

CITY OF CRANSTON
BOARD OF CANVASSERS

Final Canvass Meeting of October 15, 2024 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on October 15, 2024, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on September 24, 2024. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Kirk McDonough, at 4:36 p.m. It was held in the Canvassing Authority Office, Room 100, at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Stephen Piscopiello, Quilcia Moronta, Kirk McDonough

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections), David Igliozi (Board Legal Counsel), Emerson Brito (Bilingual Elections Specialist), Justin Erickson (Board Alternate)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- II. THE REGISTRAR MAY ADMINISTER THE OATH OF OFFICE TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS
- III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS – 9-10-2024, 9-11-2024 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- V. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- VI. PUBLIC COMMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- VII. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE OPERATIONAL CONDUCT OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION IN CRANSTON (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. THE BOARD MAY CANVASS THE PRELIMINARY LIST OF CRANSTON VOTERS, HEAR OBJECTIONS TO THE INCLUSION OR OMISSION OF ANY PERSON AS A REGISTERED VOTER, AND MAKE A FINAL CANVASS AND CORRECTION OF THE VOTER LIST FOR THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ELECTION THAT IS TO TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS §§ 17-10-5 ET. SEQ (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
 - B. THE BOARD MAY HEAR AN UPDATE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING OPERATIONAL PLANS FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED POLLING LOCATIONS; EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES; IN-PERSON EARLY AND EMERGENCY VOTING; MAIL BALLOT APPLICATION PROCESSING; POLLING PLACE SET-UP

- AND LOGISTICS; POLL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING;
MAIL BALLOT DROP BOXES; AND ELECTION SECURITY (VOTES
MAY BE TAKEN)
- C. THE BOARD MAY ISSUE ITS WARRANT FOR THE NOVEMBER 5,
2024 RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ELECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH
R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-18-3 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- D. THE BOARD MAY CERTIFY ALL MAIL BALLOT APPLICATIONS THAT
ARE RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN.
LAWS § 17-20-10 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- IX. UPDATES FROM THE REGISTRAR (ALL ITEMS FOR INFORMATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY; NO VOTES TAKEN)
- A. REVIEW OF ANTICIPATED GENERAL ELECTION TABULATION,
RETURN, RECOUNT, AUDIT, AND CERTIFICATION TIMELINE AND
POST-ELECTION BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETING SCHEDULE
- X. ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima administered the Oath of Office to new Republican Board Alternate Justin Erickson. The Board members congratulated Mr. Erickson and welcomed him to the Board. Mr. Erickson signed the oath statements, which Mr. Lima affixed the Board of Canvassers seal to. Mr. Lima notarized two original copies of Mr. Erickson's oath; one for the permanent office file, and one for Mr. Erickson's records

Mr. McDonough noted that Mr. Lima prefers to use blue Pilot G-2 1.0 pens when Board members sign official documents. Mr. Piscopiello noted he loves the pens. Mr. Iglioizzi agreed.

Mr. Lima informed Mr. Erickson that if Mr. Piscopiello is unable to attend a Board meeting, Mr. Erickson will be able to vote in his place as an alternate. That said, Mr. Lima explained that it is standing practice of the Board for all Alternates to fully participate in discussion, including asking questions and seconding motions as non-voting, ex-officio members, although their names are not called on the roll when voting unless they are present and voting for a specific absent member of the same party. Attendance of alternates is officially optional at meetings but is strongly encouraged, as over the years alternates have been frequently and regularly needed to attain a quorum or vote in place of absent, ill, or vacant member seats.

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. Piscopiello to approve the agenda as posted.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS – 9-10-2024, 9-11-2024 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve the minutes as drafted. Mr. Lima said he previously sent the minutes to the Board for review.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to approve the minutes of Sept. 10, 2024 and Sept. 11, 2024.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough thanked everyone on the Board and the office staff for their support of him and his family when his father passed away just prior to the September 10 Primary. He said he and his family really appreciated it.

PUBLIC COMMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

No one from the public was present or appeared to speak. Mr. McDonough closed public comment without objection.

