

ELECTION DEPARTMENT MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: Tuesday, March 15, 2022, 3:00 PM

Place: City Hall, 15 Summer Street
2nd Floor Conference Room

Attendees:

- Dan Barbour
- Frank Biedak
- Jason Roomes
- Carol Welch
- Pamela Menconi
- Jeanette Berrios

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 PM.

Chairman Barbour explained that although the meeting was not being broadcast on the usual community channel, the meeting was properly posted and would be audio taped using a cellular telephone for accuracy of minutes.

Chairman Barbour took a moment to review guidelines relative to Community Input. Specifically, comments no more than 3 minutes, name and address should be stated for the record, all comments should be respectful and refrain from personal attacks, and supplemental comments could be submitted in writing after the 3 minute mark expired.

A motion was made by Commissioner Biedak to accept the minutes of the meeting dated February 15, 2022. So voted unanimously.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Kathryn Cunningham, 135 Shores Street, Taunton was in attendance and expressed she didn't understand restrictions on community input. She stated she has a right to ask questions now unless we wanted to change the timing of public input. She stated public input should be listed after the meeting, after the agenda items are discussed, and as the agenda is being discussed make decision on the voting process. Ms. Cunningham stated that three minutes limited the time frame allowed for questions to be asked and stated the reason this restriction was in place was because the Board did not want her to ask any questions. She stated that she will continue to ask the Board questions that make them uncomfortable and she didn't think it was fair. Ms. Cunningham stated that she didn't feel that something in writing was considered public input.

Ms. Cunningham inquired about the process and guidelines for “poll watchers” and attorneys on Election Day. She stated that she planned to have a significant amount of “poll watchers” and attorneys lined up. She then alleged that she was still having problems with “poll watchers” asking for identification at the polls and other “illegal activities”.

Chairman Barbour stated that Community Input has previously been discussed and reviewed extensively in the past by the Law Department and the guidelines were given by them. Commissioner Roomes stated that the Commission had discussed this procedure months ago and his reasoning for wanting Community Input in the beginning was simple. The agenda is available for viewing ahead of time so the public will know what will be discussed. Placing Community Input at the beginning of the meeting would allow input to be heard prior to any agenda item being voted. If it was at the end, any vote would have been already taken and Community Input would not have any ability to impact how a vote is decided and would be counterproductive.

Chairman Barbour then addressed “poll watchers” on Election Day and instructed Ms. Cunningham to send written correspondence to the office and it would be forward to the law department so that an appropriate response could be made. The Director stated that there are guidelines outlined by the Secretary of State and she will obtain them and share them with legal or any other interested party that may want to view them. The Director then re-addressed the ongoing discussion of ID being required at the polling locations. The Director stated that to date, she has run 3 elections and only received one complaint on Election Day relative to a voter being asked to show ID in November. Due to the matter being a current hot topic, she has enhanced training with the Wardens and poll workers on this subject matter and has created additional signage for use on Election Day.

Commissioner Biedak stated he has never heard a concern about IDs and other illegal activities and asked for a definition of what illegal activities were being spoken of. He also stated that if the Election Department is not aware of issues, the Department can’t address or fix them.

Commissioner Roomes made a motion to close public input. So voted unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS –Recap of BP Election

A small discussion ensued about the Bristol Plymouth election turnout and results. The elections results would be official after the recount period expires on the 15th of March.

The Director discussed time the period between the closing of the polls and when the election results were posted. The polls closed at 3, the Wardens began returning to City Hall with results at approximately 3:30, and all results were posted by 4:15. The Director acknowledged that the poll workers and office staff did a phenomenal job of running the election efficiently,

which resulted in the ability to post the results in such a timely manner and thanked them for their dedication and hard work.

OLD BUSINESS

Next Meeting date: April 19, 2022

Meeting adjourned at 3:16 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Welch, Secretary