

CITY OF CRANSTON
BOARD OF CANVASSERS
Regular Meeting of March 22, 2023 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on March 22, 2023, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on March 20, 2023. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Randall Jackvony, at 5:35 p.m. It was held in the Canvassing Authority Office, Room 100 at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Randall Jackvony, Alice Petrone (Board Alternate, for Ms. Moronta), Dolores DiMeo Carroll (Board Alternate – Acting Member)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Quilcia Moronta

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- IV. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- V. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. THE BOARD MAY HEAR UPDATES FROM THE REGISTRAR ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS (NO VOTES TAKEN)
 1. FY24 CANVASSING AUTHORITY BUDGET REQUEST
 2. REGISTRAR’S APPOINTMENT TO THE EAC LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND STANDARDS BOARD, CHAIR OF THE RITCCA ELECTIONS COMMITTEE, RI CYBERSECURITY GRANT PLANNING COMMITTEE, BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER’S TASK FORCE ON ELECTIONS, AND SPECIAL SENATE COMMISSION TO STUDY NON-PLURALITY VOTING
 3. STATUS OF 2023 NCOA PROCESS
 4. STATUS OF BOARD OF CANVASSERS EXPIRED TERMS
 - B. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE A POSITION ON THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION PENDING IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: S-0034, S-0115, S-0130, S-0318, S-0364, S-0384, S-0385, S-0386, S-601, S-608, S-613, H-5305, H-5309, H-5383, H-5384, H-5387, H-5459, H-5460, H-5462, H-5612, H-5721, H-5770, H-5955, H-5957, H-5960, H-6032, H-6033, H-6104 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- VI. ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Jackvony asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Lima noted that Ms. Moronta was trying to get out of work and notified him she would be unlikely to make it to the meeting in time.

MOTION: By Ms. Petrone and seconded by Ms. DiMeo Carroll to approve the agenda as posted.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Jackvony, Ms. Petrone, and Ms. DiMeo Carroll voting Aye.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima several there are several previous draft minutes that need to be approved and finalized. Mr. Jackvony said Mr. Lima's minutes are very thorough and he is confident that they are accurate.

MOTION: By Mr. Jackvony and seconded by Ms. Petrone to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2020, July 19, 2021, November 8, 2022, and November 29, 2022 meetings.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Jackvony, Ms. Petrone, and Ms. DiMeo Carroll voting Aye.

PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)

Mr. Jackvony noted there were no members of the public present in attendance. As it is likely his last meeting, he said he appreciates everything everyone has done and has thoroughly enjoyed working with everybody. He looks forward to seeing the current and departing Board members about town. Ms. Petrone and Ms. DiMeo Carroll echoed Mr. Jackvony's comments.

NEW BUSINESS

A. THE BOARD MAY HEAR UPDATES FROM THE REGISTRAR ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS (NO VOTES TAKEN)

Mr. Jackvony asked Mr. Lima to provide his updates on the posted items.

1. FY24 CANVASSING AUTHORITY BUDGET REQUEST

Mr. Lima said he submitted his budget request to the administration and that Canvassing was the first department to meet with the new Finance Director, Thomas Zidelis. Mr. Lima said he requested \$90,000 to conduct the Presidential Preference Primary next April, which is contingent upon several current state law proposals passing. If polling places are allowed to be combined as they were in the past, he believes the election can be conducted for less than that figure. The \$90,000 could fund up to 20 polling places to cover the city's 26 precincts. In the past, the city has opened just 6 or 12 polling places for the PPP, going back to 2008. Mr. Lima said the BOE has signaled that they will no longer allow combinations unless the state law is clarified to explicitly grant them that authority. Another increased cost over past PPP elections is 20 days of early voting operations. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Lima said the PPP is tentatively April 23, 2024, but the date may change due to a conflict with Passover. State law requires normal primaries and elections that fall on a religious holiday to be held on the next business day, however, the law does not

currently apply to the PPP and may need to be amended. He said the Secretary of State's office is aware of and working on that.

Mr. Lima said polling place rental costs are at a minimum, because the law to require schools to be closed for the PPP is poised to pass which will make the need to rent private facilities far less likely. The remaining funds are for election day set-up crews, city personnel that support the election, police details, Board stipends, supplies, and legal advertising. Early voting itself will cost just under \$15,000, although there will only be a skeleton crew on due to the expected lighter turnout compared to a General Election.