OLD BUSINESSA. THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE OPERATIONAL CONDUCT OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION IN CRANSTON (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked if the state Board of Elections had any updates from the conduct of the Primary. Mr. Lima noted the BOE met earlier today and discussed the Pawtucket voting equipment vendor pick-up issue at length, and gave a very thorough explanation of what happened there and what controls will be added to prevent it from reoccurring in the future. Mr. Lima noted that the state BOE hires a moving company with trucks to both drop off and pick up voting equipment at well over 400 polling locations statewide, and this year, after decades with the same vendor who recently retired, they have new companies involved for the first time.

Mr. Lima noted local boards are involved in the drop off process, as we sign off on custody and control of the sealed and locked equipment when delivered. However, after use on Election Day, the pick-up of equipment is the sole responsibility of the state, with no local involvement, unless the state delivery vendor has trouble getting inside of a polling location.

Mr. Lima said in Cranston, pick-ups are done on Thursday after the election, and he informs all of our polling locations as such. He said we have a different vendor assigned to our part of the state than the one that handled Pawtucket, and the vendor we have assigned to us by the state, Coutu Movers, has been outstanding to work with during the delivery process and very professional and easy to communicate with. Mr. Lima said

he and Mr. Brito each escorted the groups of trucks delivering our equipment to the polls in September, and all went smoothly with that and the subsequent pick-ups.

Mr. Lima said Coutu will deliver the equipment back to all 27 locations on Oct. 29, and he has already notified all locations directly, and will again personally escort the trucks along with Mr. Brito to each location. Mr. Lima said our Building Maintenance, Highway, Parks and Rec., and School Dept. set-up crews, consisting of over two dozen personnel, will be split into two groups, one led by Mr. Lima and one led by Mr. Brito, to set up the delivered equipment, voting booths, tables, chairs, signs, and chalk lines on Monday, Nov. 4, and Coutu will pick up our equipment on Thursday, Nov. 7. Early voting equipment is handled by a different vendor.

Mr. Lima noted there was also a lengthy debate at the BOE meeting today regarding party runners, watchers, and checkers, which were not an issue in Cranston at the recent September Primary but the BOE expects some to be deployed by parties in November that we should be aware of. Mr. Lima said that watchers, under an outdated state law that preceded Voter ID by decades, have the ability to challenge voters, but the BOE's memo discussed today will clarify that only watchers bearing credentials from the political party will be allowed to file challenges to our moderators.

That said, Mr. Lima noted, the vast majority of the discussion revolved around the provision of a table and chairs at all polling locations for party checkers, whether they have or have not indicated they will be sending anyone. The state BOE discussed this at length, and will be providing a directive to all local boards that a table and chairs must be provided at all locations, which is not something most local boards have done in the past.

In Cranston, we already provided a table and at least two chairs at all 26 locations for the Statewide Primary, none of which were used, and we already plan to provide the same for November, as it is our standard procedure to do so for all elections. Mr. Lima noted we recently purchased several dozen additional folding tables, due to needing more tables for early voting and the President/Vice President Only polling locations.

Mr. Piscopiello asked about the ADA sidewalk issue at Eden Park Elementary School in September that was brought up by the Governor's Commission on Disabilities. Mr. Lima said the GCD routinely inspects polling locations around the state on Election Day, including the Primary, and found at Eden Park that the sidewalk was in disrepair, among other minor issues regarding signage. Mr. Lima said he has spent several hundred dollars to purchase new and additional signage above and beyond what the GCD requested, which he will personally deploy on Nov. 4 when he sets up the polls.

As for Eden Park, the school was just renovated, and there is a new section of sidewalk at the entrance of the building which is fully compliant, however, further down the street there is a sidewalk section that is in disrepair. Mr. Piscopiello recalled seeing that on Sept. 10 and agreed. Mr. Lima said he reached out to the Acting Director of Public Works and Chief of Staff Moretti, along with John Corso from the Highway Department, about the issue.

Mr. Lima reported that, at his request, last week the Highway Department staff put down brand new asphalt sidewalks to replace the deteriorated area nearest to the curb cut. Mr. Lima said these are important mitigations, and while they do cost the city funds and resources, federal law requires us to ensure our polling locations are ADA compliant and accessible to all voters with disabilities, so it is a good investment. Mr. Piscopiello agreed the sidewalk was in rough shape and was glad it was repaired.

Mr. McDonough noted for the record that Mr. Lima had recognized this was an issue last summer before the Primary, and he had already contacted the Acting Public Works Director and Administration in writing to request a fix. However, Mr. Lima's request to fix the issue was denied at that time. The GCD then flagged the same issue, and Mr. McDonough noted he was frustrated that we were ahead of this but powerless to do anything about it until the GCD filed its report from the Primary that forced a fix.

