

CITY OF CRANSTON  
BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
Final Canvass Meeting of May 14, 2024 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on May 14, 2024, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on April 29, 2024. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Kirk McDonough, at 4:34 p.m. It was held in the Canvassing Authority Office, Room 100, at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Stephen Piscopiello, Peter Rivelli (For Ms. Moronta), Kirk McDonough

MEMBERS ABSENT: Quilcia Moronta

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections), David Igliozzi (Board Legal Counsel)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS – 3-12-2024, 4-2-2024, AND 4-3-2024 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- IV. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- V. PUBLIC COMMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- VI. OLD BUSINESS – NO MATTERS ON THE TABLE
- VII. NEW BUSINESS
  - 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 CRANSTON SPECIAL REFERENDUM ELECTION THAT IS TO TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-10-5 ET. SEQ (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
  - B. THE BOARD MAY HEAR AN UPDATE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING OPERATIONAL PLANS FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED POLLING LOCATIONS; EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES; IN-PERSON EARLY AND EMERGENCY VOTING; MAIL BALLOT APPLICATION PROCESSING; POLLING PLACE SET-UP AND LOGISTICS; POLL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING; MAIL BALLOT DROP BOXES; AND ELECTION SECURITY (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
  - C. THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO ISSUE ITS WARRANT FOR THE JUNE 4, 2024 CRANSTON SPECIAL REFERENDUM ELECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-8-3 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

- D. THE BOARD MAY HEAR AN UPDATE FROM THE REGISTRAR ON THE FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE CANVASSING AUTHORITY'S FY25 BUDGET REQUEST (NO VOTES TAKEN)
  - E. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND AUTHORIZE THE REGISTRAR TO SUBMIT TITLE CHANGES, JOB DESCRIPTION UPDATES, AND ONE-GRADE INCREASES TO THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT FOR THE DATA ENTRY AND MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST POSITION TO BE THE "ELECTION OPERATIONS COORDINATOR," AND THE CANVASSING AIDE POSITION TO BE THE "DEPUTY REGISTRAR" TO TAKE EFFECT ON JULY 1, 2024, CONTINGENT UPON SUFFICIENT FUNDS BEING PROVIDED VIA FINAL ADOPTION OF THE FY25 BUDGET, PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-8-5(A)(4) (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
  - F. THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO 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)
- VIII. UPDATES FROM THE REGISTRAR (ALL ITEMS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY; NO VOTES TAKEN)
- A. STATUS OF LEGISLATION PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE BOARD INTRODUCED, HEARD, OR ACTED UPON IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
  - B. REGISTRAR'S REPORT ON THE APRIL 15-19 FEDERAL ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION STANDARDS BOARD ANNUAL MEETING
  - C. STATUS REPORT ON ATTEMPTS TO REMEDY THE FISKEVILLE USPS NON-DELIVERY AREA AND ITS EFFECT ON OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL
  - D. REPORT ON 2024 HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES
  - E. REPORT ON VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE PROJECTS INCLUDING NCOA AND 5-YEAR MAILING, AND HOW THEY ARE IMPACTED BY THE JUNE 4 SPECIAL ELECTION
- IX. ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima noted that Ms. Moronta could not attend due to another commitment this evening so Mr. Rivelli would be voting in her place as alternate. Mr. McDonough asked for a vote to approve the agenda as posted.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS – 3-12-2024, 4-2-2024, AND 4-3-2024 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough said the vote to receive the minutes could be taken together if there was no objection.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to receive the minutes of March 12, 2024, April 2, 2024, and April 3, 2024.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)

There were no public acknowledgements.

PUBLIC COMMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

No one from the public was present or appeared to speak.

OLD BUSINESS – NONE

There was no old business posted.

NEW BUSINESS

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 CRANSTON SPECIAL REFERENDUM ELECTION THAT IS TO TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-10-5 ET. SEQ (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said he has a voter registration summary that indicates there are 60,193 registered voters as of the final canvass on the preliminary list. He reviewed the registration totals and party breakdowns with the Board. There are zero No Labels Party voters registered. He said the preliminary list was posted in accordance with state law on May 6 and an updated corrected copy was reposted on May 10.

Mr. Iglizzi said he didn't realize we had such a great report to breakdown registered voters. Mr. Lima said the Central Voter Registration System allows him to generate the report on demand which is very helpful.

No objections were filed.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to certify the final canvass list for the June 4, 2024 Cranston Special Referendum Election.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Mr. Lima had the Board sign the final canvass list notice so he could post the final canvass list in place of the preliminary list. He said the list is posted on a thumb drive and made available upon request to the public as opposed to printing the entire 800-page voter list.

