



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-1732 • Telephone 617-349-4361 • TTY: 617-492-0235
Fax: 617-349-4366 • Email: Elections2@cambridgema.gov • Website: www.cambridgema.gov/election

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 March 1, 2023

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street. Commissioner Marquardt announced that Commissioner Harris would be acting as secretary since Commissioner Ward would be unable to attend due to a personal matter.

Present were: Commissioner Charles Marquardt, Commissioner Ethridge King, Commissioner Victoria Harris, Executive Director Tanya Ford, and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

I: PUBLIC COMMENT

John Hawkinson stated that he noticed that the discussion which took place during the February 15, 2023 Commission meeting regarding the voter registration challenge hearing of the same date was not included in the meeting minutes. He asked that the minutes reflect that discussion.

Gary Mello suggested that Commissioner Harris be present in the meeting room during the voter registration challenge hearing even though she has recused herself. Commissioner Harris asked permission from Commissioner Marquardt, as chair, to respond. She stated that she had reviewed relevant case law in this matter, and concluded not to attend the meeting given a person's physical presence could be seen as influencing others.

Motion: To close public comment
Moved: Commissioner Marquardt
Seconded: Commissioner King
Passed: 3-0 with 1 member absent

II: MINUTES

Commissioner Marquardt proposed that the review of the minutes be postponed until the meeting of March 15, 2023 in order that Commissioner Ward may incorporate the corrections to the minutes. The group agreed. Commissioner King asked if the relevant public comment at this meeting would be taken into consideration regarding the review of the minutes, and Commissioner Marquardt responded that it would be.

III. REPORTS

1. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Ford had no report.

2. Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Waxman stated that one of the outstanding Statement of Financial Interest forms had been returned. The Commission has not received Branville Bard's form. Commissioner Marquardt stated that he will follow up with Mr. Bard.

3. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Marquardt provided address checks on the following:

- 940 Massachusetts Avenue is not a valid address
- 168 Hancock Street is not a valid address

Commissioner Harris stated that she will make a report during the action agenda items.

III: ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

Annual City Census

Ms. Waxman reported that it has taken longer to receive mailed census forms than in the past. Regarding follow-up with the public, she said that the census was featured in the City's daily update email on the day the forms were mailed, and that there will be another reminder notice issued before the second follow-up mailing is sent in April.

FY23 Budget

Commissioner Marquardt asked if the Commission's proposed budget was still in process. Ms. Ford stated that she had a meeting on February 28 with the City Manager, and the budget was approved.

Commissioner King stated that he would like to continue to research the personnel paperwork process for election workers. He has already started to look into the forms required by other municipalities, and proposed also inviting the head of the City's personnel office, Sheila Keady-Rawson to a Commission meeting. Ms. Ford stated that the current process in place is a result of an audit of the City's hiring practices and policies; the process in place is required by law. Commissioner King asked that the Commission still proceed with a discussion. Ms. Ford recommended that Commissioner King include the issues of hourly wage and income limits in his research with other jurisdictions in Massachusetts. Commissioner Harris stated that election workers did appreciate that they did not have to complete forms every election season as they did in the past.

New Business

2023 Early Voting Planning

Commissioner Harris and Ms. Waxman reported on the meeting they had with Professor Charles Stewart of MIT and Professor Rachael Cobb of Suffolk University on February 22, 2023. The meeting was held to discuss the possibility of doing a voter survey to gather data about past and future voting methods as part of the election planning process. Professor Stewart stated that the best predictor of voter behavior is what they have done in the past. The group also discussed the inclusion of public feedback in any process that might consider changing, for example, the hours and locations of in-person early voting. Professor Cobb mentioned that the timing of any changes would have to be done carefully so that candidates and the public would have enough notice to incorporate into their planning. Professor Stewart offered to have his staff review the City's voter database activity from the November 2021, September 2022, and November 2022 elections to review the activity at the early voting sites, including looking at the busier times of day, and the locations of where voters reside in relation to the voting site. Ms. Waxman has forwarded that data.

Ms. Waxman and Commissioner Harris stated that as soon as Professor Stewart's office has forwarded the data analysis, the Commission will need to move efficiently to issue a voter survey and then incorporate any feedback into any proposed changes to early voting since the schedule will need to be approved by the City Council. Since it would be ideal to have the schedule approved by the time candidates will pull nomination papers, that would mean forwarding the proposed schedule by mid-June to the City Council.

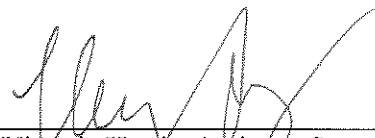
Commissioner King stated that he appreciates the data review, but that voting should not be based upon cost-effectiveness. Commissioner Harris agreed, but stated that the data analysis and public input would be a good way to see if there is a better way to allocate resources. The group discussed the data from drop box collection. Commissioner King stated that he had entered data from 2021, and offered to input data from the 2022 elections.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for March 15, 2023 immediately following the continuation of the voter registration challenge hearing that will begin at 5:30 pm at 344 Broadway, 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:04 pm
Moved: Commissioner Marquardt
Seconded: Commissioner King
Passed: 3-0 with 1 member absent

A True Record

Attested by:


Victoria Harris, Assistant Secretary