Mr. McDonough also noted we received a bill from the School Dept. for janitorial overtime during the Primary, which we have not received for any election for the last 10 years, in the amount of \$8,600, not itemized, which was not budgeted for. Mr. McDonough expressed his frustration, and noted that Mr. Lima has reached out to the School Dept. for more information, and to the Finance Dept. to determine whether or not the Board of Canvassers is responsible to pay this bill.

Mr. Lima noted that he has a great working relationship with the School Dept. facilities staff, however, at no time in the 8 years he has been Registrar has the issue of paying the schools for janitors who are already scheduled to work been raised with him. He noted that if it had been raised, he would have included those funds in his budget request for the election, as we do reimburse other departments for their overtime costs associated with supporting our election operations, including the City Clerk, Tax Assessor, Parks and Recreation, Highway, Public Works, Building Maintenance, Purchasing, and others. Mr. Lima said for all of those reimbursements, the transactions are itemized listing which staff members worked and for how many hours each, not provided to us as a lump sum invoice, and that he discusses in advance with each department head and agrees on how many staff are needed for what purpose. He was very surprised to receive this bill without any prior discussion or agreement and his hoping to receive an explanation, but regardless, whatever the costs of running the election are, the School Department is an essential partner and the costs of conducting our mandated operations are what they are.

Mr. Lima also noted the issue in the Primary where 21 locations were not provided the additional PollPad we were told would be provided, leaving a set of two poll workers at each location without a PollPad to check in voters throughout most of the morning and into the afternoon, until the BOE was finally able to get the additional PollPads out to those locations. Mr. Lima said he has been working closely with the BOE on this, who apologized for the supply allocation mix-up as the wrong version of a sheet was used. Mr. Lima said there have been many recent staff member changes at the BOE and they are doing their absolute best under difficult, fast-paced circumstances, however, the Board noted they and the poll workers were upset about not having the promised equipment for the Primary and the extended time it took to get a response and remedy while voting was underway. Fortunately, Mr. Lima noted, the issue was mitigated by the low turnout and the fact that we overstaff our locations to account for situations like this,

which allowed operations to continue at all polls without an issue and voters were unaware, the issue being confined mostly to our own internal frustration. Ms. Moronta noted how incensed poll workers were at the Primary for not being provided enough equipment, where many workers couldn't do anything for hours while waiting for the PollPads to arrive.

Mr. McDonough agreed and hoped many of these issues with BOE equipment and supply allocations can be smoothed out for the General Election, which will see a far higher turnout and has far less room for error.

NEW BUSINESS

A. THE BOARD MAY CANVASS THE PRELIMINARY LIST OF CRANSTON VOTERS, HEAR OBJECTIONS TO THE INCLUSION OR OMISSION OF ANY PERSON AS A REGISTERED VOTER, AND MAKE A FINAL CANVASS AND CORRECTION OF THE VOTER LIST FOR THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ELECTION THAT IS TO TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS §§ 17-10-5 ET. SEQ (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said there are 61,210 registered voters in the City of Cranston as of the Final Canvass, which includes 20,801 Democrats, 9,278 Republicans, 64 No Labels Party members, and 31,067 Unaffiliated voters. He said of the grand total, 55,453 are Active, 869 are Active with NCOA Change, 594 are Pending, and 4,294 are Inactive. He noted that nearly 99% of inactive voters do not vote in elections because they have likely moved out of city or out of state and are in the process of being legally removed from the voter rolls.

No objections or challenges were filed to the posted Preliminary List of Voters.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Erickson to certify the Final Canvass List of Voters for the November 5, 2024 General Election.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Mr. Lima had the Board sign the final canvass list notice so he could post the final canvass list in place of the preliminary list. The list is posted on a thumb drive and made available upon request to the public.

B. THE BOARD MAY HEAR AN UPDATE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION REGARDING OPERATIONAL PLANS FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED POLLING LOCATIONS; EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES; IN-PERSON EARLY AND EMERGENCY VOTING; MAIL BALLOT APPLICATION PROCESSING; POLLING PLACE SET-UP AND LOGISTICS; POLL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING; MAIL BALLOT DROP BOXES; AND ELECTION SECURITY (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima noted this is our final scheduled meeting before the General Election and asked if the Board had any questions on the items listed for discussion on the agenda. If not, he would provide a brief summary of the office's actions relative to these functions.