Mr. Lima said the part-time help line item was zeroed out because Emerson Brito is now full-time and no part-timers are necessary. He increased the education line to account for \$200 annual dues to the Election Center's National Association of Election Officials. Dues have also increased for the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association's quarterly meeting attendance.

Mr. Lima said he requested one-grade increases for the Canvassing Aide and Data Entry and Maintenance Specialist positions, which would also allow their job titles and descriptions to be updated to Deputy Registrar and Elections Coordinator, respectively. However, due to the city's budget position, Mr. Lima is unsure if those requests will be granted in this year's budget. The Board members said they felt the request was well-reasoned.

2. REGISTRAR'S APPOINTMENT TO THE EAC LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND STANDARDS BOARD, CHAIR OF THE RITCCA ELECTIONS COMMITTEE, RI CYBERSECURITY GRANT PLANNING COMMITTEE, BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER'S TASK FORCE ON ELECTIONS, AND SPECIAL SENATE COMMISSION TO STUDY NON-PLURALITY VOTING

Mr. Lima said that after the 2022 election, a lot of personnel shifted around and retired in the Rhode Island elections community. This opened a number of positions on state and national election committees that Mr. Lima was considered for by Secretary of State Amore and by Mr. Lima's peers in the Clerks' Association.

Mr. Lima said he is now one of two local election officials representing Rhode Island on the federal Election Assistance Commission's Local Leadership Council, which will meet in Washington this July for its annual in-person meeting. He said the LLC is a new committee formed by the EAC to elevate the voice of local election officials, and his cost of participation will be covered by the federal government. The LLC is a subsidiary board to the EAC and is comprised of two local election officials from each U.S. state and territory.

He said the other federal appointment is to the EAC Standards Board, which is comprised of one local and one state election director from every state. Mr. Lima said the Standards Board is critical in informing the EAC to set technical standards for the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines, which are used by vendors and election officials in the design and use of voting equipment including tabulators and accessible ballot-marking devices. Like the LLC, the Standards Board meets in-person once per year. He

will be traveling to Maricopa County in April for this year's meeting. Mr. Lima was nominated by Secretary Amore and approved by the RITCCA to serve as Rhode Island's local representative alongside Department of State Elections Division Director Kathy Placencia.

Mr. Lima said that Rob Rock, who previously served in Ms. Placencia's position, has been promoted to Deputy Secretary of State and Director of Administration, with direct oversight over elections and several other departments. Deputy Secretary Rock was also just elected the President of NASED, the National Association of State Election Directors. Due to his new responsibilities, Deputy Secretary Rock recommended Mr. Lima to fill his seat on the Bipartisan Policy Center's Elections Task Force. Mr. Lima said the BPC is a Washington, D.C.-based think-tank formed by former U.S. Senators Bob Dole, Tom Daschle, and others to recommend policy solutions supported by both parties on a variety of topics, elections administration being one of them. Mr. Lima will provide suggestions and feedback to the group on national elections policy.

Mr. Lima was also appointed by the Senate President to serve on the Senate Special Study Commission to Study Non-Plurality Voting Methods in General Officer and General Assembly Primaries. The Commission is chaired by Providence Senator Sam Zurier and is tasked with evaluating how ranked-choice and run-off voting works in other states, and the feasibility or support of trying it out in Rhode Island in the future. Mr. Lima said the study commission will meet five or six times over the course of this year and report back to the General Assembly by Oct. 31, 2023. The members of the study commission include three other election officials and two additional state senators. Mr. Lima said that at a policy level, implementing something like this would take several years to do correctly if desired by the legislature. He will keep the Board updated.

Mr. Lima is also now Chairperson of the RITCCA Elections Committee. He was previously vice-chair, but became chair when the current chairperson, Tracy Nelson, left as Newport elections director to become Cranston's new City Clerk. Mr. Lima is also Cranston's representative and the only local election official on the Rhode Island Cybersecurity Grant Planning Committee, which will decide how to allocate millions of dollars in new federal grant funding to increase cyber defenses specifically for cities and towns.

3. STATUS OF 2023 NCOA PROCESS

Mr. Lima said NCOA used to be done every two years, however the Let RI Vote Act of 2022 now requires the process to take place up to four times per year. This will increase the frequency but significantly reduce the volume of NCOA going forward, although this first round of NCOA is still the first time it has been done since 2021, so will be the last large batch to be processed. Mr. Lima said this NCOA project has three phases, starting with about 1,594 records to review and send mailings to. The NCOA project compares voter addresses to those on file with the U.S. Postal Service, and if records do not match, the voter is coded and contacted to update their voter registration to their newest address of record. Coding includes out-of-city, within city moves, and out-of-state, each of which generate different procedures to follow. Some categories of voters have a finite time to respond before their record is automatically moved or updated to match USPS.

