CITY OF CRANSTON
BOARD OF CANVASSERS
Meeting of October 13, 2026 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on October 13, 2026, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on September 23, 2026. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Kirk McDonough, at 4:31 p.m. It was held in Council Chambers, Third Floor, at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anthony Mastantuono, Bill White (for Ms. Moronta), Kirk McDonough

MEMBERS ABSENT: Quilcia Moronta

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- **I. Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda** (*votes may be taken*)
- **II. Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings** (*votes may be taken*)
- **III. Items for Discussion, Vote, and/or Other Action** (*votes may be taken on all items*)
  - A. The Board may canvass the preliminary list of Cranston voters, hear objections to the inclusion or omission of any person as a registered voter, and make a final canvass and correction of the voter list for the Rhode Island General Election that is to take place on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-10-5 et. seq *(votes may be taken)*
  - B. The Board may issue its warrant for the November 3, 2026 Rhode Island General Election in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-18-3 *(votes may be taken)*
  - C. The Board may certify all mail ballot applications that are received by the deadline in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-10 *(votes may be taken)*
- **IV. Updates from the Registrar / Director of Elections** (*no votes taken on any items*)
  - A. Status of election security and accessibility grant awards
  - B. Updates on General Election equipment allocations, logistics, security planning, early voting operations, and poll worker staffing
  - C. Review of General Election tabulation, return, recount, audit, and certification timeline and post-election Board of Canvassers meeting schedule
- **V. Adjournment** (*vote may be taken*)

I. Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda (*votes may be taken*)

Mr. Lima said that Ms. Moronta was travelling so Mr. White would be voting for her, and that Mr. Case had a work commitment but would be joining us shortly at Pastore Youth Center to help set up the early voting site after the meeting.

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve the agenda as posted.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Mr. White to approve the agenda as posted. PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Mr. White, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

II. Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings (*votes may be taken*)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve the two sets of minutes before the Boad.

MOTION: By Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Mastantuono to approve the official minutes of the Sept. 9, 2026 and Sept. 10, 2026 meetings. PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Mr. White, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

III. Items for Discussion, Vote, and/or Other Action *(votes may be taken on all items)*

A. The Board may canvass the preliminary list of Cranston voters, hear objections to the inclusion or omission of any person as a registered voter, and make a final canvass and correction of the voter list for the Rhode Island General Election that is to take place on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-10-5 et. seq *(votes may be taken):*

Mr. McDonough asked Mr. Lima to give his report on the Final Canvass.

Mr. Lima provided the Board with a report of the current active, active with NCOA change, inactive, and pending voters, adding up to 60,083. He noted that some registrations that were submitted prior to the deadline came in today from the state Board of Elections and needed to be processed, so the number may vary slightly. He noted that party affiliation does not matter for the General Election as everyone receives the same ballot, but listed the breakdown anyway. He noted there were over 5,100 inactive voters, many of whom will be removed from the voter rolls after this election for failing to vote in two federal election cycles while on the inactive list.

Mr. Lima said the Final Canvass was properly noticed on the city homepage, open meetings postings, and physically at multiple city facilities. No objections or notices of errors were received by today's 4 p.m. deadline, and no requests were made for inspection of the previously posted Preliminary List of Voters. He said he is regularly sending out voter lists and mail ballot reports weekly to a growing list of campaigns and candidates who would like to receive that public data.

Mr. Lima noted that early voting begins tomorrow morning. Mr. McDonough asked about the variation between the approved total number of voters vs. the number of voters that the state BOE reports on their website with results. Mr. Lima said that variable can change due to agency registrations, which the BOE mails to us, being received, and it is also contingent on when the BOE decides to pull that static number, which may be before or after we complete entering voter registrations and/or take a ministerial vote to approve the list in this meeting. We likewise continue to cancel voter registrations for voters who pass away after the Final Canvass, which impacts the total number of registered voters. Mr. Lima noted there are a wide array of reasons for variability in those statistics, particularly with a voter roll of over 60,000 registered voters that can often change minute to minute.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Mr. White to certify the Final Canvass for the Nov. 3, 2026 General Election.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Mr. White, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

B. The Board may issue its warrant for the November 3, 2026 Rhode Island General Election in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-18-3 *(votes may be taken)*

Mr. Lima said the warrant has been submitted to the Cranston Herald to run twice, which is more than the one time required under state law in order to ensure additional exposure for voters, and will also be posted in multiple public buildings throughout the city and on the city website.

