

Ballot Counting Process – PWA Director Election 2025

Objective: Count as many votes as possible while maintaining the integrity of the process.

Process Rules:

Mayor Hable will collect the ballots from the PO Box in Many on October 7, 2025, in the presence of at least one of the three witnesses to the counting process. Valid ballots will be postmarked no later than September 30, 2025. The counting committee, which will consist of two impartial individuals who do not reside in the PWA water district and the PWA Secretary, Tony Laska, will sequester themselves in a location of their choosing to count the ballots. No outside interference or witnesses will be allowed. They will open the ballots once inside the location and not before.

Each ballot must have the account number, a legible member name, and a signature on the ballot. This information can be either on the front or the back of the ballot. Only one ballot per account number can be counted and each ballot may have no more than two candidate selections.

As there was a printing and mailing error with the original ballot mail out, a member may receive more than one type of ballot. Those are listed below in order of credibility. Some ballots may have been mailed to the office in error. Those will be collected, unopened, by the PWA department assistant, sealed in an envelope, and given to Mayor Hable on October 6, 2025, for delivery to the counting committee with the ballots collected from the PO Box. Some members may have inadvertently mailed a ballot with their bill payment to the office. If the department assistant notices this, she will, in the presence of a witness, open the payment, extract it, reseal the ballot in its original envelope, initial and date it, log it, and deliver it with the above-mentioned ballots to Mayor Hable at the same time.

Ballots in order of credibility:

Level 1 - Correctly Mailed Ballot – This ballot will have the member's printed information on the back of the ballot. As it was customized to the member and mailed to their address of record, this is the most credible ballot.

Level 2 - Ballot with an "Office" Watermark – These ballots are only available by going to the office during business hours. Each one should be initialed and logged by the department assistant and, consequently, be traceable.

Level 3 - Ballot with a "Website" Watermark or a Plain Black and White Ballot – The ballot with the "Website" watermark could have been printed by anyone at any time after it was posted to the website. The plain black and white ballot was mailed in error initially from the

printer and could be any one of any number of copies. These are valid if they contain the required information.

Ballot Requirements

- 1) **Does the ballot have a legible account holder name on it, either on the front or the back?** NOTE: For business accounts, the business name may be present, or the person may have written in their own name; either is acceptable.

If yes, continue. If not, the ballot is invalid.

- 2) **Is there a valid account number on the ballot, either on the front or the back?** NOTE: The valid account numbers will be available for cross-checking to the counting committee via a spreadsheet provided by the department assistant to the PWA Secretary. This will be the official tallying spreadsheet.

If yes, continue. If not, the ballot is invalid.

- 3) **Does the ballot have a signature?** The purpose of the signature is to identify who placed the vote. Even business accounts should have a signature on it.

If yes, continue. If not, the ballot is invalid.

- 4) **Does the ballot have 2 or less candidates selected?** NOTE: If one candidate has been marked as “times 2” or written in and selected again, only one vote for that candidate is counted. If two candidates are selected and an “Other Write-In Vote” was also written in and marked, that is more than two candidates selected.

If yes, continue. If not, the ballot is invalid.

Vote Counting

Once the ballot has been verified as containing all necessary information and meets requirements, mark each candidate voted for in the member name / account number row on the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will be set up to automatically tally the votes for each candidate.

Only one ballot per meter/account number can be counted. A member may have multiple meter/account numbers and each of those accounts are allowed one ballot to vote.

What if there are two or more ballots received for a member name / account number?

- 1) Are the multiple ballots filled in exactly the same, i.e. member name/number, signature, candidate/s selected? If yes, count the votes on only one ballot, and invalidate the others. There is only one ballot per meter allowed.

- 2) Do the multiple ballots have the same member name/number but have different candidates selected?
 - a. If everything matches except the candidate selection, AND there is a Level 1 ballot present, count the votes on that Level 1 ballot and invalidate the others.
 - b. If everything matches except the candidate selection, AND there is no Level 1 ballot present but multiple Level 2 ballots are present, we must ensure that we only count the Level 2 ballot that aligns with the department assistant's logged information sheet for the "office" ballots. If all is correct, count that ballot and invalidate the others. No photocopied Level 2 ballots may be counted. If there is one Level 2 ballot and the remainder are Level 3 ballots, count the Level 2 ballot only.
 - c. If there are multiple ballots from the same member name/account number and everything matches except for the candidate selection, AND there are only Level 3 ballots present, the Secretary will make an attempt to contact the member to validate their vote. If they are unable to do so, invalidate all ballots from that member and note it on the spreadsheet.

Election Certification

Do not extend the completion of vote counting past October 7, 2025. The Secretary should complete a certification letter with the results and have all witnesses sign it attesting to the validity of the results.

In the event a "write-in" candidate is in the top two candidates, the Secretary shall verify they are willing to serve and meet the requirements before certifying the results.

At the end of the counting session, destroy all handwritten notes, personal worksheets, tally sheets, etc. The only remaining documents should be the electronic tally sheet (Excel spreadsheet), ALL the physical ballots, including invalidated ballots, with the mailing envelopes attached to them, and the election certification letter.

Per our bylaws, the Secretary is to keep the ballots until the time limit for a recount order expires, RONR (12ed.) 45:41. The ballots can be made available by appointment for viewing but not copying.

Election results must not be communicated until the October 21, 2025 annual meeting.