B. THE BOARD MAY HEAR AN UPDATE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING OPERATIONAL PLANS FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED POLLING LOCATIONS; EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES; IN-PERSON EARLY AND EMERGENCY VOTING; MAIL BALLOT APPLICATION PROCESSING; POLLING PLACE SET-UP AND LOGISTICS; POLL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING; MAIL BALLOT DROP BOXES; AND ELECTION SECURITY (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said we are in very good shape right now and if the Board has any questions on the posted items he would be happy to answer them. He said he and Ms. Bucci spent the bulk of today over at Pastore Youth Center setting up booths and signage for early voting to begin tomorrow. He encouraged the Board to visit the early voting site while it is in operation over the next three weeks. We will have four people working daily, which is minimum staffing to cover breaks and lunches, with a fifth person starting for the final week.

Mr. Lima said mail ballot application volume is less than half of what we saw for the April 2 PPP, which was itself very low, with around 200 applications. Call volume has been almost nonexistent, which is a sign of low interest. That said, Mr. Lima said there is a city-wide voter information mailing with combined polling locations going out to 30,000 households later this week, which may bring some attention and interest to the special election. The mail ballot drop box will open first thing tomorrow morning and will be open and under surveillance 24/7.

Cranston is the only Title 17 election in Rhode Island on June 4, although a couple of towns do have financial town meetings. The state BOE will drop off our voting equipment the morning before the election at the six polling locations, which will be escorted by our office. This will happen concurrently while we are also setting up the polls with our Building Maintenance set-up crew. Every poll will have two DS-200 tabulators and spare PollPads beyond what is needed, as well as a mail ballot receptacle. There will be a minimum crew of one moderator, one clerk, one greeter, and four supervisors at every poll.

Hope Church will have an extra greeter stationed outside to assist voters due to the construction at the facility. Mr. Lima said with school in session at Cranston East, he will designate voter parking areas out front with 15 cones, and recommended the Board members be at East to assist with voters finding the entrance during the busy bus pick-up and drop-off periods in the morning and at 2 p.m. The first few cones will be marked as ADA parking spaces nearest to the gym entrance. Our police detail and the school resource officers will also be made aware to assist. Mr. Lima said around 100 RI National Guard soldiers will be conducting training the day of the election, however they won't be in the armory building itself, and the Guard will instruct them to park at the city park across the street to ensure there is plenty of parking for voters.

Mr. Lima said we are still planning on between 5% and 10% turnout for this Special Election, although he noted there was higher turnout in other town school bond special elections held in May in South Kingstown and Chariho. He said if early voting turnout is higher than expected, we have plenty of back-up poll workers to make adjustments to staffing if it is deemed necessary for June 4, although that is not expected.

Mr. McDonough asked about election security in the office, particularly given the increased tensions in a presidential election year. Mr. Lima said as long as we don't discuss specific operational details, we can discuss this in open session as there is no executive session posted. Mr. Lima noted he sent an email to the administration and Cranston Police regarding a recent incident where an individual with a threatening demeanor appeared in the office, although it did not rise to a criminal level and there were no specific threats made against staff or the office. Still, the incident made our staff feel uncomfortable and generated a conversation on what can be done with available resources to make improvements.

Mr. Lima said he and the staff are in agreement that adjustments should be made to the physical security of the office, and he will be applying for city funding and grant funding to make improvements. He said the expenditure is warranted given what is happening around the country to both secure elections and ensure our staff has a safe work environment. He is asking for quotes from local security companies to see what kind of price range various improvements would cost the city. Mr. Iglizzi asked if there is a police officer stationed at City Hall, and Mr. Lima said there is one sometimes but not at all times.

Mr. Piscopiello asked about a buzzer system for the outside doors of City Hall rather than keeping them unlocked, however Mr. Lima noted that would only be effective if there was a staff member or security personnel assigned at all times to run it, and we could run into ADA compliance and Open Meetings Act compliance issues if accessibility isn't maintained at all times. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Piscopiello noted that when the office is busy, by default it becomes impracticable to limit access control. However, it's during down time when few people are coming in that are potential threat actor could be of greater concern. Mr. Iglizzi noted the Board could request a police detail during times of high volume to provide additional security. Mr. Piscopiello said in this day and age we have to be on high alert and proactive. Mr. McDonough said our personnel should not be nervous about their safety coming into work. Mr. Lima said when incidents happen, which have occurred on a minor level several times now, it brings what's happening nationally closer to home.