This list maintenance cannot be done 90 days before a federal election. Mailings will begin coming back to City Hall and processed by our staff over the next several weeks.

4. STATUS OF BOARD OF CANVASSERS EXPIRED TERMS

Mr. Lima said the Democratic City Committee has submitted a list of four names to the Mayor for consideration of appointment. He said he has contacted the Republican City Committee Chair to submit their list of names, as well. Presently, Mr. Lima said, four out of five terms on the Board are either vacant or expired. Only Ms. Moronta is serving an unexpired term, so it is imperative that the positions be appointed as we begin to prepare for the 2024 presidential election cycle. Several of the names Mr. Lima has heard are under consideration for appointment by both parties are former councilmembers who are familiar with election procedures and city government. Ms. Petrone is also listed on the Democratic list.

Mr. Lima said he hopes the positions will be appointed at the April City Council meeting, but that is up to the party chairs submitting their letters, the Mayor nominating a name to the Council for each vacancy, and the Council then voting to approve each nominee. With four seats to appoint, the process could take longer.

Mr. Lima said that later this year, he will be looking for Board approval for realignment of polling places due to school construction in 2022 that is nearing completion now. A unanimous vote of the Board will be required, so it is important a full Board is in place by then. He said CLCF, Dutemple, Garden City, Eden Park, Glen Hills, and Central Library are all precinct locations that are under consideration for changes.

Mr. Jackvony said he received a letter from the City Clerk indicating that his term has expired and that he continues to serve for 90 days. Ms. Petrone said she received the same letter. Mr. Lima said those letters are automatically generated for all city boards and commissions, however in the case of the Board of Canvassers, board members actually serve indefinitely, until their successors are appointed, because state law governing board of canvassers terms overrides the City Charter's blanket provision. Mr. Lima said at least one member of the state Board of Elections has actually been serving now for two years beyond the expiration of his term, so it's not outside the realm of possibility that the current Board will continue to serve later into this year if the Council is slow to act on appointments.

Mr. Lima said the Congressional District 1 Special Election does not really affect us, however the city does have boundary areas that bump up against CD-1. Johnson & Wales University's Harborside Village campus has dormitories that are in both congressional districts, so some students will be able to vote in CD-1, but residents on the Cranston side of the boundary are in CD-2 and are ineligible. He reached out to the University to remind them of this. Mr. Lima said the BOE will be conducting a training for local board of canvassers on the CD-1 election in June, and he hope the new Board members are appointed by then so they can attend and gain some familiarity with the BOE and state election procedures, even though we aren't directly involved in the election.

B. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE A POSITION ON THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION PENDING IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: S-0034, S-0115, S-0130, S-0318, S-0364, S-0384, S-0385, S-0386, S-601, S-608, S-613, H-5305, H-5309, H-5383, H-5384, H-5387, H-5459, H-5460, H-5462, H-5612, H-5721, H-5770, H-5955, H-5957, H-5960, H-6032, H-6033, H-6104 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said he has worked with this Board for several years and has a very good read on what everyone's views are on various election reforms. He said he has been at the State House this session advocating for bills the Board has voted to support in the past, however he would like the Board to formally support new bills as well reaffirm their support for bills that have been reintroduced this session.

Mr. Lima said dozens of elections bills are put in every year by the legislature; some are technical and administrative in nature, others are more policy driven, and others have little chance of passing and may be more of a conversation starter. Mr. Lima said he primarily focuses on the bills that affect our operations, budget, available staffing, and that modify outdated procedures. The RITCCA has already voted unanimously to support a variety of bills, including several of those on the agenda today.

Mr. Lima said the RITCCA and his colleagues in other towns have taken on a more active advocacy role this session, due to the impending 2024 election and the challenges that will present. Mr. Lima said he is hopeful several bills that improve our operations will pass this session, and said he appreciated Sen. Frank Lombardi and Rep. Jackie Baginski for taking the lead on getting many of them introduced on behalf of local canvassing authorities.

Mr. Jackvony said Mr. Lima may present the bills one at a time so the Board can discuss them and vote to take a position.

