

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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Charles J. Marquardt
Thomas J. Stohlman, Jr.

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lesley A. Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING

School Committee Candidate Objection Hearing

Minutes of September 9, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 am September 9, 2025, at 689 Massachusetts Avenue 2nd Floor Conference Room, Present were Commissioner King, Commissioner Marquardt, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Stohlman, Executive Director Ford, Assistant Director Waxman, Deputy City Solicitor Elliott Veloso and Assistant City Solicitor Andrea Carrillo-Rhoads. Commission Ward was absent so Commissioner Stohlman assumed the Chair for the meeting and hearing.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Stohlman stated that Public Comment related to the hearing would be available during the hearing.

There was no Public Comment.

Motion: To close Public Comment

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Passed 3-0-1

Motion: To Suspend the Rules to bring forward the School Committee Candidate Objection Hearing

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt

Passed 3-0-1

School Committee Candidate Objection Hearing

Deputy Solicitor Veloso and assistant Solicitor Carrillo-Rhoads provided an overview of the Hearing and the factors to be considered in determining "Domicile" under the Law and Regulations. They provided examples of recent precedent involving the claiming, or not claiming a residential exemption and the impact on Domicile. Additional precedents were also laid out for other potential factors affecting Domicile.

Mr. Veloso swore in the Objector (Missy Paige).

Ms. Paige testified to her belief that Ms. Hunter's Domicile was not in Cambridge, but on Oak Bluffs. Her testimony is included as Exhibit 1.

Ms. Paige did not have any witnesses for the Objector.

Mr. Veloso swore in the Objectee (Caroline Hunter).

Ms. Hunter's testimony as well as some of her witnesses are included in Exhibit 2

Ms. Hunter commenced her testimony with pointing out the political affiliations of Ms. Paige and why they may impact her decision to object to Ms. Hunter's decision to run for School Committee.

Ms. Hunter recounts all the activism and work within and from the community including Cambridge, Oak Bluffs and the world at large.

Ms. Hunter commented that she and her late husband have never take a residential exemption on their home.

Commissioner Marquardt asked Ms. Hunter why her Oak Bluffs real estate tax bill is sent to Cambridge. She informed him that it is sent there because she lives there.

Commissioner Marquardt asked Ms. Hunter from where does she file her tax returns. She informed him that the returns are filed with her Cambridge address.

Mr. Veloso asked Ms. Hunter where she worships. Ms. Hunter responded that this question is inappropriate.

Mr. Veloso swore in the first of Ms. Hunter's witnesses, Dr. Bidwell-Mitchell.

Dr. Mitchell recounted their history with Ms. Hunter and the many positive impacts she has had on their life and career as included in Exhibit 2.

Mr. Veloso swore in Ms. Hunter's next witness, Kinnie Lyman who is Ms. Hunter's neighbor at 13 Rockwell St. Her testimony is summarized in Exhibit 2.

Mr. Veloso swore in Ms. Hunter's next witness, Dr. Lloyd Sheldon Johnson from 148 River Street.

Dr. Johnson recounted the many positive impacts that Ms. Hunter has had on his life throughout the years. He meets with her throughout the year and finds any idea that she is not a Cambridge resident despicable.

Mr. Veloso swore in Ms. Hunter's next witness, Marisa Fratini, 18 Rockwell Street.

Ms. Fratini has been Ms. Hunter's neighbor since 2000 and sees her in and around the neighborhood regularly from September to June.

Ms. Elaine Thorne was not available to attend the Hearing.

Mr. Veloso asked if there was any one else wishing to testify.

Ms. Virginia Cuello was sworn in by Mr. Veloso to testify on behalf of Missy Paige.

Ms. Cuello stated that she is active with The Black Response Cambridge and volunteers in the school. However, she does not see Ms. Hunter at the events she attends. She referred to Ms. Hunter as "Out of Touch"

Donovan Brown of 44 Fairfield St in Watertown was sworn in by Mr. Veloso as a witness for Ms. Hunter.

Mr. Brown stated that he has known Ms. Hunter from his days at CRLS over 35 years ago and is still learning from her. He stated that the objector has a high bar to clear and it is evident to him that she has not come close.

Councillor Ayesha Wilson, 305 Elm St was sworn by Mr. Veloso as a witness for Ms. Hunter.

Councillor Wilson said she considers Ms. Hunter a friend and mentor. She also noted that there are many events in Cambridge that not all elected can reasonably make all of them. Challenging their domicile on this basis is senseless, baseless and reeks of politics.

Gary Mello expressed that the Chair had indicated that public comment would be available during the hearing. Mr. Veloso indicated that as this is a hearing that in order to provide relevant testimony, Mr. Mello would have to be sworn in.

Mr. Veloso then swore in Mr. Mello to testify.

Mr. Mello began to challenge Commissioner King's ability to hear this matter.

Mr. Veloso informed Mr. Mello that only testimony relevant to the hearing would be heard.

Mr. Mello commented that it is relevant and had he been heard earlier this would not be necessary and continued to comment on Commissioner King's ability to participate in this hearing.

Mr. Veloso again informed Mr. Mello that his testimony was not relevant to the matter at hand and he should confine his testimony to the matter.

After additional discussion between Mr. Veloso and Mr. Mello, Mr. Mello stepped down.

Motion: To close the witness portion of the Hearing.

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Passed 3-0-1

Commissioner Marquardt commented that there was a very high bar to effectively remove someone from the ballot as a result of a Domicile Objection. He noted that he did not think that the bar had been crossed and would be voting against the objection.

Commissioner King noted that he too would be voting against the objection.

Motion: To deny the objection to the domicile of Caroline Hunter as filed by Missy Paige.

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Passes 3-0-1

Motion: To close the Hearing.

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Passed 3-0-1

Regular Meeting

II: MINUTES

None

III. Reports

1. Executive Director's Report

- Ms. Ford indicated that Rep. Decker believes the Home Rule Petition will pass the House Thursday.
- Ms. Ford informed the commissioners that there had been no positive response received from the search for an opposition argument. Therefore, the Staff and Law Department had drafted on for the Commissioners to adopt.

Motion: To adopt the opposition argument for inclusion in the Ballot Question Mailing (as included in the Executive Directors Report).

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Passed 3-0-1

Assistant Director's Report

- None

Commissioners' Reports

- None

IV. Action Agenda

Old Business

New Business

Next meeting will be September 17, 2025, at 5:30pm pm on Zoom.

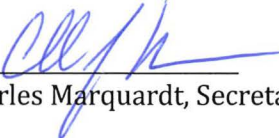
Motion: To adjourn at 12:47 pm

Moved by Commissioner King

Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt

Passed 3-0-1

A True Record

Attested by: 
Charles Marquardt, Secretary