

CITY OF CRANSTON  
BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
Regular Meeting of January 17, 2017 – APPROVED MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on January 17, 2017, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on January 13, 2017. The meeting was called to order by the Acting Chairperson, Cynthia Fogarty, at 12:02 p.m. It was held in the Canvassing Office at Cranston City Hall, Room 100.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cynthia Fogarty, Randall Jackvony

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ed Lemoi

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 12-8-16
- III. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS – ED LEMOI
- IV. UPDATES AND REMARKS
  - A. REGISTRAR – NICHOLAS LIMA
- V. OLD BUSINESS
  - A. MATTERS PERTAINING TO GENERAL ELECTION OF 11-8-16
- VI. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. MEETING SCHEDULE
- VII. COMMENTS OF BOARD MEMBERS
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Lima informed the Board that there was no indication that the open session meeting minutes of 12-8-16, recorded by Registrar Steven Sepe, had been approved.

MOTION: By Mr. Jackvony and seconded by Ms. Fogarty to approve the open session meeting minutes of 12-8-16.  
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY – VOICE VOTE

CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACTING CHAIRPERSON – Cynthia Fogarty

Ms. Fogarty indicated that Chairman Lemoi did not provide her with any pressing communications or announcements for the Board.

Mr. Lima requested guidance on protocol for the notation of member absences in the record, and under what circumstances to contact an Alternate Board Member. He said

Chairman Lemoi indicated he was unable to attend the meeting due to an illness. Ms. Fogarty asked what the status of the two alternate members was, and Mr. Lima indicated their terms both expire in March 2017. Mr. Jackvony indicated that Mr. Sepe had attempted to contact the alternates to participate on multiple occasions without success since their appointment. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Fogarty suggested reaching out to the new Democratic and Republican City Committee chairpersons to alert them to the upcoming vacancies and their responsibility to submit lists of five names to the mayor for prospective appointment by the City Council. It was noted that, in addition to the two alternates, Ms. Fogarty's term was also due to expire in March 2017.

### UPDATES AND REMARKS

REGISTRAR – Nicholas Lima

Mr. Lima formally introduced himself to the Board, describing his background as a graduate of Rhode Island College, his work in the communications field, and as a politically active resident of Cranston for the last 10 years. He described his philosophy that his job as registrar, beyond the management of the Canvassing Office's day-to-day operations, was to follow the direction of the Board, and not to make policy decisions, but to enforce decisions as directed by the Board.

Ms. Fogarty said Mr. Lima's take on the position is correct, and added that the registrar is also tasked with providing guidance to the Board members in making decisions. Mr. Jackvony said that Steven Sepe would often provide research for the Board as needed to aid in their decision-making.

Mr. Lima said he would benefit in his new role from the combined four decades of experience and practical knowledge possessed by the canvassing staff, Maria Madonna and Theresa Bucci, and he was likewise fortunate that former Registrar Jaclyn Caruolo kept extensive paper and electronic records in the office that he would be reviewing to help guide his transition into the position.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### A. MATTERS PERTAINING TO GENERAL ELECTION OF 11-8-16

Mr. Lima mentioned that Chairman Lemoi, in a phone conversation prior to the meeting, indicated to him that the most pressing issues from the November 2016 election that had a negative impact on the office's operations were the significant increase seen in emergency "early" voting prior to the election, and the considerable effort required to tabulate write-in votes following the election, many of which were of a frivolous or inconsequential nature.

Ms. Fogarty and Mr. Jackvony agreed. Mr. Lima said he attended the January meeting of the state Board of Elections, and he said that the state Board was collaborating with the Secretary of State's Office to address or mitigate the aforementioned issues, among many other changes to state election law that both entities are seeking to have

introduced during the current session of the General Assembly. Ms. Fogarty said Mr. Lima could ask the Cranston City Council to pass a resolution in support of these bills when they are introduced.

Mr. Lima also said he met with Rob Rock, director of elections for the Secretary of State, and that he was joining the Rhode Island Town and City Clerk's Association to keep up-to-date on any proposed changes to Title 17 and other rules and regulations.

Mr. Lima presented a full update to the Board regarding 13 proposed changes to election laws that the state Board is considering, including changes to write-in tabulation, emergency voting, and other statutes designed to have a cost-saving or time-saving impact, or streamline outdated and antiquated elements of the elections process.

Ms. Fogarty asked if there were any updates from the Cranston Police Department regarding two confidential matters referred to them by the Board for investigation through Steven Sepe in December 2016. Mr. Lima indicated the Canvassing Department had not received any communication from the Cranston Police since the matters were referred, but he said he would follow up with the Police Department to inquire as to the disposition of the two matters if he did not hear anything soon.

Mr. Lima said that one of the first items brought to his attention when he took office as the new registrar was that most of the Certificates of Office created after the election contained errors, either of a grammatical nature or, in the case of Council certificates, that they had a signature line for the mayor instead of the city clerk, who actually presided over the swearing in thereof.

The certificates had to be recreated before being sent to the City Council and School Committee members. The office staff was able to reproduce them, however they needed to be signed once again by the members of the Board, which Ms. Fogarty and Mr. Jackvony did. Mr. Lima said Chairman Lemoi indicated he would stop by the office as soon as possible to provide his signature on the certificates.

Mr. Lima asked if the Board was aware of any other pending matters relating to the General Election of 11-8-16, and the Board members indicated there were none that they were aware of.

## NEW BUSINESS

### A. MEETING SCHEDULE

Given that the composition of the Board would be changing soon in the month of March, Mr. Lima asked for guidance regarding the upcoming Board meeting schedule. He said that Jaclyn Caruolo would often bring her proposed annual operating budget to the Board for review and approval, although it was his understanding that this was not the process undertaken by Steven Sepe. Mr. Lima asked if a meeting should be held to discuss the FY 2018 Canvassing Department budget with the Board. He also asked if a special orientation meeting should be scheduled for new Board members in April, or if

the Board would prefer to have a first meeting as newly constituted on an as-needed basis later in the year.

Mr. Jackvony indicated a formal meeting to discuss the budget would not be necessary, however, he offered to attend the Council budget meetings with Mr. Lima in order to provide any assistance needed in justifying the budget as presented.

Mr. Lima also requested direction for contingencies in the event the Council failed to appoint new members in the month of March and an urgent matter requiring the Board's attention came up. It was noted that Ms. Fogarty's term, in such an instance, would likely continue until her successor was so named and qualified, according to statute. Mr. Lima said he would closely monitor the appointment process for new Board members to ensure a full Board would be in place in a timely manner if any emergencies were to arise.

Mr. Jackvony said an orientation meeting for new members, whenever they are appointed, would not be necessary in its own right until there was sufficient cause to hold a meeting.

#### COMMENTS OF BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Lima inquired as to the swearing-in process for the new members when they are appointed, as there were no records in the Canvassing Office pertaining to a swearing in or oath of office for the Board. Ms. Fogarty said that City Clerk Maria Wall handled the oath of office and swearing in the past.

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: By Mr. Jackvony and seconded by Ms. Fogarty to adjourn.  
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY – VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas J. Lima  
Registrar  
Cranston Board of Canvassers

APPROVED by the Cranston Board of Canvassers: February 16, 2017