

CITY OF CRANSTON
BOARD OF CANVASSERS
Meeting of July 30, 2026 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on July 30, 2026, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on July 21, 2026. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Kirk McDonough, at 5:30 p.m. It was held in Council Chambers, Third Floor, at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anthony Mastantuono, Quilcia Moronta, Kirk McDonough

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Jason Case (Board Alternate) Bill White (Board Alternate), Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections), Richard Mancini (Fire Chief), Anthony Sassone-McHugh (Lieutenant, Cranston Police), Rob Rock (Deputy Secretary of State)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda** (*votes may be taken*)
- II. Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings** (*votes may be taken*)
- III. Executive Session** (*votes may be taken on all items*)
 - A. The Board may vote to enter executive session in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5 (a)(3) to discuss and/or vote on a matter related to security (*votes may be taken*)
 1. Election security table-top exercise testing the Board of Canvassers Continuity of Operations Plan (*votes may be taken*)
 2. Adoption of a revised Board of Canvassers Continuity of Operations Plan (*votes may be taken*)
 - B. The Board may vote to close executive session, and the chairperson may report on any votes taken (*votes may be taken*)
 - C. The Board may vote to seal the minutes of the executive session (*votes may be taken*)
- IV. Items for Discussion, Vote, and/or Other Action** (*votes may be taken on all items*)
 - A. The Board may vote to certify to the Secretary of State the final form of referenda to be placed on the Nov. 3, 2026 General Election ballot, including six local bond questions, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-7 (*votes may be taken*):
 1. Local bond questions:
 1. Question 6 – Storm Drainage Improvements \$4,000,000
 2. Question 7 – Public Buildings \$2,000,000
 3. Question 8 – Playgrounds and Athletic fields \$4,000,000
 4. Question 9 – Streets, Sidewalks and Bridges \$8,000,000
 5. Question 10 – Fire and Public Safety Equipment \$8,000,000
 6. Question 11 – Schools and School Facilities \$25,000,000

- B. The Board may vote to certify all mail ballot applications that are received to date in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-10 (*votes may be taken*)
- C. The Board may discuss and enact a policy to mitigate concerns regarding electioneering inside and within 50 feet of the entrance of the off-site early voting location, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-8-5 (a)(2) and 17-19-49 (*votes may be taken*)
- V. **Updates from the Registrar / Director of Elections** (*no votes taken on any items*)
 - A. Early Voting Staffing and Logistics
 - B. Primary Equipment Allocations
 - C. PLEJ 2026 Summer Convening
 - D. International Association of Government Officials Annual Conference
- VI. **Adjournment** (*vote may be taken*)

I. Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda (*votes may be taken*)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve the agenda as posted.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Mastantuono to approve the agenda as posted.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY – VOICE VOTE

II. Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings (*votes may be taken*)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the prior meeting as officially posted.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Mastantuono to approve the prior meeting minutes.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

III. Executive Session (*votes may be taken*)

A. The Board may vote to enter executive session in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5 (a)(3) to discuss and/or vote on a matter related to security (*votes may be taken*)

1. Election security table-top exercise testing the Board of Canvassers Continuity of Operations Plan (*votes may be taken*)

2. Adoption of a revised Board of Canvassers Continuity of Operations Plan (*votes may be taken*)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to enter executive session.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Mastantuono to enter executive session in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5 (a)(3) to discuss the two matters listed on the agenda.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

The Board entered executive session at 5:31 p.m.

The Board reconvened from executive session at 6:48 p.m.

