



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

689 Massachusetts Ave Ste 1, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-3302 • 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  
Thomas J. Stohlman, Jr.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tanya L. Ford

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lesley A. Waxman

## **BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING and STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL INTERESTS HEARING.** **Minutes of February 11, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm February 11, 2026, via Zoom. Present were Commissioner King, Commissioner Marquardt, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Stohlman, Executive Director Ford and Assistant Director Waxman.

### **Roll Call**

Commissioner Ward – Present  
Commissioner Stohlman – Present  
Commissioner King – Present  
Commissioner Marquardt – Present

### **Motion: To Suspend the Rules to Suspend the Meeting**

Moved by Commissioner Ward  
Seconded by Commissioner Stohlman

Commissioner Ward – Yes  
Commissioner Stohlman – Yes  
Commissioner King – Yes  
Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passes 4-0

### **Motion: To Open the Statement of Financial Interests Hearing at 5:34 pm**

Moved by Commissioner Ward  
Seconded by Commissioner Stohlman

Commissioner Ward – Yes  
Commissioner Stohlman – Yes  
Commissioner King – Yes  
Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passes 4-0

Assistant Director Waxman informed the commissioners that the five delinquent filers for which the hearing was called all filed their Statements of Financial Interests prior to the start of the hearing rendering the hearing unnecessary.

Commissioner Ward thanked Assistant Director Waxman and the staff for their work on this matter.

**Motion: To Close the Statement of Financial Interests Hearing at 5:36pm**

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner Stohlman

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passes 4-0

**Motion: To Reconvene the Commission Meeting at 5:37pm**

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner Stohlman

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passes 4-0

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Public Comment

**Motion: To close Public Comment**

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner King

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passes 4-0

**II: MINUTES**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of January 28, 2026 with corrections.**

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passes 4-0

### III. Reports

#### 1. Executive Director's Report

- None.

#### Assistant Director's Report

- Ms. Waxman reported that Campaign Finance Reports were due on January 20, 2026. Year-end reports are required by all committees that have not been dissolved, including past candidates.

Formal notice of failure to file was sent by email and mail to the following candidates/committees on January 29, 2026:

##### Committee/Candidate Name and Notes

Let Cambridge Choose - Replied by email 1/29 to say he would file "next week"

Ruth Ryan Allen – No Response

Anne Coburn - Notice of failure to file both the pre-election report and year-end report sent by certified mail in preparation for referral to OCPF; notices were not picked up from the post office

Richard Harding - Filed 1/30/2026

Robert Travers, Jr. - Filed 2/2/2026

David Weinstein – Replied by email 1/29 to say he would file ASAP

Commissioner Marquardt indicated that he would be willing to visit Ms. Allen to encourage her to file her report. Commissioner Stohlman remarked that he had a good relationship with her and would be happy to go. Commissioner Stohlman to visit Ms. Allen.

- Ms. Waxman reported that she did not comment on Commissioner Stohlman's list of priorities at the last meeting to have time to properly focused. She provided feedback and thoughts on the items which is attached.

#### Commissioners' Reports

- Commissioner Stohlman reported that there are 4 candidates running for the Democratic Election Commissioner slot expiring end of March. The Cambridge Democratic City Committee should have names to the City Manager by the end of the month.

Ms. Ford requested that she be copied on the communication so she can follow-up with the City Manager.

- Commissioner King reported that he had reached out to St. Bartolomew Church regarding being the temporary polling location while the Moses Youth Center is undergoing renovations. He will introduce Commissioner Ward via email.

#### **IV. Action Agenda**

##### **Old Business**

N/A.

##### **New Business**

##### Discussion Regarding Commissioner Stohlman's Priorities Suggestions

Commissioner Marquardt started by stating that he preferred to refer to the in person meeting for further discussion as a meeting rather than a retreat.

Commissioner Marquardt then added that he would like to add use of Poll Pads at polling locations to check in voters and provided his reasoning why this is important.

Discussion ensued regarding next steps and time frame.

There was also discussion regarding the distinction between policy and procedures. After discussion Commissioner Stohlman stated that he agrees with the distinction between policy and procedure.

Decided that additional items to be added to the list should be submitted to Ms. Ford along with a brief blurb describing the item. This should also be done for the items already listed.

Next meeting scheduled for February 25, 2026 at 5:30pm via Zoom.

##### **Motion: To adjourn at 6:32pm**

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner Stohlman

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

A True Record

Attested by:   
Charles Marquardt, Secretary

## **Attachment to February 11, 2026 Minutes: Assistant Director's Report**

I was out of the office in the week before the last meeting, but since then, I have had a better chance to think about the items that were on Commissioner Stohlman's list, and discuss them with Tanya. So as part of my report, I wanted to share some of my thoughts. I think there are some valuable suggestions that are important for the board to discuss, especially improving poll worker hiring and training procedures. But there are other items that I think need clarification, starting with the suggestion that the board "Adopt processes to ensure the technical errors from the 2025 municipal election are not repeated." The board absolutely has a critical role in setting policy direction and expectations. At the same time, the development of technical procedures, such as checklists, workflows, and corrective measures, is an operational responsibility of the Executive Director and staff. These processes require detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of election systems, vendor tools, and day-to-day operations.

The board can and should set the outcome we want: preventing a recurrence of those errors. But the way to achieve that outcome must be designed by the professionals who run elections every day, in consultation with our technical partners. If the board were to adopt these technical procedures as formal policy, we would lose the flexibility to adjust them quickly as technology, guidance, or circumstances change. Formal policy is essential, but it is slow to adapt. Think about how the old charter mandated that we bring all of the ballot boxes from the polls unopened to the central tabulation center, which made sense for a hand count but became an unnecessary burden as soon as the PR count was computerized. I know election commission policies are easier to change than a charter, but we don't want to find ourselves on election night following a policy that no longer makes sense after a software update.

The same reasoning applies to the final item on the list: "catalog, review, and revise all election procedures." That is an extremely broad directive. Not only do operational procedures fall under the purview of the Executive Director and staff, but it is essential that we maintain the flexibility to address problems as they come up.

Tanya and I have served as Director and Assistant Director for nearly sixteen years. During that time, we have continuously updated and improved our procedures, sometimes in response to issues that arose, sometimes because of changes in election law, and sometimes simply because we identified a more efficient or secure way to do something. This is ongoing, technical work that requires familiarity with every aspect of election administration. In 2020, we went from 80% of voters voting in person on election day in

March, to 60% of voters voting by mail in September, which required a number of quick decisions and changes to election procedures amidst changing directives from the Secretary of State's office.

We have always included the commissioners in discussions and their input has been invaluable, particularly when changes affect Election Day procedures at the polls. Commissioners conduct poll worker training and visit every polling location, so their perspective in those areas is irreplaceable. But much of election administration happens before and after Election Day and does not involve the board at all. That includes voter registration, vote-by-mail processing, certifying nomination papers and petitions, polling place confirmations, vendor contracts, equipment testing, coordination with other departments such as DPW and the police department, and more.

The suggestion that the board should 'catalog, review, and revise' all of these procedures implies a level of oversight over day-to-day operations that is neither practical nor consistent with the board's role. The board can absolutely set expectations and policy goals, and staff will continue to report on our progress. But the development, maintenance, and revision of operational procedures must remain with the Executive Director and staff, who have the technical expertise and who work with our consultants to ensure accuracy, compliance, and continuous improvement.