

Tipton Claims Mayoral Victory as Beam, White, Burgin, Rhyne and Alexander Win

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By Jay Dellinger | Publisher

LINCOLNTON, N.C. — Republican Jill Tipton claimed victory Tuesday night in one of Lincoln County's most closely watched elections, winning the race for Lincolnton mayor as Sheriff Bill Beam secured another term, Mary Frances White and Todd Burgin won seats on the Lincolnton City Council and Republicans Heather Rhyne and Ted Alexander won their respective state legislative races.

The November 3 general election brought several closely watched contests to a conclusion, with all 23 Lincoln County precincts reporting by 9:38 p.m. According to unofficial results from the North Carolina State Board of Elections, 38,430 ballots were cast out of 71,018 registered voters, representing a turnout of 54.11 percent.

Tipton defeated Democrat Jim R. Watson in the race for Lincolnton mayor, receiving 1,879 votes, or 53.66 percent, compared to Watson's 1,610 votes, or 45.97 percent. Another 13 votes were cast for write-in candidates.

The final unofficial margin was 269 votes, giving Tipton a 7.69-percentage-point advantage over Watson.

The mayoral contest was among the most closely watched local races throughout the election season. With the city's top elected position at stake, Lincolnton voters had an opportunity to decide who would serve as mayor during the next term.

Tipton's victory came as Republicans and Democrats divided the contested municipal races. Although Republicans captured the mayor's office and one City Council seat, Democrats maintained a presence on the council through White's narrow victory in Ward One.

White, a Democrat, defeated Republican Kevin Demeny by just 32 votes in what proved to be one of the closest contests of the evening. White received 1,756 votes, or 50.34 percent, while Demeny received 1,724 votes, or 49.43 percent. Eight additional votes were cast for write-in candidates.

The difference amounted to less than one percentage point, demonstrating just how closely divided voters were in the Ward One contest. With all seven Lincolnton precincts reporting, White held a narrow lead that will remain unofficial until the election results are certified.

In the Ward Three City Council race, Republican Todd Burgin finished ahead of Democrat Tommy Huskey and Libertarian Jedi Lykins in a three-candidate contest.

Burgin received 1,679 votes, or 48.29 percent, while Huskey received 1,576 votes, or 45.33 percent. Lykins finished with 222 votes, or 6.38 percent.

Burgin's 103-vote advantage over Huskey gave Republicans another victory in Lincolnton's municipal elections. Because the race included three candidates, Burgin won with a plurality rather than an outright majority of the votes.

Lincoln County Sheriff Bill Beam also secured another term, winning a decisive victory over Libertarian challenger Anthony Huss.

Beam, a Republican, received 26,755 votes, or 82.12 percent, compared to Huss's 5,825 votes, or 17.88 percent. The sheriff finished 20,930 votes ahead of his challenger, one of the largest winning margins among the county's contested races.

The results showed strong voter support for Beam as he prepares to continue leading the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office.

In the race for North Carolina House of Representatives District 97, Republican Heather Rhyne defeated Democrat Greg McBryde. Rhyne received 25,490 votes, or 67.02 percent, while McBryde received 12,545 votes, or 32.98 percent.

Rhyne's margin of victory was 12,945 votes, giving her a commanding advantage in the district.

Republican Ted Alexander also won the North Carolina State Senate District 44 race over Democrat Rod Powell. Alexander received 25,266 votes in Lincoln County, or 66.34 percent, compared to Powell's 12,821 votes, or 33.66 percent.

Alexander's Lincoln County advantage was 12,445 votes. Because Senate District 44 includes Cleveland County as well, these figures represent only Lincoln County's portion of the contest rather than the complete district-wide results.

Voters also selected two members of the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors in a three-candidate contest.

Terry Lee Turbyfill finished first with 18,218 votes, or 35.11 percent, followed by Daniel Miller with 16,988 votes, or 32.74 percent. Carrol D. Mitchem received 16,089 votes, or 31.01 percent. Another 593 votes were recorded for write-in candidates.

With two positions available, Turbyfill and Miller secured the seats according to the unofficial results. Miller finished 899 votes ahead of Mitchem for the second position.

Lincoln County voters also expressed strong support for three proposed amendments to the North Carolina Constitution, with each receiving more than 73 percent support locally.

The proposed amendment concerning photo identification for voting received 28,530 votes in favor, or 75.45 percent, compared to 9,284 votes against, or 24.55 percent.

A second amendment proposing a maximum state income tax rate of 3.5 percent received 28,496 votes in favor, or 75.51 percent, while 9,244 voters opposed the measure, representing 24.49 percent.

The third proposed amendment, concerning a property tax levy limit, received 27,872 votes in favor, or 73.89 percent, compared to 9,851 votes against, or 26.11 percent.

These figures reflect voting within Lincoln County only. The statewide totals will determine whether each constitutional amendment is adopted.

Several other candidates appeared on the ballot without a named general election opponent.

Republicans David M. Carpenter and Bud Cesena secured the two available seats on the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners. Tony A. Jenkins was unopposed for the at-large Board of Education seat while Krista Heavner was unopposed in Board of Education District Five.

Jennifer S. Raimey also appeared without a named opponent in the Board of Education District Two race, although write-in votes were recorded.

Other unopposed Republican candidates included Stacey Leonard Crouse for Lincoln County Clerk of Superior Court and Melissa L. Elmore for Register of Deeds.

District Attorney Mike Miller and District Court Judge Micah J. Sanderson also ran without named general election opposition in their respective District 39

races.

Although every Lincoln County precinct has reported, all election-night totals remain unofficial until the required canvass and certification process is completed.

Residents can continue following the latest election results through LincolnHerald.com at:

https://lincolnherald.com/story/2026-election-results-watch-live-lincoln-county-and-north-carolina-results-here