

**JAMESTOWN ELECTIONS TRAINING AND ADVISORY AD HOC COMMITTEE
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024
10:00 a.m.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Linda Jamison, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting of the Jamestown Elections Training and Advisory Ad hoc Committee to order at 10:02 a.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall small conference room at 93 Narragansett Avenue.

II. ROLL CALL

A scheduled meeting of the Jamestown Elections Training and Advisory Ad hoc Committee was held on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. Committee members present were as follows: Ms. Laura Goldstein, Ms. Linda Jamison, Ms. Daphne Meredith, Ms. Marlene Murphy, and Mr. Kenneth Newman.

Also in attendance was Mr. Robert Berczuk, Publisher of the Jamestown Press.

III. MINUTES

A) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/ or Vote:

1.) Minutes of the: Elections Training and Advisory Ad hoc Committee meeting of April 9, 2024

Mr. Newman moved to waive the reading of the minutes. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion and the motion was approved as follows: Ms. Goldstein, Aye; Ms. Jamison, Aye; Ms. Meredith Aye; Ms. Murphy, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye. The vote passed unanimously.

Ms. Jamison requested corrections or additions to the minutes. There being none, Ms. Murphy moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion and it was approved as follows: Ms. Goldstein, Aye; Ms. Jamison, Aye; Ms. Meredith Aye; Ms. Murphy, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye. The vote passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS / OPEN FORUM

No public comment was given

Ms. Nancy Beye entered the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Due to the presence of Mr. Berczuk, Ms. Jamison suggested opening the discussion with agenda items pertinent to him. Discussion proceeded out of agenda order but is otherwise recorded here in the appropriate categories, at the appropriate times.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: Training Program and Development

1.) Update on Jamestown voter brochure and dissemination

Ms. Goldstein presented the latest version of the Brochure, incorporating the changes suggested by the Secretary of State's office. Mr. Berczuk discussed paper quality and printing costs and informed the committee that to print and insert the brochure in the Jamestown Press would cost an estimated \$850 to \$900. He noted that he is willing to absorb the cost. The conversation turned to the possibility of using the Jamestown Brochure as a statewide template. Mr. Berczuk brainstormed with the committee, methods for disseminating the Brochure statewide. He noted that Jamestown is the only newspaper in the state that has "total market concentration," with a copy of the paper mailed to every address in the community, weekly. Ultimately, responsibility for statewide dissemination will rest with other communities or state agencies. Other sources of funding for voter education were discussed generally, with both the Rhode Island Foundation and the Knight Foundation specifically mentioned.

Conversation turned to the voter supplement produced in the past by the Jamestown Press in contested elections to inform voters about candidate positions and referendums. The supplement is financed through partisan advertisements appearing within. Mr. Berczuk indicated a willingness to produce a supplement for the 2024 general election. Ms. Goldstein stressed the importance of dissemination prior to early voting.

The Committee thanked Mr. Berczuk for his attendance and participation and, in particular, for his ongoing commitment to inform and educate the electorate of Jamestown; he left the meeting at 10:56 a.m.

Ms. Goldstein moved to approve the Brochure as amended to incorporate feedback from the Secretary of State's office. Mr. Newman seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: Ms. Beye, Aye; Ms. Goldstein, Aye; Ms. Jamison, Aye; Ms. Meredith Aye; Ms. Murphy, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye. The vote passed unanimously.

Ms. Meredith moved that the committee generate a generic version of the Jamestown Brochure, omitting references specific to Jamestown. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: Ms. Beye, Aye; Ms. Goldstein, Aye; Ms. Jamison, Aye; Ms. Meredith Aye; Ms. Murphy, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye. The vote passed unanimously.

Further regarding dissemination of the Brochure, the Committee generated the following initial list of locations for placement of copies of the Brochure and/or its QR code: the Town Recreation Center, BankNewport, the senior center, the library, the hardware store, the transfer station, Town Hall, the Jamestown Museum and the Jamestown Arts Center. Ms. Meredith asked if we are able to post sandwich boards at the two big intersections on Narragansett Avenue. Mr. Newman volunteered to raise that issue at the Board of Canvassers.

B) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: Advisory Role

1.) Continue to work on list of issues/problems and next steps

Ms. Jamison noted that this Committee's charge is to report up to the following bodies: the local Board of Canvassers, the Association of Local Boards of Canvassers, the State Board of Elections and the Secretary of State's office. The following issues/problems/areas for

improvement have been identified to date, with new items as of this meeting appearing **bolded and in italics**:

- General election safety and orderly voting, including maintaining and managing appropriate voter conduct at the polls and when to require/request the presence of law enforcement;
- The voting process, including, for example, how to accommodate both poll checkers and First Amendment auditors in accordance with the law
- ***Standardize/make uniform the voter registration process in all communities, including where and when voters can register***
- How to address voter concerns raised at the polls, such as implicit partisanship (example: the color of signage, the color of the “I Voted” stickers)
- How best to administer the process of voting when there are long lines
- The education of prospective candidates to insure access for all
- The need for voter education concerning the consistency of signatures to avoid invalidation of signatures
- Future voter education/outreach
- Education of poll workers re: legality of photos/videos in polling place
- Track status of pending “Disaffiliation” bill in State Legislature to address voter confusion/lack of clarity on the topic; ***emphasize importance of uniform language regarding disaffiliation: each community uses different language to inform voters of their status when they disaffiliate***
- Collaboration with local press/news outlets to insure factual accuracy and timeliness of voter education and informational materials/articles
- Mail-in ballots, general issues, including voter confusion regarding the application for, and multistep processing of, these ballots, and the perceived unreliability of the U.S. postal service
- Improve appearance of ballots, especially primary ballots, to reduce voter confusion
- How best to manage, and give voters notice of, changes in polling location
- Accountability and accessibility of State Board of Elections and its members
- Problems with State Board of Elections’ required documentation, record-keeping, and follow-up; issues with the accessibility, response, clarity of published materials and “presence” of the BOE; examples:
 - “Affidavit of Ballot Box Inspection”--no signature line
 - “Discrepancy Reports”--no follow-up: ballots and training materials are often confusing, especially on line
 - Ballot tracking issues attributable to how ballot is voted and/or delivered
 - Inconsistent calendar items, for example: incorrect delegate deadlines in published materials
 - Raise the possibility of Ad hoc committees reviewing BOE published materials for clarity and consistency and to eliminate ambiguity
 - Ethical and legal issues arising from statutory ambiguity (example: what constitutes “running for office?”)
 - How can BOE be more present, especially in high-turnout elections?
 - Can materials comparable to the FEC’s materials for campaigns be generated at the state level?

- **Update poll worker materials to reflect actual issues that arise during the conduct of elections**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/ or Vote:

- 1.) Meet with Robert Burzcek, publisher Jamestown Press and discuss collaboration regarding voter education and information. (Please see above).

B) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote:

- 1.) Begin to work on recommendations/solution for issues / problems (Please see above).

C) Review, discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote:

- 1.) Secretary of State, Board of Elections, and Jamestown Board of Canvassers to review Brochure.

The Secretary of State has reviewed and changes have been voted on, above; others pending.

Action items:

General poll worker information:

- The Committee to generate a list of helpful tips for poll workers for use on election days

Dissemination of Brochure:

- Mr. Newman to follow up on the question of sandwich boards

Outreach to BOE with a view to future collaboration/service:

Ms. Jamison to seek a meeting with Mr. Randy Jackvony of the BOE.

Mr. Newman moved to approve the following dates for subsequent meetings, with Ms.

Goldstein to serve as chairperson pro tempore in Ms. Jamison's absence on May 1 and 8: April 24th, May 1st, May 8th, May 15th all at 10:00 a.m. Ms. Murphy volunteered to act as recording secretary during Ms. Meredith's absences on April 24 and May 15.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Newman made a motion to adjourn with a second by Ms. Goldstein. Vote: Ms. Beye, Aye; Ms. Goldstein, Aye; Ms. Jamison, Aye; Ms. Meredith Aye; Ms. Murphy, Aye; Mr. Newman, Aye. The vote passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Attest:



Daphne Meredith
Secretary

Cc: Town Council Members(5); Roberta Fagan, Town Clerk

