



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

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lesley Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING Minutes of February 7, 2024

Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM on February 7, 2024, by the Chair, Commissioner Harris. Present were the Chair, Commissioner Victoria Harris, Commissioner Larry Ward, Commissioner Charles Marquardt, Commissioner Ethridge King, Executive Director Tanya Ford, and Assistant Director Lesley Waxman.

Roll Call:

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

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

None given.

Motion: Close Public Comment

Moved by Commissioner Harris

Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner Victoria Harris: Yea
Commissioner Larry Ward: Yea
Commissioner Charles Marquardt: Yea
Commissioner Ethridge King: Yea

Passed 4-0

II: MINUTES

Motion: To approve the Minutes of January 24, 2024, with corrections.

Moved by Commissioner Harris

Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner Victoria Harris: Yea
Commissioner Larry Ward: Yea
Commissioner Charles Marquardt: Yea

Passed 4—0

III: REPORTS

1. Executive Director's Report

No report given.

2. Assistant Director's Report

Campaign Finance Reports:

- One additional campaign finance report was filed since our last meeting.
- Delinquent filer notices are pending to prioritize the work of preparing for the Presidential Primary.

Election Worker Update:

- Out of 235 election workers confirmation and agreement letters, 134 have responded so far.
- Confirmations are expected by Friday, and the Assistant Director will compile a list of non-respondents by then to share with the Commissioners.

Training:

- Thirty-two (32) election workers opted for in-person, 102 opted for online, and 4 opted for both in-person and online.
- The Commissioners endorsed the proposal to provide online training to all workers regardless of if they selected in-person or not, recognizing its value as a continuous training resource.
- The training PowerPoint slides should be sent to Scytl by early next week.
- Executive Director Ford inquired about compensation for workers attending both in-person and online training.
- Commissioner Harris clarified that attending both training formats will result in compensation for only one session.

Ballot Processing Update:

- Assistant Director Waxman reported the receipt of 7,700 ballot request applications, with processing nearly up to date.
- Commissioner Marquardt inquired if the office had received the folded ballots.
- Assistant Director confirmed their arrival.

IV. Commissioners Reports:

- Commissioner Marquardt reported that on January 30, 2024, he provided onsite assistance for ballot requests at Sancta Maria Nursing Facility.
- Commissioner Harris and Commissioner Marquardt provided onsite help as well on January 31, assisting DHCF residents with their ballot requests at both Neville Center and Neville Place. Commissioner Harris noted some residents were unable to review the request forms while she was onsite. The Activity Coordinators at each location kept the applications to further discuss with the residents. Commissioner Harris plans to return on February 12 to collect the remaining forms.

- Commissioner Harris sent the Superintendent, Mayor Simmons, and School Committee and email regarding the use of schools for voting on September 3. In her email, she highlighted the number of voters positively impacted by using the schools, she also shared the success of the CRLS student Election Worker program.

V. ACTION AGENDA:

Old Business

March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary:

- Commissioner Harris presented to the Board a comprehensive review of action items from the November 5, 2024, Municipal Election, categorized under "Issues and Next Steps." These categories were further divided into specific areas of focus: Early Voting, Inactive Voters, Training, and Miscellaneous.
- Commissioner Harris proceeded to summarize the key feedback items. Given the immediate focus on the upcoming March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary, she recommended that the Board prioritize revisiting and addressing election worker feedback after the March 5 election.

Poll Worker Staffing

- Commissioner Harris inquired whether the Commissioners were content with their current staffing levels.
- Commissioner Marquardt expressed his need for additional workers. Similarly, Commissioner King affirmed his need for more staff members.
- Commissioner Harris proposed that she, along with Commissioner Ward, should reach out to Mr. Gehant at CRLS to explore the possibility of recruiting more student workers.
- Commissioner Harris suggested several ideas, with a key proposal being to organize an open house on a Monday evening. This event would invite potential candidates to 51 Inman Street for a Q&A session with the Commissioners, providing a direct opportunity for engagement and recruitment.
- Commissioner King questioned whether the PIO office had previously advertised on the city's social media account.
- Executive Director Ford stated that she emailed the PIO to ascertain the feasibility of such promotion.
- The Assistant Director reported that she had contacted the Daily Update following the last meeting on January 24. She was informed that they intended to include the poll worker positions in their upcoming job postings, alongside other Board and job vacancies. However, she noted that there was no confirmation on whether the poll worker positions had been advertised as of February 7.
- Commissioner Harris proposed a motion to appoint election workers without considering their political party affiliation, voter status, residency, or whether they appear on any list submitted by political parties.

