



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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COMMISSIONERS

Ethridge A. King, Jr.
Larry W. Ward
Charles J. Marquardt
Victoria A. Harris

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tanya L. Ford-Crump

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lesley Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Minutes of July 8, 2020

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm on July 1, 2020 via Zoom. Present were Commissioner Ethridge King, Commissioner Charles Marquardt, Commissioner Larry Ward, Executive Director Tanya Ford-Crump and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman. Commissioner Victoria Harris was absent as she was representing the Commission at a meeting of the Buildings and Grounds sub-committee of the Cambridge School Committee, which started at 5:30 pm. Commissioner Ward would be acting as secretary until she is able join the meeting.

I: MINUTES

Motion: To approve the Minutes of July 1, 2020

Moved: Commissioner King

Seconded: Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner King Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Commissioner Ward Yea

Passed 3-0

II: REPORTS

1. Executive Director's Report - R1 (Please see attachments)

State Primary, September 1, 2020

Ms. Ford Crump reviewed with the group the polling locations currently being considered. As noted in her report, she will speak with Jim Maloney of CPSD administration regarding the use of the CRLS cafeteria as a polling location. She will also inquire if the Morse School could serve as a double precinct.

Commissioner Marquardt will check if 808 Memorial Dr. can be used as a precinct.

Commissioner King will check if Malkin Athletic Center at Harvard can be used as a location for wards/precincts 7-3 and 8-3.

Ms. Ford-Crump addressed one item from the recent report from the Secretary of State's office regarding the recently passed legislation concerning the upcoming fall elections. The State will be looking to certify at least one type of poll book by July 15, 2020. If they do approve the model of poll book that Cambridge currently owns, she would like to purchase 23 additional units so that all precincts would have one poll book. Ms. Ford-Crump also stated that she is investigating whether the Commission could lease high-speed scanners. The Commission would consequently also need to look for additional space to house these types of scanners since the current office space would not be able to accommodate them.

Ms. Ford-Crump provided a brief update regarding the status of the ballot application mailing to all registered voters for the September 1, 2020 primary by the Secretary of State's office, stating that a recent report in the news indicated that there was

a potential delay with the mailing due to funding. Any delays will mean shorter turn-around times for processing applications and mailing ballots.

Ms. Ford-Crump updated the group regarding the potential use of municipal employees as election workers and volunteers at the polls. The City Manager gave initial support to the proposal; the issue is now under review by the City Solicitor.

The commissioners and staff discussed challenges with the recruitment and retention of poll workers, particularly as it relates to COVID. Ms. Waxman commented that the State will be issuing guidelines which may help to alleviate worker concerns.

2. Assistant Director's Report – R2

Ms. Waxman mentioned that the recently passed legislation regarding the fall elections does not require the use of a check-out table at precincts.

Election Worker Training

Ms. Waxman stated that she and Ms. Ford-Crump met with a representative from ScytI, a company which provides on-line training for election workers. The company would be able to take materials the Commission has to create a program that could include powerpoints and videos. Their technology would allow the Commission to track worker log-ins and the number of lessons completed.

Other on-line training options include working with Rachael Cobb, a professor of political science at Suffolk University. Ms. Waxman stated that Professor Cobb is developing poll worker training using Canvas, an on-line learning platform used by teachers. Since this is a new effort, there would be more work involved in setting up a program by the Commission. Zoom training would be another option, but as mentioned at previous meetings, there is not a way to monitor connection with the material and presence of the worker at the meeting itself.

City Administration and the IT Department are currently reviewing these options and procedures. The Commission looks to getting approval soon given the need to begin training in August.

Ms. Waxman also revisited the idea of having a Zoom meeting that would be a question and answer session for workers as a follow-up to their training. She also mentioned that the IT Department suggested using Microsoft Teams as an alternative format to Zoom.

Commissioner Harris joined the meeting at approximately 6:20 pm.

Election Law Update

Update from the Secretary of the Commonwealth

Ms. Waxman reviewed the attachment from Michelle Tassinari of the Secretary of State's Office (**R3**). The memo focuses on procedures and policies regarding voting by mail. As Ms. Ford-Crump stated earlier, there may be a delay with the mailing, but the aim is to have it drop on July 15. The postcard application returned by the voter will have a barcode which can be scanned to update the voter record.

Ms. Waxman then went over the new deadlines for requesting an absentee ballot and for voter registration. With the latter, the deadline will now be 10 days before an election, which means the office will need to be open on Saturday, August 22 and Saturday, October 24.

In terms of early voting hours, Cambridge currently has approximately 71,000 registered voters. For the November election, however, registration numbers could reach 75,000, which would mean an additional 2 hours of early voting each day it is offered. Ms. Waxman noted that the deadlines for finalizing hours and locations for the upcoming primary and general election are August 7 and October 9, respectively.

The group discussed possible locations for early voting for the primary, with Ms. Waxman providing information regarding the numbers of voters at sites where it has been offered in the past. The Main Library has normally experienced the highest volume, but the facility most likely will not be available. The Election Commission office, City Hall and the Water Department were discussed as options, as well as the possibility varying hours at each location. Since there will be weekend hours involved

to provide multiple options to voters, the group tentatively proposed having a schedule that included 2 days with evening hours until 8 pm (Monday and Saturday). The Commission will aim to vote on an early voting program by July 29.

In addition to her report on early processing of mail-in ballots, the group discussed the logistics involved in processing ballots, including location, extra personnel and security.

Ms. Waxman commented that the Commission is seeking the opinion of the City Solicitor regarding which body has the authority, and subsequently the responsibility to report on any disparate adverse impacts polling re-locations may have on the electorate. The recent legislation mentions city councils, town committees, etc., but Cambridge normally has ceded this role to the Election Commission.

The commissioners and staff discussed poll worker qualifications, public observation of ballots being cast, Designated Health Care Facility voting, and acceptable signatures on applications and ballots.

3. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Harris updated the group on the School Committee's Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee meeting, at which she reviewed the request by the Commission to use school buildings as polling places, and answered questions. She stated that School Committee members in attendance generally responded positively to the request. Ms. Harris recommended that the Commission forward a formal request to the Chair of the Subcommittee, Mr. Rojas, who will then review and forward to the School Committee as a whole. The Commission should also include information regarding our timeline and need for action on the request as soon as possible.

Ms. Harris also mentioned that the National Association of State Election Directors would be having their conference available on-line on Thursday and Friday, July 9 and 10. She will forward a link to the meeting website.

III: PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Mello of 324 Franklin Street expressed his dissatisfaction with the circumstances involving the re-appointment of Larry Ward as Commissioner. Mr. Mello suggested the use of retail storefronts as polling locations, and the recruitment of workers in the retail sector as poll workers. He commented positively on the use of on-line training.

V: ACTION AGENDA

Commissioner Marquardt mentioned that the next School Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 14, 2020, and therefore the Commission may be able to receive an answer quickly on its request.

Next meeting will be held on July 15, at 5:30pm via Zoom

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:31 pm
Moved: Commissioner King
Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call

Commissioner King	Yea
Commissioner Marquardt	Yea
Commissioner Ward	Yea
Commissioner Harris	Yea

Passed: 4—0

A True Record

Attested by:


Victoria A. Harris, Secretary