Mr. Lima said he'd first like the Board to consider opposition to S-0364, an act that would repeal the state's Voter ID law, as well as any House companion legislation. Mr. Lima said local election officials are unanimously opposed to that repeal because the PollPads require photo IDs to function efficiently, and it would be a step backwards and make elections more difficult if voters did not provide an ID. Ms. Petrone said it would not be a good thing to repeal this law.

MOTION: By Ms. Petrone and seconded by Ms. DiMeo Carroll for the Cranston Board of Canvassers to formally oppose S-0364 and any House companion bills that would repeal the current Rhode Island Voter Identification law.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Jackvony, Ms. Petrone, and Ms. DiMeo Carroll voting Aye.

Mr. Lima said this Board previously voted 2-1 to support Same Day Voter Registration. He said this year's effort at the State House, S-0608 and H-5770, is focusing more on putting the question to the voters on the 2024 ballot, which will likely not be considered until next year's session. SDR would likely not be enacted until, at the earliest, 2026, if it were to win voter approval.

Mr. Lima said that Rhode Island has the longest voter registration deadline in the entire country, at 30 days. This causes a problem for our staff, as within 30 days of the election they can no longer process the 100-200 voter registration records that come in daily from the DMV, OVR, mail, and other sources. By the time the election or primary is over, and the voter rolls are unfrozen, our staff have a backlog of thousands of registrations that must be quickly processed, which is a challenge most other states do not have to deal with.

Mr. Lima said state law reflects the RI Constitution, meaning that an effort to repeal the 30-day deadline from the Constitution would need to be followed up by efforts to change the state law. He expects, at that time, for local boards of canvassers to be part of the conversation, because it will require several procedural changes and amendments to state law to work correctly.

Mr. Lima added that a significant portion of the provisional ballots that the Board disqualifies following each election are due to voters having updated their registration within the 30-day period, but it is sitting in our processing queue and not yet effective, due to the constitutional provision. He noted these voters are being disenfranchised, even though they in most cases have been living in the city much longer than 30 days. Mr. Lima said the state currently does have same-day voter registration for every presidential election, because it is required by federal law which overrides the state Constitution. Several hundred voters register and vote in that election every four years.

Mr. Jackvony said that he thought SDR would cause problems, but it sounds like it would have a bigger effect to relieve stress on our operations due to eliminating the 30-day backlog and having to scramble to process thousands of records quickly after the election. He also noted the expected reduction in provisional ballots to be adjudicated and disqualified is a favorable outcome. Mr. Lima said it would still require some operational changes to the office's workflow, but it would be a better situation than we have now.

Mr. Lima said he has heard the bill as written is unlikely to pass in its current form, but will probably be reintroduced next year to ask for voter approval to remove the deadline from the state Constitution without yet impacting state law, so there can be sufficient time to work out operational details. Those discussions can't really take place in a meaningful way until voters decide the issue in the Constitution in 2024, which is why many election officials are in favor of placing it on the ballot so if SDR is to be enacted, it can be implemented correctly and with input from local boards.

Ms. Petrone said that we get inundated with voter registrations within the 30-day period because that is when election advertising and media attention is at its most intense, and most voters start to pay close attention. Mr. Lima said Common Cause RI is one of the leading backers of the bill. Mr. Jackvony said that makes him inclined to support it.

The next bill was S-0034/H-5460, which would increase the precinct cap to 3,500 registered voters. Mr. Lima said he has been lobbying several representatives and senators regarding this information and that it has universal support from election administrators. The bill is the same one that passed the House in 2022. Mr. Lima said he looked at statewide turnout, and statewide total registered voters per precinct in

2022, and discovered that Cranston had five of the 10 busiest precincts statewide, including all of the Top 3, so this bill is sorely needed and will impact us the most of any other city or town.

Mr. Lima said some legislators from towns like North Providence, Newport, and Woonsocket had expressed some concerns. He said his review of the data proves that their communities are actually not affected, as none of their polling places even appear in the Top 75 for in-person turnout. Mr. Lima said he has communicated that to legislators who wanted more data to make a decision on the legislation.

Mr. Lima said if this bill does not pass, we may have to add additional polls in 2024 unnecessarily. This will mean voters will have to go to polling places that are less ideal and further away than the ones they voted at in 2022, just to comply with the current arbitrary cap number. The BOE has voted to support the bill.

