

**BOARD OF CANVASSERS
JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
February 26, 2024**

An advertised meeting of the Board of Canvassers was called to order at 9:33 AM by Carol Nelson- Lee at 93 Narragansett Ave. The following member(s) was present.

Ken Newman – Member
Hugh Murphy – Member
Kitty Wineberg – Alternate Member

Absent: Jennifer Thran – Alternate Member

Also present was: Keith Ford, Deputy Town Clerk / Clerk to the Board of Canvassers, Roberta Fagan, Town Clerk

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Nelson-Lee opened with the approval of minutes from February 8, 2024. All members reviewed the minutes. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented of a grammatical error. Mr. Ford will correct. Mr. Murphy made a motion to approve the February 19, 2024 as amended with a second by Mr. Newman. Vote: Ms. Nelson-Lee, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye; and Mr. Murphy, Aye. Vote Passed unanimously.

Ms. Nelson-Lee then opened the review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote on updates concerning the Elections Training and Advisory Committee. Mr. Newman commented that he is ready to call a meeting of the committee. He asked Mr. Ford to reach out to the members to find a date/time that works. He also commented that other towns are in the process of creating similar committees. Mr. Murphy commented that the committee should be run as a regular committee meeting following Roberts Rules and Open Meetings Act (OMA). Mr. Newman commented they will be following Roberts Rules and OMA. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that a committee member, Laura Goldstein has already created a pamphlet of information for voters for distribution if that's what the committee recommends. No Action/Vote Taken.

Ms. Nelson-Lee then opened the review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote concerning the use of the library as a possible polling location. Mr. Ford commented he has spoken with the Librarian and will be setting up a date to go in and speak with her regarding the issue. No date set at this time. No Action/Vote Taken.

Ms. Nelson-Lee opened the review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote on the 2024-2025 Budget. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that this agenda item goes hand and hand with the agenda item 're-districting' under new business. She commented that Mr. Ford has drawn up some facts in figures for voter turnout, how many voters in the Beavertail District (191), and a potential budget for re-districting. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that we have had two elections in 2023 and one in 2024 all within the 2023-2024 budget year. The Board works one shift a day for early voting which has saved the town \$2,352. The 2024-2025 we will have two elections with Board members working early voting which saves the town \$1,568. It was also mentioned during the vacancy of a board member from the time Ms. Jamison resigned from the

board and Ms. Thran joined saved the town a total of \$350. Thus, would ask for \$4,000 towards re-districting. Mr. Murphy commented that he would like to see a 10% increase in the Board of Canvassers Salary due to the Board having to work early voting. Mr. Murphy made a motion to increase the budget for 2024-2025 for early voting, poll worker number increase, and an increase to the salary of the Board of Canvassers with a second by Mr. Newman. Vote: Ms. Nelson-Lee, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye; and Mr. Murphy, Aye. Vote Passed unanimously. A discussion ensued regarding the increase in salary which would increase the line item \$523 total split between the 5 members. A discussion ensued. Mr. Newman commented that there are issues we need to resolve prior to budgeting such as regulations like minimum and maximum number of voters. Mr. Murphy made a motion to table the budget to the end of the agenda with a second by Mr. Newman. Vote: Ms. Nelson-Lee, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye; and Mr. Murphy, Aye. Vote Passed unanimously.

Ms. Nelson-Lee opened the review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote concerning updates on the “No Labels, Rhode Island” petition papers. Mr. Ford commented that he has spoken with Detective Petrarca with the Jamestown Police. During his investigation he was able to contact just one of the signature collectors who’s petition paper contained two signatures, one of which was flagged as fraudulent. That individual stated they collected signatures in front of a store and did not ask people for identification. Detective Petrarca has decided not to pursue charges on that individual. The other suspected fraudulent signatures have been referred to the Public Integrity Unit within the Attorney General’s Office. Ms. Nelson-Lee asked about the Notary Complaint with the Petition Papers having notary have two distinct signatures. Mr. Ford commented that the Department of Administration has investigated and the notary has claimed due to her hand hurting from signing so many she used her non-dominant hand to sign. The Department of Administration has issued a warning to the notary to always use her signature on file. A discussion ensued. Mr. Newman made a motion to have Mr. Ford compose a letter asking the status of the fraudulent signatures from the Matos Campaign in the CD1 race with a second from Mr. Murphy. Vote: Ms. Nelson-Lee, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye; and Mr. Murphy, Aye. Vote Passed unanimously.