Mr. Lima provided the Board with a master list of polling locations that includes items that were recently finalized, such as voting equipment to be deployed, ballot quantities, poll worker positions assigned to each precinct, and other supplies and materials. The list includes blue metal boxes and seals used to store ballots, DS-200s, PollPads, ExpressVotes, blue and red state supply boxes, mail ballot receptacles, total registered voters, and other information.

Mr. Lima noted he was concerned there is not enough voting equipment in the state inventory to meet his requested allocations above the bare minimums the state is providing for some precincts. He said cities and towns with two-page ballots, which this year Cranston only has a one-page ballot, are being prioritized for any excess voting equipment the state has in its warehouse. This makes sense, operationally, because those communities will have double the ballots being cast through their tabulators for the same number of voters, however, it means that some of our largest and highest turnout precincts, which have received two or even three tabulators in past presidential elections, will only receive one for this election.

Discussion ensued. It was noted we may have to empty the DS-200s of ballots during the day, while voting is going on, if the storage compartments become full, which we have never had to do before. Mr. Lima or a Board member will need to be present if and when that occurs to ensure voting continues to go smoothly. A note will be included in moderator packets regarding this potential, for the handful of locations where our office repeatedly and strongly requested a second DS-200 tabulator from the state but our request was denied due to the state's higher priority allocations to other towns.

The note instructs the moderator to call the Canvassing Authority office when the DS-200 reaches 1,300 ballots cast, which is a few hundred below capacity. The office will dispatch a technician or Board member, whoever is closest and available, to the polling location to assist the moderator and poll workers in emptying the ballots and ensuring voting can continue with minimal disruption. The ballots will be secured and sealed in metal boxes. Ultimately, we do not want poll workers to do this themselves without a senior election official present to guide them as it is not a procedure they are trained on.

In particular, Mr. Lima noted he is most concerned about Hope Highlands School, Precinct 0705, which has been given only one DS-200 tabulator. Mr. Lima said this precinct has 3,020 registered voters, and is the largest polling location in the state to not receive a second tabulator. In 2020, turnout at this location was also among the highest of any polling location in the entire State of Rhode Island, at 79.75%, which is anticipated this year, with over 2,000 in-person voters on Election Day despite hundreds voting early and by mail during the pandemic. In 2020, the location had two DS-200s. In 2022, a midterm year, the location had only one DS-200, which notably caused lines at both check-in and at the DS-200 itself that Mr. Lima noted to the state BOE, which had also denied his request for a second DS-200 at that location in 2022.

As 2020 was prior to 2022 redistricting, Mr. Lima noted that in 2020, there were 200 fewer voters assigned to that location as there are now in 2024. Mr. Lima said he communicated all of these concerns repeatedly to the state BOE, however, his requests for more equipment were denied. Mr. Lima noted Hope Highlands has more voters now than in 2020, far fewer people voting by mail than in 2020.

Mr. Lima said he understands the state's perspective and decision to prioritize extra equipment for two-page ballot communities, and that there is a finite supply of voting equipment to go around. He said one town even has a three-card ballot this year, which adds many complications to election operations. However, he feels Hope Highlands, of all locations in the state, needs a second tabulator to operate efficiently and minimize the potential for a major issue or long lines on Election Day.

Part of the issue is there are only so many DS-200s to go around. This being a presidential year, for example, there are 39 extra polling locations for President / Vice President Only, eating up the inventory of excess tabulators. Additionally, early voting takes up many more, with Cranston alone having three DS-200s assigned to our early voting location. Mr. Lima said he tried everything he could, in emails, phone calls, and other communications with the BOE to reconsider.

He is also uncomfortable with both Glen Hills and Edgewood Highlands Elementary Schools each receiving only one DS-200, as they are likewise high-turnout percentage and high total-voter precincts with over 3,000 voters, although past turnout isn't quite as high as Hope Highlands. His next highest concern after those three is Cranston East. He is very uncomfortable with this in a high-turnout presidential election, but we have no choice.

Mr. Lima wrote to the BOE in 2022 after similar experiences and requested the state purchase more equipment ahead of the 2024 elections to avoid this exact scenario. Ultimately, he said, their resources and funding are limited, and they are doing the best they can with what they have and trying to make good decisions for the entire state, not just Cranston, in how they allocate their finite inventory, so we have to operate with what we're given and adjust our planning accordingly.

