

CITY OF CRANSTON  
BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
Special Meeting of September 11, 2024 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on September 11, 2024, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on August 14, 2024. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Kirk McDonough, at 10:06 a.m. It was held in the Canvassing Authority Office, Room 100, at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steven Piscopiello, Peter Rivelli (Voting for Ms. Moronta), Kirk McDonough

MEMBERS ABSENT: Quilcia Moronta

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Rivelli (Board Alternate), Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections), Theresa Bucci (Deputy Registrar), Maria Madonna (Election Operations Coordinator), Emerson Brito (Bilingual Elections Specialist)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- II. THE BOARD MAY CONVENE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE DISPOSITION OF PROVISIONAL BALLOTS CAST DURING THE RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-19-24.3 AND 410-RICR-20-00-13 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- III. DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF THE CONDUCT OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- IV. PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS §§ 17-22-5.2 AND 17-15-30, THE BOARD MAY CERTIFY THE LOCAL ELECTION AND/OR NOMINATION RESULTS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION, WITH CERTIFICATION CONTINGENT AND EFFECTIVE UPON NO VALID RECOUNT OR PROTEST BEING TIMELY FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-15-34 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- V. THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND COMPLETE CERTIFICATIONS FOR ALL NOMINATION PAPERS THAT HAVE BEEN VALIDATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-14-11 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- VI. ADJOURNMENT (VOTE MAY BE TAKEN)

THE BOARD MAY CONVENE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE DISPOSITION OF PROVISIONAL BALLOTS CAST DURING THE RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-19-24.3 AND 410-RICR-20-00-13 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said we have election certificates and discrepancy reports from the polling locations to verify the number of provisionals and see if any notes related to them are marked on the reports. He also provided BOE regulations, instructions, and guidance to the Board to review prior to adjudicating the provisional ballots.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to qualify or disqualify all provisional ballots adjudicated by unanimous consent.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Ms. Bucci and Ms. Madonna reviewed each of the provisional ballots with the Board and explained the situations and facts pertaining to each provisional. The Board qualified 12 provisional ballots as full, 16 as federal offices only, 7 as qualified pending no mail ballot being received by the BOE, and disqualified 87 provisionals. There were 122 provisional ballots to adjudicate in total; three of the 26 precinct polling locations had no provisionals at all. Hope Highlands School, Precinct 0705, had the most with 21, the vast majority from registered Democrats who wished to vote in the Republican Primary for Mayor but were ineligible and thus disqualified.

There were no objections from Board members regarding the determination made by staff on the provisional ballots, and all dispositions were passed by unanimous consent. Mr. Lima asked the Board to provide discretion to the staff to correct any ministerial issues related to the provisional ballot adjudications which will now be verified by our staff and transmitted to the state Board of Elections tomorrow along with our returns.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to authorize the Canvassing Authority staff to make ministerial corrections to the adjudication of provisional ballots that are pending mail ballot receipt determination or have other minor deficiencies or pending items that affect their final disposition but are unknown at this time.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

#### DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF THE CONDUCT OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION (NO VOTES TAKEN)

The entire Board expressed their frustration with communications and timely actions by the state Board of Elections to remedy the issue where 21 PollPads were not provided to locations throughout the city. This left pairs of supervisors at these locations unable to check in voters until 3 p.m. at some locations, meaning all of Cranston's largest and busiest polls were operating with only two check-in pairs the majority of the day. Mr. Lima said he communicated this to the state BOE staff who apologized for the error. He said they provided us the minimum number of PollPads, instead of the previously requested and confirmed number that were needed for the number of poll workers our office told the BOE were working. Mr. Lima said this was due to an internal communication error by the state BOE staff. Mr. McDonough said we were lucky turnout was relatively light, as with a bigger election this error would have had serious ramifications, and he hopes the BOE will correct the communication issues in time for the General Election.

Mr. Piscopiello noted that the poll workers are sometimes in a rush at the close of polls on Election Night to complete paperwork, which results in errors on certificates and documentation the Board needs. Ms. Madonna suggested the Board members should stress the importance of adhering to closing procedures and poll workers taking their time when they visit the polls throughout the day on Election Day, and ensure moderators and clerks don't have any questions. The Board agreed this would be a good practice to stress. Mr. Rivelli said he did this in his area with the clerks and stressed the importance of ensuring the election certificate is filled out correctly and completely.

Mr. Piscopiello suggested having a different item to review each time a Board member visits, i.e., the first time, the Board members are introducing themselves and checking seals and opening items, and when they visit again later in the day, to review closing procedures, that way the poll workers aren't overwhelmed. He said he visited each of his assigned locations five times, so that would be easy to do. Mr. Lima said walking them through it with a mock-up example could be helpful. Mr. Rivelli said the pressure on the workers to get out of there at the end of the night is immense after a long day, but they have to slow down and ensure things are done correctly. Mr. Piscopiello noted the smaller locations seem to close down better than the larger, busier locations which are operating at a higher tempo all day long. Ms. Madonna noted some veteran poll workers could not work this primary but will be back for November, which is also a factor in terms of experience. Even so, she noted everyone can make mistakes, even the ace, most-experienced poll workers.

Mr. Lima reminded the Board that the number of provisionals adjudicated today is two to three times lower than in many previous major elections due in part to the lower turnout, and that we can expect more in the General Election where turnout will be high or at record levels. The Board should be prepared to take two full days off of work on both Nov. 6 and Nov. 7 for that reason, along with also needing to tabulate thousands of write-in votes.

PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS §§ 17-22-5.2 AND 17-15-30, THE BOARD MAY CERTIFY THE LOCAL ELECTION AND/OR NOMINATION RESULTS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION, WITH CERTIFICATION CONTINGENT AND EFFECTIVE UPON NO VALID RECOUNT OR PROTEST BEING TIMELY FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-15-34 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to certify the unofficial local election results, with certification contingent and effective upon there being no valid recount or protest being timely filed, and there not being enough remaining uncounted ballots to change the results in any local contest. Mr. Lima noted this is necessary today due to the immediate deadline for the Board to certify as mail ballots must be sent out under federal law for the General Election 45 days before, meaning that ballot proofs need to be assembled and approved this weekend. Mr. McDonough noted the Primary date should really be changed by the General Assembly due to this nearly unworkable timeline.

Mr. Lima noted that candidates have until 4 p.m. today to request a recount, however there are no races within the margin where a recount request would be valid, to the best of his knowledge, and the small number of remaining uncounted mail ballots and provisionals will not affect that margin. Mr. Lima provided the list of General Election candidates to the Board to sign and submit to the Secretary of State based on today's certification.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to certify the unofficial results pending final published numbers from the state Board of Elections and contingent upon no valid and timely recount request or protest being filed for Republican Mayor or Democratic Ward 2 Committee, and transmit to the Secretary of State in order to create the 2024 General Election ballot proofs.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND COMPLETE CERTIFICATIONS FOR ALL NOMINATION PAPERS THAT HAVE BEEN VALIDATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-14-11 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to certify the nomination papers signed by the Board for independent presidential electors.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to certify all nomination papers received and validated to date for independent presidential electors and transmit them to the Secretary of State.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

MOTION: By Mr. McDonough and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to adjourn.  
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY – VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas J. Lima  
Registrar / Director of Elections  
Cranston Board of Canvassers

APPROVED by the Cranston Board of Canvassers: October 15, 2024