

**BOARD OF CANVASSERS
JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
Friday, August 11, 2023**

An advertised meeting of the Board of Canvassers was called to order at 9:50 AM by Carol Nelson-Lee at 93 Narragansett Ave. The following member was present.

Ken Newman - Member

Absent: Hugh Murphy - Member,
Kitty Wineberg - Alternate

Also present was: Keith Ford, Clerk to the Board of Canvassers

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Nelson-Lee opened the agenda with the review of the meeting minutes from July 17, 2023 and July 21, 2023. Mr. Newman made a motion to accept the minutes, as amended, from July 17, 2023 and July 21, 2023. Ms. Nelson-Lee seconded. So voted, unanimously.

Ms. Nelson-Lee opened the discussion on petitioning the Board of Elections (BOE) to refer all the Congressional District 1 (CD1) Nomination Papers back to the individual Boards of Canvassers for re-review. Ms. Nelson-Lee asked that Mr. Newman speak on the matter. Mr. Newman commented that he had asked for this to be placed on the agenda prior to the Board of Elections (BOE) meeting where they had decided to review the signatures from the Sabina Matos campaign. The BOE has asked the canvassers from the Congressional District 2 (CD2) towns to help in the review of all the signatures collected by the Matos campaign. Mr. Newman stated that he does not believe the Jamestown Board of Canvassers (BOC) needs to act on the matter. The BOE has a meeting on Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 9:30 AM, same time as our BOC meeting. Mr. Newman asked Mr. Ford to review the meeting and give the BOC a synopsis of what happened. Mr. Newman commented that it was Jamestown's finding of the suspected fraud which in turn had made other cities and towns review their papers. This cascaded into other town Boards of Canvassers contacting their police to report similar circumstances culminating in East Providence where their entire City Council on nomination papers with their address simply stating City Hall. Mr. Newman commented we should be proud of our Canvassing Clerk for his care and observation capacities, probably due to his previous position as a police dispatcher which means that he knows the community well and knows who may have died or other issues. The problem with using CD2 canvassers to review the nomination papers is that they do not have the institutional knowledge of the town, however was a good way to discourage potential bias. Mr. Newman commented that he believes that this moved the situation forward to close some of the gaps in the electoral system. The Secretary of States Office who is working closely with the Board of Elections. We are all concerned to put measures into effect to tighten up the gaps for the 2024 election. This would include tightening up the certification process with more training of the local Canvassers. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that this is about progress, openness and transparency not targeting political candidates. She also agreed with the issues with signatures. Ms. Nelson-Lee hopes that the BOE or SOS make legislation making the time between Nomination Papers and the printing of ballots longer so the respective agencies can have time for an investigation if needed. Mr. Newman commented one problematic area is the short time frame of gathering Nomination Papers it's possible that

people cut corners. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that while at the BOE the hearing on July 21st, 2023 she and Mr. Ford heard testimony regarding the issues around nomination papers and the limited time was a big issue. Mr. Newman commented training for potential candidates as another issue. He also pointed out the record number of minority candidates who recounted harassment during the process of collecting signatures. The BOE could only hear the complaints and not cure the problems and follow statute by allowing them on the ballot with 500 signatures or not. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that the SOS should set up a regional training for potential candidates to learn the process and requirements to run for a political office. Mr. Newman made the motion for a request of the SOS to devise a training session, potentially in regional format, for candidates running for office in terms of all of the steps including the end step of where the nomination papers must be returned to. This would include the process, guidelines and campaign finance including the roles of everyone in the process. Ms. Nelson-Lee seconded the motion. So Voted, passed unanimously.

Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that she would like to propose to all the other boards a discussion of the Nomination Papers Fraud and suggestions for how to re-review. She commented that the more we can share knowledge, be transparent, work with and help other boards is very valuable. For example, there is a statewide league of cities and towns and a town clerks association. She does not believe it has to be formal but working workshops/meetings where we talk about issues. Having one topic at each session. Mr. Newman commented that this is more of a BOE issue and if Mr. Nelson-Lee will bring this issue up with the Executive Director of the BOE.

Ms. Nelson-Lee moved to agenda item 'F' the agenda which is the Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote regarding Posting of Preliminary List of Jamestown Voters by 2:00 pm at the Town Clerks Office. Mr. Ford commented that there was a roundtable discussion about the Preliminary List being posted. He contacted the SOS for guidance and they advised it was required to post the list 5 days prior to the Final Canvass to allow for inspection for inclusions or omissions. He will be posting the list and have the list on a PDF file on the public computer.

Ms. Nelson-Lee moved to item 'E' Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote concerning the Certification of the Mail Ballot Applications. Mail Ballots were approved and signed by both Ms. Nelson-Lee and Mr. Newman.

Mr. Newman moved to adjourn and Ms. Nelson-Lee seconded at 10:29 AM. So Voted, unanimously.

Attest:



Keith Ford
Clerk to the Board of Canvassers

Cc: Town Council Members (5)
Board of Canvassers (4)
Roberta Fagan, Town Clerk