B. The Board may vote to close executive session, and the chairperson may report on any votes taken (*votes may be taken*)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to exit executive session.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Ms. Moronta to exit from executive session and resume open session.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

C. The Board may vote to seal the minutes of the executive session (*votes may be taken*)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to seal the minutes of the executive session.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Ms. Moronta to seal the minutes of the executive session.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Mr. McDonough disclosed that one vote was taken in executive session. Mr. Lima said given the nature of the vote, it can be disclosed as part of the public record.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Ms. Moronta to adopt a revised Cranston Board of Canvassers Continuity of Operations Plan.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

IV. Items for Discussion, Vote, and/or Other Action (*votes may be taken on all items*)

A. The Board may vote to certify to the Secretary of State the final form of referenda to be placed on the Nov. 3, 2026 General Election ballot, including six local bond questions, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-7 (*votes may be taken*):

1. Local bond questions:

- 1. Question 6 – Storm Drainage Improvements \$4,000,000**
- 2. Question 7 – Public Buildings \$2,000,000**
- 3. Question 8 – Playgrounds and Athletic fields \$4,000,000**
- 4. Question 9 – Streets, Sidewalks and Bridges \$8,000,000**
- 5. Question 10 – Fire and Public Safety Equipment \$8,000,000**

6. Question 11 – Schools and School Facilities \$25,000,000

Mr. McDonough read the six questions and reviewed the certification document with the Board. Mr. Lima said our legal counsel and city bond counsel has reviewed this, and he has also sent it for review to all city departments with bonds on the ballot, the administration, and the Finance Department. He said he will work with bond counsel to develop voter communication materials for these bonds including the city-wide mailer, legal ad, election warrant, and website posting.

Mr. Lima said these are in the form passed by the General Assembly. He noted that Question 11 has no comma after “shall enact,” unlike the others, because that is how the General Assembly drafted it. Mr. Lima also said the City Council has voted to authorize the Board to certify these questions specifically for the November 2026 General Election, as the enabling legislation gave the Council the option of instead choosing a special election.

Mr. Lima said that following the Board’s action, he will hand-deliver these to the Secretary of State’s office tomorrow, keep an electronic scanned copy, and also keep a duplicate original copy in our vault.

Mr. McDonough asked the Board if there were any questions, and there were none.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Mastantuono to certify the final form of the six (6) listed bond questions to the Rhode Island Secretary of State for placement on the Nov. 3, 2026 General Election ballot in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-7.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

B. The Board may vote to certify all mail ballot applications that are received to date in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-10 (votes may be taken)

Mr. Lima said the mail ballot applications certification sheets completed to date are in the office awaiting the Board’s signature following their public vote to certify.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Ms. Moronta to certify all mail ballot applications received to date.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

C. The Board may discuss and enact a policy to mitigate concerns regarding electioneering inside and within 50 feet of the entrance of the off-site early voting location, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-8-5 (a)(2) and 17-19-49 (votes may be taken)

Mr. McDonough presented the draft directive to the Board. Mr. White asked if this has always been law, and Mr. McDonough said it is for Election Day but there is ambiguity around early voting because a law has not been enacted by the General Assembly that specifically mentions it.

Ms. Moronta said she felt that all rules that apply on Election Day polling locations should also apply to early voting. Mr. Lima said the law is not crystal clear, although he does feel the current legal definition of polling places includes early voting, which means the 50 foot prohibition on

electioneering should already apply, however, the state BOE has not taken the same position, opting to take no position in the newly adopted regulations.

Mr. Lima noted that has left enforcement up to us, and he drafted the directive with the assistance of the Board's legal counsel, Asst. Solicitor Iglizzi, and was careful to use the word "requests" respecting the 50-foot boundary, as to not imply that the directive could result in legal action for non-compliance. He noted there are other statutes that already apply, such as election interference or disorderly conduct, if someone ignored the 50 foot boundary and was additionally being disruptive to the voting process or intentionally blocking access by standing in the doorway. The directive includes a direct reference to the existing law, which defines polling locations as the "building in which voting is conducted" at any primary or election. He noted he did not understand why the BOE seems to consider early voting sites as not being a "building in which voting is conducted."