Mr. Piscopiello asked if we should have our police detail officers present if and when machines are emptied in public view in case the public does not understand why ballots are being emptied or become frustrated by lines while voting is paused. Mr. Lima agreed that we can arrange to have a detail officer present for added security.

Ms. Moronta asked if the emptied ballots will be transported back to City Hall right away. Mr. Lima said by best practices, the voted ballots should remain at the location until the polls close, as we don't want to split them up. The moderator will transport them back with the remaining voter ballots at the end of the night, per normal procedure.

Mr. Igliozi asked how the ballots will be stored. Mr. Lima said they will be stored in blue metal security cases and sealed by the poll workers at each location. Mr. Igliozi asked if the cases are marked, and Mr. Lima said they are marked with a label from our office and the seal number is recorded on the chain of custody documentation. Mr. Igliozi asked if it's possible to count how many ballots go into the boxes, and Mr. Lima said that is not typically done and would take a lot more time. With 1,600 ballots, he said, we would need two boxes, and the machine may start to jam prior to 1,600 depending on how the ballots fall from the tabulator so the number we empty at the time we pause voting will be arbitrary. Mr. Lima said we were told 1,600 by the state, but we're asking moderators to call us at 1,300 so we have time to get personnel there to assist.

Mr. Piscopiello said it makes sense to go with a lower number than the BOE suggests because it's likely they could be hitting that 1,600 number right around the evening rush when people get out of work at 5 p.m. and polling locations are at their busiest. He said it would be better to empty sooner, if it will be necessary to empty any at all, during the early afternoon when polls are less busy to minimize disruption.

Mr. Iglioizzi thinks the procedure is fine as long as it's well-documented, monitored by individual Board members, and the boxes are sealed. He said the best time to do this would be during the slow period after lunch. Mr. McDonough agreed, and asked if the assigned state BOE technician will also be present, as this issue is caused by the BOE's lack of sufficient equipment. Mr. Iglioizzi noted since the BOE technician will also be called, in addition to a Board member, the police detail, or one of our own technicians and the moderator and other poll workers, which should be ample personnel to ensure security and chain of custody at each location.

Mr. Lima said, operationally, we will have a Board member check in at these large locations that only have one DS-200 around 2 p.m. on Election Day to see what the tally count is at that time. It may ultimately be unnecessary to follow this procedure at all, if in-person turnout is lower than expected.

Mr. Lima said each location as one ExpressVote, and early voting has two, one of which is a back-up unit. Each precinct will have between three and five PollPads, as the smallest location has two sets of supervisors and the largest has four sets, plus each location has two clerks which share one PollPad for provisionals and voter look-ups. Mr. Lima said he is grateful the BOE was able to fully accommodate our request for sufficient PollPads, as we have several dozen extra poll workers assigned above the state-mandated minimums, which is the number they initially use for PollPad allocations, meaning we needed to request more, which was fulfilled.

Mr. Lima said he is satisfied with the ballot printing order, and that if any locations start to run low on ballots, we have a procedure in place with the Secretary of State, which monitors ballot inventories throughout the day, where they can quickly print extra ballots and transport them to us as a failsafe. We will also be carefully monitoring the early voting ballot stock throughout the 20-day period.

Mr. McDonough asked if a polling place runs low on ballots if we can use leftover early voting ballots. Mr. Lima said he asked the state about that but unfortunately, we can't, as the early voting ballots say "mail voter" at the top under state law, which precludes their use on Election Day, even though they are otherwise identical.

Mr. Lima said the state's minimum poll worker allocations was one moderator, one clerk, and four supervisors at each location, with larger locations having six supervisors as a minimum. He noted we have eight supervisors at all of our largest locations and six at most of the other locations where the minimum is four. We additionally have a greeter, who is trained as a supervisor, assigned at all 26 locations, plus three greeters for President Only at City Hall and several floaters scheduled in case of call-outs. We also have two moderators and two clerks, double the minimum, scheduled at nearly every location. He noted Maria Madonna has once again done a phenomenal job with poll worker recruitment and training class assignments, with over 300 poll workers hired,

trained, and assigned. We have about two positions left to fill, but we also would like to hire and train additional back-ups due to expected attrition and callouts.