#### C. THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO ISSUE ITS WARRANT FOR THE JUNE 4, 2024 CRANSTON SPECIAL REFERENDUM ELECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-8-3 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima showed the Board the election warrant and said it will run for two weeks in the Cranston Herald starting next week. He said it doubles as our Special Election polling location combination ad which is also required under state law. Bond counsel as reviewed and approved the warrant. Mr. Lima will also have it posted at City Hall, the Central Library, and the Cranston Senior Center.

Mr. McDonough asked if the City Council's budget votes affect the bond. Mr. Lima said it's his understanding that the bond is for authorization of up to \$40,000,000, and the city ultimately has the authority to decide which funding sources to use for various projects and can likewise change those sources at later dates and times as necessary. Mr. Lima said bond counsel has reviewed the legal ad for the bond question after the

Council's action, as has the city solicitor's office and School Dept. He said the bond act itself does not specify which projects the bond covers, and the warrant just lists the question as posed to voters per the bond act.

Mr. Iglizzi agreed. He said that bond acts like this have language that is intentionally designed for flexibility given various financing scenarios as to not limit what the city's option are, and it does not change the validity of the bond. In the Board's case, Mr. Iglizzi said our only role is to properly advertise the bond to voters via the warrant as required by law, which as presented it does.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to issue the Board's warrant for the June 4, 2024 Cranston Special Referendum Election.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

D. THE BOARD MAY HEAR AN UPDATE FROM THE REGISTRAR ON THE FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE CANVASSING AUTHORITY'S FY25 BUDGET REQUEST (NO VOTES TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said the budget passed. There were no substantial amendments, aside from the approval of the amendment that was requested by us regarding funding the two one-grade increases for two of the Board's staff positions. We will have \$225,000 to conduct the Fall 2024 elections which in Mr. Lima's view is adequate to meet our needs and expected expenditures for supplies, ads, police details, and poll workers.

E. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND AUTHORIZE THE REGISTRAR TO SUBMIT TITLE CHANGES, JOB DESCRIPTION UPDATES, AND ONE-GRADE INCREASES TO THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT FOR THE DATA ENTRY AND MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST POSITION TO BE THE "ELECTION OPERATIONS COORDINATOR," AND THE CANVASSING AIDE POSITION TO BE THE "DEPUTY REGISTRAR" TO TAKE EFFECT ON JULY 1, 2024, CONTINGENT UPON SUFFICIENT FUNDS BEING PROVIDED VIA FINAL ADOPTION OF THE FY25 BUDGET, PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-8-5(A)(4) (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said state law provides for the Board to appoint and employ all of its necessary clerical and technical assistants, and fix the compensation thereof, pursuant to the funds available to it in accordance with law. The Council amended the budget to provide funding for the Board's two requested grade changes, which passed and was enacted to be effective July 1, 2024.

Mr. Lima said the next action is for the Board to formally put in the grade changes, title changes, and corresponding job description updates to the Personnel Dept. Mr. Lima provided the job descriptions to the Board. He said the Teamsters signaled their support for this effort back in March and their correspondence is included. There is also a letter that was submitted as part of the Canvassing Authority's FY2025 budget request detailing the rationale for the changes. Mr. Lima said these items are all incorporated in a letter to be sent to Personnel signed by the Board which is before the Board for its approval presently.

Mr. Piscopiello said the Board all concurred this is something that needs to be done and agreed we should move forward. Mr. Lima noted for the record that the job title changes are for the Data Entry and Maintenance Specialist position to become the Election Operations Coordinator, and for the Canvassing Aide to become the Deputy Registrar, each with a corresponding one-grade increase and updated job descriptions to be filed.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to accept the job title and grade change rationale letter into the record and direct the Registrar to submit the job titles, job descriptions, and grade changes as presented to the Personnel Dept. to take effect July 1, 2024.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

#### F. THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO 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. McDonough

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to certify all mail ballot applications received by the deadline for the June 4, 2024 Cranston Special Referendum Election pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-10.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Mr. Lima said there are duplicate originals for the Board to sign, one for our minutes book permanent record and one for Personell.

Mr. Piscopiello, Mr. Rivelli, and Mr. Igliazzi each marveled at the pen Mr. Lima had the Board use to sign official paperwork. Mr. Lima said it is a blue Pilot G-2 10, and that he started using the pen when the General Manager of his previous employer, the Newport Gulls baseball team, would also use the same pen during meetings. Mr. Igliazzi said he would look into getting some of the same pens.

