



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 October 7, 2020

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm on October 7, 2020 via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ethridge King	Present
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Present
Commissioner Larry Ward	Present
Commissioner Victoria Harris	Present

Also present was Executive Director Tanya Ford-Crump and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

I: MINUTES

Motion: To approve the Minutes of September 30, 2020

Moved: Commissioner King
Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call

Commissioner King	Yea
Commissioner Marquardt	Yea
Commissioner Ward	Yea
Commissioner Harris	Yea
Passed:	4—0

II: REPORTS

1. Executive Director's Report (R1)

A. State Election - November 3rd

Ms. Ford-Crump stated that there would need to be a motion to dispose of the unvoted ballots from the September 1, 2020 primary. She said that the commissioners could consider granting the Executive Director the ability to dispose of unvoted ballots without having to make a motion to do so at every election. The commissioners agreed to authorize the staff to do so.

Motion: To grant permission to the Executive Director of the Election Commission, pursuant to MGL c.54 sec. 109, to dispose of unvoted ballots from past elections at their discretion

Moved: Commissioner Ward
Seconded: Commissioner King

Roll Call

Commissioner King	Yea
Commissioner Marquardt	Yea
Commissioner Ward	Yea
Commissioner Harris	Yea
Passed:	4—0

Ms. Ford-Crump reviewed the attached voter guide for the November 3, 2020 election **(R2)**. There was discussion regarding the wording regarding face masks, which Ms. Ford-Crump stated was consistent with the language being used by the State.

The drop box located at 51 Inman Street is now being used. Other boxes will be available for use beginning October 9. Each box will have a unique key system.

The Commission has received 70 plexiglass shields from the State. The office has also received additional supplies from the State, including PPE. These materials will be kept in their boxes and sent to individual precincts on Election Day.

Ms. Ford-Crump reported that the Commission had received reimbursement from the State for certain costs associated with the March primary, and explained what expenses were covered by mandate.

Thirty-four (34) Imagecast tabulators and ballots boxes that were used in the September 1, 2020 primary will be purchased by the Election Commission office for \$5100. Ms. Ford-Crump reported that the City Manager was very happy about the cost, and this is positive for the office budget. The commissioners thanked Ms. Ford-Crump for her work in negotiating the contracts.

A discussion followed regarding the use of storing equipment at the Senior Center. It would not be feasible at this time. The use of the Senior Center as the site of ballot pre-processing the week of October 26th was also discussed.

2. Assistant Director's Report (R3)

Mail-in Ballots received on Election Day

Ms. Waxman reviewed the options outlined by the Secretary of State's office regarding the processing of ballots received on November 3. She reviewed each of the options and their advantages.

She stated that ballots received would still be scanned in a timely fashion so that voters know they have been received by the office. With option 3, one of the distinct advantages would be the decrease in the number of phone calls being made to the office because it would allow anyone who had requested a mail-in ballot to vote in person without checking with the office first. Ms. Waxman did stress that it was imperative that poll workers mark off voters on the check in list to avoid any individual from voting twice.

Ms. Waxman stated that the Commission has not received to-date any regulations from the State regarding post-election processing of ballots.

Motion:	To adopt that all absentee and early voting ballots received by the Commission on November 3, 2020 be included in post-election processing and tabulation
Moved:	Commissioner Marquardt
Seconded:	Commissioner King

Roll Call

Commissioner King	Yea
Commissioner Marquardt	Yea
Commissioner Ward	Yea
Commissioner Harris	Yea
Passed:	4—0

Ms. Waxman provided an update regarding the processing of ballot application and mailing of ballots. She stated that the Cambridge Post Office has been excellent to work with.

There was discussion regarding the number of mail-in ballot requests. The group also reviewed deadlines for ballot applications vis a vis the USPS recommendations regarding voters mailing ballots in a timely fashion. Commissioner Marquardt offered assistance with taking ballots to Boston if needed, and Commissioner Harris stated that commissioners were willing to help with ballot processing.

3. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Marquardt stated that:

- 424 Massachusetts Avenue is not a valid address.
- 897 Massachusetts Avenue is a valid address.
- 932 Massachusetts Avenue is a valid address.
- 204 Prospect Street is a valid address.

Commissioner Harris reported on the following:

- She has contacted Damon Smith, Principal at CRLS, regarding a student voter registration event and has not received a reply.
- She received a request from Harvard Law School for a Commission representative to speak at an event tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 14. Commissioner King stated that he would also be available. Commissioner Harris will obtain additional information.
- She has been working on a powerpoint to be used for training with early voting workers.

III PUBLIC COMMENT

John Hawkinson inquired about the availability and timing of seeing election results, and also whether unofficial results will be received on November 4.

Ms. Waxman stated that unofficial results would be available 11/3 in the evening but that the rest of the ballots cannot be counted until after 11/6 at 5pm, so there will be no results released on 11/4. She was not sure whether the Commission would be releasing a second set of unofficial results or whether there would be a release of official results on 11/13 when all ballots (including provisional and overseas) would be added. There has not been any guidance to-date from the Secretary of State's office

Gary Mello, 324 Franklin Street, offered information regarding Lopez Avenue with respect to one of the address checks.

Motion: To close public comment

Moved: Commissioner King
 Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call

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

Passed:

4—0

IV: ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

2020 State Election, Tuesday, November 3rd

Early Voting

The group discussed confirmation of workers and staffing for sites. There may be increased traffic at these locations from both in-person voting and dropping of ballots into the boxes at each location. The group agreed that adding an inspector at each location would be helpful. Commissioner Ward provided an update on the Longfellow School location, and stated that it appears that it will work well.

Ballot Drop Boxes

All drop boxes will be installed within the next two days. Commissioner King thanked Paul Lyle, Gene, Owen O’Riordan and Victor Camara from DPW for their work with drop box installation.

The group reviewed the drop box pick up and chain of custody procedures (R4). Commissioner Marquardt suggested that the drop box at City Hall (#3) be grouped with the boxes at the Morse School and Police Department, and the box at 51 Inman (Coffon Building - #4) be grouped with the boxes at the O’Neil Library and Baldwin School. The group agreed to this change.

Two commissioners (1 Republican, 1 Democrat) will coordinate pick-up, splitting the boxes into 2 sets (1-3 and 4-6). Individual commissioners will rotate pick-up every other day. Commissioner Harris will develop a schedule and send to the commissioners. Commissioners will count ballots upon delivery to the office, and at the end of the day the 2 commissioners will verify their last pick-up totals.

The group then discussed the drop box log (R4) and relevant procedures in documenting pick up, drop off, and custody of ballots from the drop boxes. Commissioner Harris recommended a maintenance or comment section be added. Ms. Ford-Crump stated that she will revise procedures and the form.

Motion: To adopt the policies and procedures for drop box pick up, drop off, and custody of ballots, with amendments as discussed, as outlined in attachment R4

Moved: Commissioner King

Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call

Commissioner King Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Commissioner Ward Yea

Commissioner Harris Yea

Passed: 4—0

Election Day

Commissioner King asked whether the Commission would be getting new voting booths. Ms. Ford-Crump responded that no new booths would be purchased before the November 3rd election. She stated that commissioners should review equipment at their precincts and report back for next year’s budgeting process.

Commissioner Marquardt stated that the Commission would need to authorize 2 additional people on Election night to close the drop boxes at 8 pm. The group discussed asking police officers to act in this capacity, and Ms. Ford-Crump had some recommendations.

New Business

Commissioner Harris stated that the Commission website had a very good update with excellent information posted about the November 3rd election , and proposed at the next meeting messages for social media be reviewed; she would forward to all a list of suggestions along with some ideas for PSAs. She also recommended the plan for pre-processing of ballots the week of October 26th be an agenda item as well.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:12 pm
Moved: Commissioner King
Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call

Commissioner Marquardt Yea
Commissioner Harris Yea
Commissioner Ward Yea
Commissioner King Yea
Passed: 4—0

A True Record

Attested by:


Victoria Harris, Secretary