Mr. Case expressed concern that not enforcing the 50-foot rule at early voting could jeopardize the orderly conduct of the election, given the significant number of campaign workers who stand at the early voting site around the 50-foot line historically. Mr. Lima noted the new regulation does apply inside the polling place.

Ms. Moronta noted that the 50-foot line is narrowly scoped and limited only to the active times voting is ongoing during an election. Mr. McDonough said he has spoken to the BOE and expressed his displeasure with them taking no position on that, as it has put the issue on the individual 39 local boards to handle it in different, non-uniform ways. Mr. McDonough said doing nothing is not an option considering how active our early voting site is, and how many candidates and sign holders appear at it.

Mr. Mastantuono noted that if the white line is put down, even if it can't be strictly enforced, candidates will respect it and self-regulate voluntarily, as they don't want the appearance of disrespecting voters' rights. Mr. Lima noted that the line has been put down at our early voting site for the last 10 elections going back to 2020 without issue, and we are following the same longstanding practice with this directive. Mr. White asked if we have to put the line down throughout the 20-day period, and Mr. Lima said it is reapplied after it rains or fades.

Mr. McDonough noted that our line is particularly needed because we use an off-site location with a tight entrance. Mr. Lima said in 2024 there were days when he counted as many as 30 candidates and sign holders ringing the 50-foot line. He does not expect this to be an issue this year, as there is a self-policing element, as we are requesting that they respect the line even if we can't enforce it with penalties.

Mr. Case asked about campaign workers taking up parking spaces. Mr. Lima said it is already our informal policy to notify the campaigns to ask their volunteers to not park in the prime parking spaces that are needed by voters, due to the finite parking available, which has likewise generally been honored by the campaigns through multiple election cycles. Much like this directive, Mr. Lima noted that is also a request, and not a legally enforceable statute or regulation, which candidates generally respect because they do not want to make it more difficult for voters with disabilities or who are elderly to find parking near to the early voting polling place entrance.

Mr. McDonough noted that it is the Board taking this position formally to issue the directive to Mr. Lima and the Canvassing Authority staff to implement the 50-foot marker, and communicate to candidates that the Board respectfully requests it be adhered to.

MOTION: By Mr. Mastantuono and seconded by Ms. Moronta to enact the 50-foot early voting policy directive.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Mastantuono, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

V. Updates from the Registrar / Director of Elections (no votes taken on any items)

A. Early Voting Staffing and Logistics

Mr. Lima said at this time we are all set for early voting staffing for September, and most likely for November as well. He said that due to budget constraints we will have fewer total early voting poll workers this year, however they are all experienced. Mr. Mastantuono asked if they attend a training class, and Mr. Lima said they do. He added that many of the returning staff worked in both 2022 and 2024, and some additionally worked early voting in 2020 so have been with us since the beginning. Most are also normal Election Day moderators, clerks, and supervisors who have been working in some cases for 20 years or more.

He said their experience helps to ensure our office staff back at City Hall can focus on our many other election tasks. Mr. Lima noted he does go to early voting in the mornings at opening and at closing each day, is in frequent contact with the bi-partisan moderators throughout the day, both of whom have been working since 2020, and also is only 5 minutes away from Pastore if any issues occur. Mr. Lima noted that our logistics are also supported by Parks and Rec., who have staff coming in early and staying late to open and close the building for us. He noted that Steven Piscopiello, the Director of Parks and Rec., served on the Board in 2024 and is very familiar with our operational needs.

Mr. Lima noted that parking is tighter this year, as Building Inspections, Community Development, and CCAP also share office space in the building, however we will be designating sufficient spaces as voter parking only to ensure voters have enough parking available throughout the period. He said that Community Development and Parks and Rec. staff have agreed to give up many of their assigned parking spaces in front of the building for the duration of early voting, and we will put up temporary signage for voters. He said that as a city building, Pastore Youth Center checks every box for interior space, access control, security, ADA compliance, and facilities, with parking being the lone issue, which is why we do everything we can to mitigate it with cones and signage. While the General Election will be busier, he noted the Primary will be fairly light for turnout.