S-0115/H-5612 allows unaffiliated voters to remain unaffiliated without having to fill out a form at the polls, when voting in a party primary. Mr. Lima said this will save hundreds of hours in unnecessary processing work of disaffiliations, which are counted in the thousands. Mr. Lima also said this will cut down on provisional ballots due to party issues, because most unaffiliated voters prefer to remain registered that way. However, they sometimes forget to fill out the form, or don't realize that applying for a primary mail ballot affiliates them with that party. Mr. Lima said there are more unaffiliated voters than there are Democrats or Republicans. We are just shuffling paper around, because voters go in unaffiliated, vote in a primary, then fill out a form to go right back to unaffiliated.

S-0130/H-5305 closes schools for the Presidential Preference Primary. Mr. Lima said if we wanted or were required to have 18 or 20 polls for the PPP, we couldn't do so, because there aren't enough non-school locations in the city. He said this bill was fast-tracked because RIDE needed to finalize their 2023-2024 school calendar, and it has widespread support. It has already passed in both chambers, which procedurally now just need to pass each other's bills again and transmit to the Governor. Mr. Lima credited new City Clerk Tracy Nelson, as this was originally her idea and she drafted and submitted the bill while still in Newport.

S-0318/H-5459 allows General Assembly elections to be included in the risk-limiting audit. This is a Common Cause procedural bill, which the Board has supported in the past. Mr. Lima said it was an oversight in the original RLA law.

S-0384/H-5387 allows local election officials who have been authorized by the board of canvassers to apply for a flashing light permit at the DMV. Mr. Lima said this allows an amber flashing light for election directors such as himself, who are on the roadways for dozens of hours each election putting out and picking up signage, delivering election supplies and materials to voters and polling places, and escorting state delivery trucks and set-up crews. Mr. Lima said it's a safety issue, as many of these activities are on busy roadways and involve frequent stops at night in poorly lit areas.

S-0385/H-5384 allows local boards to substitute advertising the location of the voter registration deadline online instead of in a newspaper. This will allow the Board to

redirect approximately \$2,000 in unnecessary newspaper ads next year to other resources, such as hiring more poll workers and paying for ads for early voting. Mr. Lima said in recent years, voters do not come in on the deadline day, and the ads are a waste of resources. He is not aware of anyone who registered to vote because they were prompted by the ad.

Mr. Lima said state newspaper groups put in letters opposed to the bill, but he noted this is only a couple of ads every two years, and is not a major revenue generator for newspapers. It's an ad that is actually only required to be run if the city or town is not open its usual hours on the deadline day, which falls on a Sunday. In Cranston, Mr. Lima said we typically open the office from 1 to 4 p.m., so we have run the ad in the past.

S-0386/H-5383 clarifies that only active voters are to be used in calculating the precinct cap. Inactive voters are currently included in the total, Mr. Lima said, which means 50-200 voters per precinct are included even though they are unlikely to vote. He said over 98% of inactive voters in 2022 did not cast a ballot.

S-0608/H-6033 is a BOE bill to better line up dates for local special primaries and elections, so vacancies in offices can be filled faster. Mr. Lima said it makes sense to support this bill as the current statutory language results in unnecessarily long vacancies for local offices when there is a resignation.

S-0613 is a new bill written by Mr. Lima that will clarify past practice for combinations of polls for the PPP, special primaries, and special elections. Mr. Lima said the BOE has modified its policy on combinations, because it no longer believes it has state law authorization to permit them as it did in the past. The BOE asked local clerks to introduce language to correct that, and voted unanimously to support it. A House companion is also being introduced soon. The bill will not affect the regular September Primary or General Election, and just codifies longstanding practice. It is important it passes, however, due to the CD-1 Special Election and the upcoming PPP in 2024.

H-5309 would provide for the Statewide Primary to take place on Wednesday in the years when it falls the day after Labor Day. Mr. Lima said the Board has supported this legislation for several years running.

H-5462 adds an SOS liaison to the state BOE as a non-voting member, and clarifies that the BOE should be in charge of procuring voting equipment instead of the SOS. It also corrects several ballot proofing procedures due to the adoption of new voting equipment. As a procedural bill, it has little effect on our operations, but Mr. Lima said we should still support it as it improves operations for our state partners. The improvements to logic and accuracy testing will also help ensure our ballots are printed as intended.