Motion: Appoint election workers without regard to political party membership, voter status, residence, or inclusion on any list filed by political parties pursuant to MGL Title 8 Ch54 Section 14.

Moved by Commissioner Harris

Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner Victoria Harris:	Yea
Commissioner Larry Ward:	Yea
Commissioner Charles Marquardt:	Yea
Commissioner Ethridge King:	Yea

Passed 4—0

Training:

- Commissioner Harris discussed the February 17, 2024, in-person training whether all four Commissioner should be in attendance. Commissioner Harris also discussed having the training be more interactive.
- Executive Director Ford reported that Mike Carlson from LHS will attend the training, specifically to demonstrate the use of the ballot boxes, adding a practical component to the session.
- Commissioner Marquardt raised a question regarding the trainers for the upcoming sessions. He proposed that for a more effective and tailored training experience, one commissioner should lead each training module.
- It was decided that Commissioner Ward would lead the inspector training, while Commissioner Marquardt would lead the Warden/Clerk training.
- Commissioner Marquardt requested Assistant Director Waxman to share the PowerPoint slides for the training sessions. This would allow the Commissioners time to familiarize themselves with any updates or changes to the training material.
- Assistant Director Waxman clarified that the training material is organized into five distinct presentations, with the final one dedicated to the LHS ballot box training.
- Commissioner Marquardt asked if the Automark memory cards have been delivered yet so we can schedule testing.
- Executive Director Ford stated that the memory cards have not been received yet.
- Commissioner Harris emphasized the importance of the in-person training scheduled for February 17, 2024, urging all four commissioners to attend. She also highlighted the need to make the training more interactive to enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

Ballot Drop boxes

- The Drop boxes will open Friday, February 9.

Fiscal Year 25 Budget Planning:

- Commissioner Harris talked about goals and objectives for FY25, no specifics were mentioned.

New Business:

- Commissioner Harris announced that the Charter Review Committee has published their final report, which is now accessible on their official website.

Summary of Recommendations Relevant to the Election Commission under the Section "Equity and Franchisement":

1. **Grant Non-Citizens the Right to Vote in Municipal Elections:** This recommendation advocates for allowing non-citizens who are residents of the municipality to participate in local elections.
2. **Reduce the Voting Age for Municipal Elections to 16:** This proposal suggests lowering the voting age for municipal elections which permits 16- and 17-year-olds to vote.
3. **Align Municipal Elections with Even-Year Electoral Cycles:** The recommendation to shift municipal elections to even years is intended to increase voter turnout by coinciding with larger state and federal election cycles, which typically see higher levels of participation.
4. **Empower the Election Commission to Work with the City Council on Modernizing Vote Tabulation:** This recommendation encourages collaboration between the Election Commission and the City Council to explore and implement modern technologies and methods for counting votes.

Executive Ford has confirmed that the Charter Review Committee's recommendations will be discussed at the upcoming City Council's meeting on Monday, February 12.

The next two meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 5:30 PM (via Zoom), and February 21, 2024 (venue to be decided) at 5PM.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:24 PM.

Moved: Commissioner Harris
Seconded: Commissioner Ward

Roll Call:

Commissioner Victoria Harris:	Yea
Commissioner Larry Ward:	Yea
Commissioner Charles Marquardt:	Yea
Commissioner Ethridge King:	Yea

Passed: 4—0

A True Record

Attested by: Ethridge King
Ethridge A. King, Secretary