” Mason said. “Election staff and boards are established to serve the entire community regardless of political persuasions.”

After the Reflector gave Mason the statement to read, she said she tried three times to have a closed meeting but was not granted the request by Driver. She said Avery told her she did not have the votes to call for a resignation, so a closed session would not be necessary.

“The last sentence in the statement implies that the whole board discussed the position as stated in the letter and concurred with its contents. This is incorrect. Neither I nor Dr. Rouse were aware or involved in the statement,” she said. “My position is that a well-run election is essential for our democracy. Proving a properly executed election for our citizens is more important than anything or anyone.”

Turner, who joined the Pitt County Board of Elections as a deputy director in mid-2025, was later appointed director and was fully endorsed by the outgoing director, Dave Davis, who retired after more

than 20 years of service, the letter from the Republican members said. Following Davis' endorsement, Turner was unanimously appointed by all five members of the board in December.

Mason said she supported Turner's hiring but became concerned when she learned there were tensions between Turner and staff member

██████████ Several precinct judges and poll workers also reported disagreements with Turner.

After ██████████ was dismissed in early April, Mason said she tried to have a closed session placed on the board's April 15 meeting agenda. When it was not added, Mason said she believed she had to speak because she feared poll workers may decide against working during the Nov. 4 general election.

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