MOTION: By Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Mastantuono to issue the Board's warrant for the Nov. 3, 2026 General Election.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Mr. White, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

C. The Board may certify all mail ballot applications that are received by the deadline in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-10 *(votes may be taken)*

Mr. Lima said we have received about 2,200 mail ballot requests so far for the General Election, and that they can continue to come in through the 4 p.m. deadline on Friday due to the three-day transmittal rule for applications post-marked by the deadline. Additionally, any applications submitted online by today's 4 p.m. deadline will be transmitted to us for processing by the Secretary of State tomorrow morning. Mr. Lima's said the Board's certification vote will include all received applications and those received under law that qualify as meeting the deadline. He noted the Board will take another vote to certify the emergency mail ballot applications on Election Day.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Mr. White to certify all mail ballot applications received to date.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Mr. White, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

IV. Updates from the Registrar / Director of Elections (*no votes taken on any items*)

A. Status of election security and accessibility grant applications

Mr. Lima said he will be brief as the City Council has added special meetings for tonight after our meeting, and we all likewise need to get over to Pastore to set up for tomorrow morning. He said we have expended most, but not all, of our election security grant funding, and he is looking at pricing to purchase a storage unit, such as a shipping container, to store our elections signage, folding tables, and other assets such as chairs, light kits, generators, gas cans, mats, ballot cages, carpets, and cones. Mr. Mastantuono asked where it could be located, and Mr. Lima said the ice rink property is probably the most likely location that has sufficient space, as it would need to be placed on paved ground or gravel. Mr. Lima said he is talking to the Administration and Parks and Rec. Director Piscopiello to review our best options. The goal is to secure all of our existing and new equipment in one place that only we have access to, rather than storing it in various spaces that take up space needed throughout the city by other departments. Discussion ensued.

B. Updates on General Election equipment allocations, logistics, security planning, early voting operations, and poll worker staffing

Mr. Lima said he prepared a spreadsheet for the Board that includes the number of poll workers assigned to each precinct, the number of supply boxes voting booths, accessible voting booths, tabulators, PollPads, total registered voters, and the number of ballots that are being provided. He noted that the states does not provide 100% of potential ballots to a precinct, because some are allocated for mail ballots and early voting. He said we have not been provided an inventory for early voting ballots, which begins tomorrow morning, though he has requested it several times. Mr. Lima reviewed how we typically have excess ballots at all precincts as the state always provides us with more than we need as a fail-safe.

Mr. Lima said the Board members will have to remind moderators on Election Day to ensure metal ballot boxes are properly closed and sealed at the end of the night in the event of any recounts, as we do expect some tightly contested races. He said that we almost did not have enough metal boxes, because the federal government sent notice to the state, without explanation, that they demanded the entire state preserve all 2024 election records, including ballots, which would normally already have been destroyed to make room and free up storage containers. He noted the letter from the U.S. Dept. of Justice is unprecedented, and this has never occurred before. He said this is highly disruptive, as we have to now continue to store the November 2024 ballots in addition to finding space for the ballots for the September 2026 Primary and November 2026 General Election, which will completely fill up the free space in our vault. He noted that Congress enacted a 22-month retention law for federal ballots specifically to avoid these issues, but that does not seem to be a concern for the current DOJ.

Mr. McDonough asked about the equipment inventory spreadsheet, and how he acquired the information. Mr. Lima said he has asked four times for the information from the BOE, which has still not responded to his emailed requests. So, he instead had to ask the SOS for the ballot allocation data. Mr. Lima said the SOS responded within a few minutes, and he copied into the incomplete draft master equipment spreadsheet that we received several weeks ago, and he went through individually and added in the current voter registration figures from a report he ran on the CVRS. Mr. Lima said for all of the prior 14 elections he has administered, this spreadsheet was made available to us so he could report it out to the Board at the Final Canvass, but this time the BOE is simply not responding to his requests for it, and he apologized for presenting incomplete information.

Mr. McDonough expressed his frustration with the way the Board of Elections is treating local boards of canvassers, including not providing us with clear guidance when we need it, not being responsive to our requests, and not providing basic information we need to properly do our jobs in administering the election. Mr. McDonough said that the lack of response from the BOE for basic requests and information, and for not providing clear guidance on items like the provisional ballot report or 50-foot rule for early voting, are forcing us to take up more staff time, and create a situation where there is inconsistency among the 39 cities and towns because we lack guidance from the state.

Mr. McDonough said there is a clear need for an after-action meeting with the BOE to address these issues after the election and improve the communication between the agency and the local boards. He said that most of the other local boards in the state are equally upset, and have experienced similar issues throughout this election cycle. Mr. Lima said that our board and our

staff, including himself, are held legally and professionally responsible and accountable for the conduct of elections in the city, so when we are not supported to the degree we need, ultimately anything that goes right or wrong falls on us in the eyes of the public and our elected officials. He noted that the state Board certainly has its own wide array of responsibilities and competing priorities. Mr. McDonough said that is not an excuse. Mr. Lima noted that in his 10 years of working elections in the city, he has not previously had this much difficulty in getting basic information and requests for voting equipment from the state BOE.