H-5721 is the Secretary of State's bill to move the Statewide Primary to late August, to allow for more time to prepare for the General Election and get ballots out to military and overseas voters in compliance with the MOVE Act. Mr. Lima said Rhode Island has the very latest primary in the entire country, because the state has been ignoring the federal law that caused nearly every other state to move their primary schedule back in

compliance. The state is at serious risk of a federal lawsuit by the Justice Department due to this issue. Also, Mr. Lima said having more time to conduct primary recounts and proof ballots would ensure a smoother General Election. The Board members agreed.

H-5955 is a bill Mr. Lima asked the BOE to introduce which would allow for a three-day period for the transmittal of mail ballot applications sent via USPS and arriving after the deadline. Mr. Lima said each election, the office has to spend hours needlessly rejecting hundreds of applications, when they have all of the information necessary to otherwise process them. There is already a five-day transmittal period for voter registrations, he noted.

H-5957 is another BOE bill that adds new procedures and rules and regulations for processing nomination paper signatures, and the process for handling appeals regarding them. The bill would not have much of an effect on our operations, because Mr. Lima said we already follow the procedures that the bill seeks to codify, although not all towns do. In 2022, several candidates had days-long appeal hearings at the BOE, because current law does not provide a solid framework for the process.

H-5960 is a BOE bill that previously has passed the House twice, which would require write-in candidates to file a declaration of candidacy and remove the requirement for local and state boards to tabulate tens of thousands of frivolous write-ins for fictional characters. Manual tabulation would be required, however, if there are more write-in votes than a declared candidate receives, or if the write-in candidate declares formally, or if there are no declared candidates.

H-6032 is a BOE bill that clarifies that voters who cannot sign will need a witness to co-sign their election documents such as mail ballot applications and certifications. Current law allows the signing of an X, which is counted only if a similar mark is on file on the voter's record. Rhode Island is the only state in the country that uses this procedure, and nearly all other states require a witness or more in-depth procedures. The BOE is seeking to close this loophole.

H-6104 is a BOE bill that Mr. Lima also requested, which extends the timeframe that mail ballot drop boxes are open from 20 days to 35 days. This will allow for voter registration forms, mail ballot applications, and mail ballots voters have prior to 20 days to be deposited. This is the procedure that was followed in 2020, but the Let RI Vote act inadvertently added new language that states the box shall be opened 20 days prior to an election. Mr. Lima said in 2022, voters were appearing at the box, finding it locked, and calling our office after hours to lodge complaints. There is no reason to not have the box open, as it is monitored by 24-hour video surveillance.

H-6185 is a new bill put in by the state so it can conduct the Special Congressional Primary and Special Election later this year. The state has not had a federal special election since 1967, and no one has updated the various state laws affecting such an election to comply with the numerous changes made to federal law since then. The Special Election would be illegal under federal law if held under the current state statutes.

While there is no bill introduced yet, Mr. Lima said he is aware of an elections calendar issue where the PPP in 2024 falls on Passover. Normally, state law provides that elections that fall on a religious holiday shall take place on the next business day, however, that law is not written to apply to the PPP. Mr. Lima said state election officials are aware of this and are contemplating options for legislation to remedy it. He asked the Board to authorize him to support the tentative legislation.

MOTION: By Mr. Jackvony and seconded by Ms. DiMeo Carroll for the Cranston Board of Canvassers to formally support the following legislation in the 2023 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly: H-5305, H-5309, H-5383, H-5384, H-5387, H-5459, H-5460, H-5462, H-5612, H-5721, H-5770, H-5955, H-5957, H-5960, H-6032, H-6033, H-6104, H-6185, S-0034, S-0115, S-0130, S-0318, S-0384, S-0385, S-0386, S-0601, S-0608, S-0613, and soon to be drafted legislation to correct issues related to the 2024 PPP falling on a religious holiday, as well as any companion bills to the aforementioned legislation not yet introduced.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

POINT OF ORDER: By Mr. Lima, who noted that Chairman Randall A. Jackvony should inspect the gavel he has been using for the meeting.

Mr. Jackvony inspected the gavel, and noticed his name had been engraved as Board Chairman. He happily thanked Mr. Lima and the office staff for the gift. Mr. Lima thanked Mr. Jackvony for his nine years of dedicated and honorable service to the Cranston Board of Canvassers.

MOTION: By Ms. Petrone and seconded by Ms. DiMeo Carroll to adjourn.
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY – VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

APPROVED by the Cranston Board of Canvassers: May 26, 2023