



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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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

Minutes of January 14, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm January 14, 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

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

John Hawkinson commented on the Election Report provided at the December 3, 2025 meeting:

- Why was the RTR run by LHS rather than Election Commission staff?
- Results tapes from the high-speed scanner should be printed and taped to the wall along with the precinct tapes.
- Does RTR have a report or list of the batches processed and the dates that they were created? This would potentially identify the issue experienced in the recently completed municipal election.

Gary Mello commented that he would like the meetings to be held in person or hybrid.

Motion: To close Public Comment

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner Stohlman

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

Passed 4-0

II: MINUTES

Motion: To approve the minutes of November 4, 2025 with corrections.

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

Motion: To approve the minutes of November 5 - 7, 2025 with corrections.

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

Motion: To approve the minutes of November 14, 2025 with corrections.

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner King

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

Motion: To approve the minutes of November 19, 2025.

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner Stohlman

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

Motion: To approve the minutes of December 3, 2025 with corrections.

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner King

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

III. Reports

1. Executive Director's Report

- Reported that she had included in the agenda packet a legal opinion from Solicitor Bayer regarding open meeting questions provided by Commissioner Stohlman..

Assistant Director's Report

- Reported that there are still SFI fillings outstanding. Commissioners discussed setting a date for a hearing. The hearing will be scheduled under new business.
- Reported that the Moses Youth Center is undergoing renovations that will require a new location for 3-2. Commissioner Ward to communicate with St. Bartholomew to see if they would be willing to be a temporary location.
- Requested permission to destroy ballots and election materials from the 2023 Municipal Election per Cambridge City Charter § 7-16

Motion: To grant permission to destroy ballots and election materials from the 2023 Municipal Election per Cambridge City Charter § 7-16.

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

- Requested permission to destroy ballots and election materials from the 2024 Presidential Primary per 42 USC § 1974

Motion: To grant permission to destroy ballots and election materials from the 2024 Presidential Primary per 42 USC § 1974

Moved by Commissioner Stohlman

Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

Commissioners' Reports

- Commissioners Stohlman and Ward reported that they will be part of a panel discussion / teach-in on Martin Luther King Day, January 19, 2026 in conjunction with Many Helping Hands. They will be covering ranked choice voting.
- Commissioner Stohlman provided comments regarding the Report on Election Issues and his thoughts on next steps. His comments are attached.

IV. Action Agenda

Old Business

None

New Business

Next meeting will be January 28, 2026, at 5:30 pm on Zoom.

The SFI Hearing and an Election Commission Meeting will be scheduled for February 11, 2026 at 5:30pm on Zoom.

Motion: To adjourn at 6:30pm

Moved by Commissioner Ward

Seconded by Commissioner King

Commissioner Ward – Yes

Commissioner Stohlman – Yes

Commissioner King – Yes

Commissioner Marquardt – Yes

Passed 4-0

A True Record

Attested by: 

Charles Marquardt, Secretary

Public Statement on the December 3, 2025 Election Results Processing Assessment Report by Commissioner Stohlman at the January 14, 2026 Meeting

I'd like to thank Ms. Ford and the Election Commission staff for preparing their report on the last Municipal Election. This report helped me understand what caused the Board of Election Commissioners (BOEC) to release flawed preliminary unofficial results for the election late in the night of the election. It also helped me have confidence that the official results are accurate and reflect the will of the voters.

Our new City Charter says this about our municipal elections: "The board of election commissioners shall have the authority to make any changes to the proportional representation voting ballot and tabulation process necessary to ensure the integrity and functioning of the election;" I take this authority seriously and so do my fellow commissioners.

The fact that results, even unofficial results, could be altered by the introduction of data from hundreds of mock test ballots into the counting process shook me to the core. It is essential that the BOEC understands precisely how mock test ballot data was introduced in order to "make any changes to the proportional representation voting ballot and tabulation process necessary to ensure the integrity and functioning of the election"

Although the Executive Director's report does not explain precisely how mock test data was introduced, the report does provide enough information to understand how it happened. The report notes we test the entire voting and counting process before an election and we process early voting and mail in ballots before the election using a high speed scanning system and throughout the process we use dozens of external storage cards like this <holds up a CF card>*.

Prior to the election, the actual tabulators, laptops, and storage cards* are tested using mock ballots. There are procedures in place to make sure that each card* and tabulator and laptop are "zeroed" of any data from the test.

On election day, prior to the polls opening, poll workers turn on the voting tabulators and print out the data found on the card*. It is called a zero tape, it is hung in a prominent place for the public to see. If there is anything other than zeros for all the candidates and ballot questions, the card would not be used until properly zeroed.

With advanced processing, a more complex tabulator was introduced. It uses a high speed scanner and a dedicated laptop (ICC laptop) and a external card reader* to allow the tabulator's ballot data to be transferred to a card and then used on election night. A virtual zero tape can be obtained from the ICC laptop's internal storage, but it appears this same zero tape was not obtained or noted from the card itself.

The cards used for testing the ICC tabulator were not properly zeroed and infected the unofficial preliminary results on election night. There was no zero tape printed, displayed and available for the public to see from advanced processing cards.

The new City Charter says: "The city shall treat public engagement as an integral part of effective and trusted governance." The BOEC is the public face of elections. If we are not embracing public engagement as an integral part of effective and trusted governance, we are not doing our job.

The Executive Director's report makes it clear we, the BOEC, were not included in critical decisions and press releases regarding the election. The report states that "The Election Commission is examining ways to prevent errors like these in future elections" and "... the Election Commission is implementing the following solutions...".

In reality, we have not yet done these things. But we should and I look forward to it.

*Ms. Waxman of the BOEC office clarified that for this particular election, the ICC laptop test ballot information was transferred using an external hard drive.