#### UPDATES FROM THE REGISTRAR (ALL ITEMS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY; NO VOTES TAKEN)

##### A. STATUS OF LEGISLATION PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE BOARD INTRODUCED, HEARD, OR ACTED UPON IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mr. McDonough gave the floor to Mr. Lima to provide his updates to the Board. Mr. Lima said the biggest bill the Board is supporting this year, the automatic disaffiliation bill for unaffiliated voters, recently passed the House unanimously. He said he will be meeting with the Senate President's Chief of Staff tomorrow to discuss the legislative priorities for local election clerks. He said there is also movement on the 3-day mail ballot application transmission bill, as well as the 35-day mail ballot drop box bill.

Mr. Lima said he is continuing to monitor other legislation. A new bill was put in this week by Chairperson Euer on behalf of the Secretary of State that would move the September primary back one week, instead of August, which is less ideal but still an improvement as it would give us an extra week to prepare for the General Election and more time to complete primary recounts and prepare mail ballots for military/overseas voters.

Mr. Lima said he has received no indication of where the local clerks' election bills stand in the Senate, including the precinct cap, newspaper ad, and write-in bill, although he is trying to find out. If there are any issues with the local bills, no one has communicated them to the RITCCA. Mr. Lima said the House has previously supported all three bills multiple times, however they are hesitant to vote on them again this year if the Senate will choose to not act on them without explanation. Mr. Lima said the RITCCA has informed the sponsors in both chambers that we are open to amendments or alternative ideas for all three bills if it means they can pass this session, as the ultimate goal is to provide some degree of relief to local election offices even if it's not everything we are seeking.

#### **B. REGISTRAR'S REPORT ON THE APRIL 15-19 FEDERAL ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION STANDARDS BOARD ANNUAL MEETING**

Mr. Lima said he attended the EAC Standards Board's Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Missouri. He had the opportunity to meet with election officials from all around the country and various U.S. territories, and it was interesting hearing the differences in election administration in various jurisdictions. Election security was a hot topic. Mr. Lima said he was also fascinated how in some U.S. territories election officials were still able to conduct successful elections despite tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, which showcased to him the ability of election administrators to overcome a wide array of challenges to serve the voters. Mr. Lima said a main focus of the EAC is implementing the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines 2.0 for the next generation of voting equipment. Mr. Lima said his attendance was paid for by the federal government at no cost to the city.

#### **C. STATUS REPORT ON ATTEMPTS TO REMEDY THE FISKEVILLE USPS NON-DELIVERY AREA AND ITS EFFECT ON OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL**

Mr. Lima said the Fiskeville resolution was co-sponsored and passed unanimously by the entire City Council and transmitted to Congressman Magaziner, Senator Reed, Senator Whitehouse, Secretary of State Amore, and USPS. He has not heard a response yet but plans to follow up on next steps with each office.

#### **D. REPORT ON 2024 HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES**

Mr. Lima said there were 8 registrations at East, 8 at the Apprenticeship Exploration School, and 18 at West, and the Board has met its legal obligation to conduct at least one drive at each high school in the city this year. He particularly thanked Emerson Brito for conducting the drives for our office, and John Fontaine, principal of Cranston West, for helping get the word out to students. The Secretary of State's office also attended



and provided assistance. A civics teacher at West has reached out asking for another drive, which our office will help conduct in cooperation with two students and the Secretary of State's office.

#### E. REPORT ON VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE PROJECTS INCLUDING NCOA AND 5-YEAR MAILING, AND HOW THEY ARE IMPACTED BY THE JUNE 4 SPECIAL ELECTION

Mr. Lima said he warned city officials that having a special election in a presidential year where we already had three other city-wide elections would make it difficult to conduct list maintenance, however the city needed to have the special election due to the higher reimbursement rate despite the challenges it would cause for our office. Federal law ties our hands, as there are updates to the voter rolls we cannot conduct in the 90-day lead-up to federal elections, so we now have an extremely limited window after the June 4 Special Election to conduct planned NCOA list maintenance. However, Mr. Lima confirmed with the SOS that the projects began prior to the federal deadline, so we should fortunately still be able to complete them. The five-year mailing will go to Cranston voters who have not cast a ballot in the last five years, asking if they want to update their registration, and mail pieces that come back undeliverable will allow us to make voters inactive which will eventually lead to their cancellation after the 2026 elections. Despite it being more difficult for our office due to the Special Election and the 30-day voter registration holdout backlog, we will still be able to legally complete most of our planned list maintenance projects thanks to the hard work of our staff.

#### ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

APPROVED by the Cranston Board of Canvassers: June 11, 2024