Mr. Lima noted in his most recent follow-up communications to the BOE sent last week, he noted that this Board would be meeting at 4 p.m. today, and he would like to provide the most current and accurate allocations spreadsheet to the Board for their review, as today is our last meeting before Election Day and we have always had this information in the past. He received no response.

Mr. McDonough said that there is a night and day difference between the BOE and Secretary of State's office in terms of communications and their willingness to support us with anything we need. He said while the BOE often chooses to make decisions without our input or taking into serious consideration our actual needs, the SOS is constantly asking for our opinion in advance, and is extremely responsive, to the point of going above and beyond. Mr. McDonough said he gets the impression that our requests to the BOE are treated as an annoyance, when in fact they are things we need in order to properly do our jobs.

Mr. Lima said he has been sending regular update emails to all departments in the city that support election operations, ranging from chalk lines to set-up crews to City Hall personnel who assist us on Election Night and the day after. He noted the city departments based at Pastore Youth Center have been extremely accommodating for us at early voting, going as far as agreeing to give up their assigned staff parking spaces to free up more spaces for voters. As far as poll worker staffing, he noted we have just about every poll worker position filled, with 265 in total, and are in very good shape, as compared to the Primary when we were struggling to fill positions on the fly due to cancellations.

He noted we do have a several upcoming poll worker training classes, both for our new poll workers and any who are returning but did not work in September, as well as any September poll workers who wanted to attend training again as a refresher. We likewise have our full 14-member early voting crew returning, with at least 10 to 12 scheduled to work every day.

Mr. Lima noted the 2,200 mail ballot applications we have right now is the lowest he has seen in a General Election in the last decade. He noted that is likely due to concerns about the federal government's attempts to direct the U.S. Postal Service to restrict mail ballot deliveries, although those restrictions have been paused by the U.S. Supreme Court.

C. Review of General Election tabulation, return, recount, audit, and certification timeline and post-election Board of Canvassers meeting schedule

Mr. Lima said it's important for the Board to arrive early on Election Day to start the 5:45 a.m. Board meeting and then be immediately prepared to head out to respond to any issues with the polls, bring along extra extension cords, or other supplies that may be needed. Once again we will distribute the new radios to all Board members and field technicians for rapid communication with our office, and as a back-up in the event of any cellular network

disruptions. The Board will meet again on Wednesday morning at 10 a.m., but the actual start time may be later because of the new write-in law, which does not require us to manually tabulate them unless it impacts a contest. That would leave only adjudicating provisional ballots, but our staff will need time to review them prior to the Board beginning their adjudication, which will likely be in the afternoon. We do have another meeting scheduled for Thursday in case the quantity of provisional ballots requires us to go into the next day, which has occurred in the past for general elections. It would not be unexpected to have two or three times the number of provisional ballots we saw in the lower turnout Primary.

Mr. Lima said our certification meeting is scheduled for early December, because we cannot certify until we receive final, official results from the state BOE. The BOE cannot send us those final reports until they first have conducted recounts, completed the risk-limiting audit, and met to certify, which isn't expected to be complete until late in the week before Thanksgiving. It then takes a few days for the state BOE to send us the final PDF reports which we use to generate the certification documents for the City Council, School Committee, and local bond questions, and the certificates of office that are distributed at inauguration in January.

Mr. Lima said there are continuing concerns about the federal government asserting unconstitutional control over state and local elections. He said he will soon be attending an election security briefing, and was invited to attend a press conference today at the Warwick Police Station that included the BOE, SOS, State Police, and local police to inform the public about our overall security planning and coordination for the General Election, and hopefully to allay concerns we know the public has from the volume of phone calls we have been receiving about the federal government's intentions. It is possible that, post-election, the federal government may attempt to seize ballots or voting equipment, as has occurred in some states and is likewise without precedent prior to this year.

Mr. Lima said we are preparing for all possibilities, however unlikely, and we know those possibilities are causing anxiety for our voters, poll workers, and staff. He said that for all elections, we start planning two years out, have many back-up plans for anything that can go wrong ranging from bomb threats to bad weather, and that for 2026 we are more prepared than we ever have been to serve the voters and ensure the election process goes smoothly.

V. Adjournment (*vote may be taken*)

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Mr. White to adjourn.
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY – VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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