Mr. Lima reminded the Board members that they will need to assist in setting up the early voting site after the Final Canvass meeting on Aug. 19, which will take a couple of hours. Early voting begins at 8:30 a.m. the next morning, and early voting workers arrive at 8 a.m. Mr. Lima said the objective is to have the room organized and signage all up for when they come in so they can focus on opening the polling place in time for 8:30.

B. Primary Equipment Allocations

Mr. McDonough said that for years, we have sent our requested equipment allocations for early voting and Election Day to the Board of Elections, which has historically worked with us to provide any additional equipment requested above their minimums, especially when it comes to voting booths and PollPads. He said that our numbers were cut down dramatically this year, and is asking Mr. Lima to provide justification for any requested increases. Mr. McDonough said state law allows us to request what we believe we need, and that while Mr. Lima has responded to request the additional equipment on behalf of the Board, we are still waiting to hear back. Mr. McDonough felt that the relationship between the BOE and local boards was becoming adversarial rather than cooperative. He said there were concerns that we would not be provided enough check-in PollPads for the supervisors we have already hired and scheduled for training classes.

Ms. Moronta asked if there is anything the Board can do, and what allocations were low. Mr. Lima said that the initial spreadsheet he received had total numbers of supervisors and voting booths that were well below not only what we normally receive, but were lower than the minimum requirements in state law. Mr. Lima said this may be an error and that they will be adjusted, but we haven't heard back just yet. For example while we normally receive between 12 and 15 voting booths at most locations, except for smaller precincts, the initial allocation only listed between 1 and 4 booths per location.

Ms. Moronta expressed her frustration and said she was concerned with lines forming if we do not have enough equipment and poll workers assigned. Mr. McDonough said if there are issues on Election Day, the attention will be on us, not the BOE, as the Board is running the election, and we have a responsibility to our voters to ensure the polling places operate smoothly. Mr. Lima said he is confident the BOE will review the initial numbers and adjust them accordingly, but perhaps not to the higher levels we would like to see based on equipment availability. He said there is still a couple of weeks to make these adjustments before they start loading the trucks for deliveries.

C. PLEJ 2026 Summer Convening

Mr. Lima said he attended PLEJ in Atlanta for a day-and-a-half conference. He said the travel was a little rough due to weather and cancelled and delayed flights, and his plane even had a missed approach going into Dulles, but the conference was great. He said there was an excellent interactive table-top exercise involving the entire room of several hundred attendees that dealt with election emergency scenarios.

D. International Association of Government Officials Annual Conference

Mr. Lima said due to additional weather flight cancellations he had to stay an extra day in Reston, Virginia at the iGO conference, which he covered out of pocket along with the rest of his costs for attendance. Mr. Lima said he was able to talk to the former EAC Chair, who came to the conference and was recently terminated along with the other EAC commissioners by the President. Mr. Lima informed the Board that the EAC still exists as an agency, and many of its free resources and trainings are still available to election officials, including the Board if they would like to participate, however without any commissioners the agency's work will be halted in some areas at least for now.

Mr. Lima said he also spoke with the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, who had a booth at the iGO conference, and he plans to apply for certification for the Canvassing Authority, as well as grant funding to help support election emergency response and accessibility. The grant he is applying for through the Alliance will be for up to \$15,000 to help achieve the Alliance standards. He said that could come quickly, and allow us to have additional emergency equipment such as generators and radios in place before the upcoming elections, which we would not otherwise have funding for.

Mr. Lima thanked the Board for continuing to allow him to participate in several national organizations and federal boards on behalf of both the City and the State of Rhode Island. He said these were the last two scheduled conferences he is attending until 2027 as the focus is now solely on conducting the 2026 elections.

V. Adjournment (vote may be taken)

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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