



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 May 15th, 2024

Commission Chair Ethridge King called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm on May 15, 2024 via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Commissioner King	Present
Commissioner Marquardt	Present
Commissioner Ward	Present
Commissioner Harris	Present

Also present were Executive Director Tanya Ford and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

Motion: To close public comment

Moved: Commissioner King

Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call:

Commissioner King	Yes
Commissioner Marquardt	Yes
Commissioner Ward	Yes
Commissioner Harris	Yes

Passed: 4-0

II. MINUTES

Motion: To accept the minutes of May 1, 2024

Moved: Commissioner King

Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call:

Commissioner King	Yes
Commissioner Marquardt	Yes
Commissioner Ward	Yes
Commissioner Harris	Yes

Passed: 4-0

III. REPORTS

1. Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Waxman reported that the Library department confirmed that the Commission will be able to use the Main library and Valente branch library for early voting.

She also stated that the second mailing of the city census was sent May 14. The public should receive the mailing in the next 2-3 days.

Ms. Waxman stated that the Statement of Financial Interest (SOFI) packets had not been mailed yet since she was still waiting for the final list of recipients; she expects that the SOFI will be sent later in the week. Ms. Waxman also mentioned that since the last update provided on campaign finance reports that Daria Johnson had filed a report which also dissolved her committee, and that Ruth Ryan also filed a report.

2. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Marquardt stated that he had attended the budget hearings on May 7 along with Ms. Ford and Ms. Waxman. The Election Commission budget was not pulled for review by members of the City Council, and it was forwarded to the full Council with a favorable recommendation. Commissioner Marquardt thanked the staff for developing the budget presentation.

Commissioner Harris reported that, in response to items raised at the last Commission meeting, she sent out an email to poll workers regarding staffing opportunities for the September 3rd and November 5th elections. Approximately 45-50 people have replied to date. She will forward the list of poll workers able to work to Commissioner King and Ms. Ford so that this information may be passed on to the new commissioner. She and Commissioner King will also meet to review the transfer of the election worker application process. Commissioner Harris will send information to Commissioner King, and then forward applications to the appropriate commissioner electronically, or with a paper copy depending on what was received by the office.

Commissioner Harris stated that she was unable to schedule a meeting with the CRLS students this week, but perhaps could arrange a meeting on May 23 if Commissioner Ward was also available. Commissioner Ward stated that he believed he did have time then. Commissioner Harris said that if an in-person meeting was not possible to arrange then a list of draft questions would be developed so that student feedback could be obtained that way. The information could then be used in future elections.

Lastly, Commissioner Harris stated that she will send a draft set of minutes for the meeting today to Commissioner Ward to be reviewed at the next Commission meeting.

III. ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

State Primary, September 3, 2024

- Poll Worker Trainings

Ms. Ford began the discussion by stating that given the tentative dates identified at the last meeting, in-person poll worker trainings have been scheduled for August 10 and August 14. She also mentioned that the agreement with Scytl is due to end on July 30. In response to whether the agreement will be renewed, Ms. Ford stated that it would be up to the commissioners as to whether to continue with on-line training and therefore renew the agreement.

The commissioners then reviewed the benefits and challenges of on-line and in-person training options, and talked about issues of engagement with the material and assessment of knowledge gained through each type

of training. They agreed to have both options available to workers for the upcoming election. Ms. Ford stated that she will contact Scytl and report back to the commissioners. She said that if on-line training continued that it could mean cancelling one of the in-person trainings. Commissioner Ward stated that an in-person training could be added if necessary.

- Drop Boxes Schedules and Procedures

Commissioner King thanked Commissioner Marquardt for preparing the schedule presented at the meeting. Commissioner Marquardt mentioned that if any changes needed to be made it will depend partly on the next commissioner, but there is some flexibility. As done previously, each commissioner will be assigned one weekend [in which they will be responsible for collecting at all drop boxes]. The boxes will open four weeks before the election, and all satellite drop boxes will close the day before each election, with the main drop box remaining open on election days.