Ms. Nelson-Lee opened the review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote concerning the statewide Coalition of Board of Canvassers ad hoc committee. Mr. Newman commented that the committee has had it second meeting. They are still working out how to structure the group. The Attorney General’s Office did have a rendering as to how many board members from each town can be on the committee, which was only one member as to not violate Open Meeting Act. No Action/Vote Taken.

Ms. Nelson-Lee then opened the review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote concerning Re-Districting the voting districts from 2 to 3. Ms. Nelson-Lee shared an e-mail she received from Mr. Nunez, Executive Director of the Board of Elections. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that the Beavertail District has 191 voters according to Mr. Ford’s findings which corresponds to Prudence/Hog Islands voting district numbers. Mr. Ford referred the Board to Rhode Island General Law Title 17 Chapter 11 Section 1 that has the requirements for voting districts listing no more than 3,000 and no less than 500 total eligible voters. Mr. Newman commented that this is a big issue, as Prudence/Hog Island have a ferry system which is different that Jamestown and that has a lot to do with voter turnout. A lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Newman asked how polling places equipment and supplies are delivered to their respected locations. Mr. Ford commented that a few days prior to any election the Board of Elections delivers the supplies and voting equipment off to each site. Ms. Wineberg commented there must be an established polling location for each election storm or not. Mr. Ford commented that the polling location must all have a bi-partisan pair of supervisors, as well as a moderator and clerk. Currently there is only one poll worker in that district.

Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that a potential polling location may be the Country Club (Golf Course) which is north of the Great Creek. Ms. Wineberg pointed out that the Country Club is south of the Great Creek. Mr. Ford commented he believed that the Board of Elections failed the Country Club due to the small area at the top of the stairs near the elevator. Mr. Newman commented that he still does not understand where the sites will be. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented on the possible need for a Beavertail Fire Station as well as using the Beavertail Lighthouse as a polling place. Mr. Ford commented that the Lighthouse may not pass the inspection due to ADA compliance and parking lot issues. Mr. Wineberg commented that the lighthouse would not be allowed by the Board of Elections to be used during a storm as it's in a storm surge area, the worst area in town to be during a storm and the park is closed off during storms. A lengthy discussion ensued. Ms. Wineberg commented that it may come to the Town hiring someone to write a report outlining these issues and present them to the Board of Elections. Ms. Wineberg also commented we need a statement from the Board of Elections regarding what information is needed for re-districting. Mr. Newman made a motion to send a letter to the Board of Elections requesting what is required, permissible, non-permissible, what are the requirements for polling locations as well as if there is any inkling on going to all mail ballots or all early voting with no election day voting with a second by Mr. Murphy. A discussion ensued. Mr. Newman commented on there are many bills put forward by the Secretary of State and the Board of Elections to cover issues statewide. Ms. Fagan commented that the The League of Cities and Towns does have legislative priorities that are published and they can be forwarded to the Board at their pleasure. With a motion on the table, Ms. Nelson-Lee requested a vote. Vote: Ms. Nelson-Lee, Aye; and Mr. Newman, Aye. Vote Passed unanimously.

Ms. Nelson-Lee re- opened the review, discussion, and/or action and/or vote on the 2024-2025 Budget. Ms. Wineberg commented that with the whirlwind we created with the previous discussions we should ask to raise the budget for re-districting. Ms. Nelson-Lee commented that she would like to increase for re-districting and Board Salary increase. Mr. Newman commented that he is not inclined to ask for an increase for re-districting without a plan in place or enough information for the cost of the re-districting. A discussion ensued. Mr. Newman made a motion to approve the budget with a 10% increase in the Board Salary in addition to \$4,000 increase to Salary, Clerical for re-districting with a second by Ms. Nelson-Lee. Vote: Ms. Nelson-Lee, Aye; and Mr. Newman, Aye. Vote Passed Unanimously.

Mr. Murphy excused himself from the meeting at 10:59 AM.

Mr. Newman made a motion to adjourn with a second by Ms. Nelson-Lee. Vote: Ms. Nelson-Lee, Aye; and Mr. Newman, Aye. Vote Passed Unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 11:17 AM.

Attest:



Keith Ford
Clerk to the Board of Canvassers

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