Commissioner King noted that the following question was outside the topic at hand, but asked whether the Cambridge Democratic City Committee had scheduled a date for a vote {for the next commissioner.} Commissioner Ward stated he was not aware of any date set.

The drop box discussion continued with Ms. Ford asking about the purpose of opening the drop box on August 9 as outlined in the schedule. Commissioner Marquardt stated that the opening date depended on when the ballots were received. Ms. Ford stated that on the draft drop box procedure document included in the meeting packet that the opening date is August 12. She can change the date to August 9 if that is what the commissioners decide. Commissioner Marquardt mentioned that on the drop box procedure document the date for closing the satellite drop boxes should be changed to September 2.

- Ward 7 Precinct 3 Voting Location at Gund Hall

Commissioner King stated that this agenda item served as a notice that he will take care of the matter through email tomorrow to all stakeholders. The email will be a summary of the conversation regarding the arrangement and agreement to use Cambridge Rindge and Latin School as the precinct location for the September primary, since Harvard will need the space at Gund Hall for orientation. Commissioner Ward asked if the precinct will be at the High School just for the one time mentioned. Commissioner King stated that was the case and that he will stress that in the email.

Ms. Waxman mentioned that orientation will also take place at MIT on September 3. She stated that she had copied Commissioner Ward on an email today regarding this matter, and discussed that MIT had listed activities that will take place in the area near the precinct. People apparently will be using one of the doors in Kresge Auditorium during the day to access events. Since she does not know the location well, Ms. Waxman was not sure whether other activities related to orientation taking place in the area could affect the polling location. Commissioner Ward will review the email and follow up with her.

New Business

- Government Operations and Planning Committee meeting scheduled for June 5 from 3:00 – 5:00 pm to discuss the Charter Review Process

Ms. Ford stated that this item was self-explanatory, and was included to provide information regarding the meeting and questions that will be asked pertaining to the Election Commission and the Law Department.

- Questions submitted by the City Council for discussion

Commissioner King stated that he had met with Ms. Ford and Ms. Waxman to review the questions and begin drafting responses in preparation for the June 5th meeting which will be chaired by Councillor Paul Toner. Ms. Ford, Commissioner Marquardt, and he will attend the meeting.

Ms. Ford stated that she is still waiting to be notified as to how the Commission will be allowed to present. She also said that she believes the public will be allowed to speak. It is not clear how much time the Commission will be given to make a presentation.

Commissioner Marquardt stated he was aware that there are some people who would like the Election Commission to move forward quickly regarding the Charter Review Committee recommendations. The State House will move to meet in informal session at the end of June, at which point unanimous consent is required [on any legislation].

Commissioner King asked Commissioners Ward and Harris to review the questions and provide any feedback to him or Ms. Waxman. The group then reviewed the questions relevant to the Election Commission, which were identified as: half of questions 8 and 9; and questions 11, 13, and 14. The questions listed for the meeting cover four different topic areas.

Commissioner King then asked if there was any other business. He mentioned that poll worker lists are due June 12. He also stated that he and Commissioner Harris will meet to review election worker applications, and that applications will be forwarded to the appropriate commissioner. The same process used by Commissioner Harris will continue, whereby an applicant will receive an acknowledgment that their information was received, and that a commissioner will follow up with them.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for May 29. Ms. Waxman stated that she will not be able to start the meeting on that day, and the group discussed and agreed to move the Commission meeting to June 5.

Commissioner King announced that this was Commissioner Harris's last meeting. Commissioner Harris expressed her thanks for the opportunity to have worked together and served as election commissioner. She appreciated the opportunity to promote best practices, and was grateful to have worked with many City departments, community partners, and poll workers, and wished the Commission success moving forward.

With no further business the Chair moved to close the meeting.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:01 pm

Moved: Commissioner King

Seconded: Commissioner Harris

Roll Call:

Commissioner King Yes

Commissioner Marquardt Yes

Commissioner Ward Yes

Commissioner Harris Yes

Passed: 4-0

A True Record

Attested by: _____

Victoria Harris, Secretary