Mr. Lima said the Board does not have to go to poll worker training because they all went to training for the Primary, with the exception of Mr. Erickson who is new. Mr. Lima said he will let Mr. Erickson know the training class dates for both supervisors and moderators and clerks so he can attend one of each class type to get up to speed. Mr. Erickson said he's going on Tuesday to the afternoon class.

Mr. Lima said he also requested additional voting booths at several locations, and for the first time ever, that request was denied. This is because the state's inventory of voting booths is stretched thin due to both President Only and early voting. The BOE may be able to get him a few extra booths, and are exploring ordering more. Mr. Lima said he has seen lines form in the past when all booths are full, and we have to pause checking in voters until booths free up.

Mr. Lima said if we see that happen on Election Day, he will ask our technicians and Board members to drive to Pastore Youth Center, put some of the unused early voting booths in their cars, and set them up as extras at any busy locations that may need them, which he said the BOE would be fine with us doing.

Mr. Lima said we will set up Pastore Youth Center for early voting tonight with booths, tables, chairs, signage, sample ballots, and organize the ballot inventory and supplies. We are putting 58 cones in the parking lot and along the street to designate parking spots for early voters, including some in the adjoining YMCA lot. He's also setting up more than a dozen VOTE HERE and early voting signs outside the building. We will have a dozen poll workers at the off-site early voting location daily, which will include a full 8-hour day the Saturday before Election Day. Parks and Rec. will also be putting down our 50-foot chalk line. Mr. Lima expressed his continued thanks to Parks and Rec. for accommodating us in their building, and shutting down all activities in their gym for 3 weeks for use as our early voting site.

Emergency mail ballot voting is also good to go tomorrow at City Hall, and our staff has all of the supplies ready and in position. Mr. Lima checked our label printers and counter computers which are likewise ready for the morning. Blank ballots will be stored in the vault.

We are also continuing to empty our mail ballot drop box on a daily basis with two staff members, logging the total number of ballots emptied, and storing them in the vault. Courier teams from the state BOE are retrieving the ballots from us in sealed containers with documented chain of custody. Mr. Lima said we did hit over 4,000 mail ballot applications as of today, which would be higher than any presidential election in the city's history, except for 2020 when we had over 14,000, and that Terri Bucci has done an outstanding job in processing them, including a couple hundred overseas/military FPCA ballots.

Mr. Erickson said it sounds like Mr. Lima has all of our I's dotted and T's crossed.

Mr. McDonough asked about security. Mr. Lima said we have been getting daily, sometimes multiple times per day, updates from the Dept. of Homeland Security, CISA, EI-ISAC, the FBI, ODNI, Defense Intelligence Services, and other law enforcement and intelligence agency partners. We have great situational awareness not only of what's happening around the country, but also what advanced persistent threat actors and nation-state foreign intelligence services are actively doing to attempt to disrupt our elections process, what mitigations and counter actions are in place, and what our office can and should be doing to respond to it.

Mr. Lima said we know there is an undercurrent out there that includes potential physical threats on Election Day which we have extensively prepared for and communicated to our Cranston Police details and law enforcement partners. The Fusion Center has also been sending out periodic updates. Mr. Lima said an ISIS-affiliated terrorist plot against polling locations was recently disrupted in Oklahoma. We also had the white powder envelope incidents, where our office was notified the state BOE in Cranston received an envelope from the "U.S. Traitor Elimination Army." We now keep Narcan at our mail opening and sorting station, because some white powder envelopes sent to election offices in other states contained fentanyl.

Mr. Lima said these incidents are concerning, and we're doing everything we can with the resources, training, and thorough federal support structure we have in place via EI-ISAC and CISA. Our poll workers have received training materials thanks to CISA for de-escalation and how to respond in the event of various emergency incidents. Mr. Lima has also received classified intelligence briefings on elections security at the Secret level through CISA.

Mr. Lima recalled June 2020 in the Presidential Primary, when the pandemic and security threats were at a high point, and there were serious threats against infrastructure in Cranston that prompted a city-wide lockdown and travel ban with a curfew after polls closed, National Guard helicopters were circling overhead, and there were riots in Providence the prior night. We had police escorts for the Board members and poll workers getting the ballots back from polls to City Hall that night, and it was an unprecedented scary time. Mr. Lima said things like this happen, and when it does, our job is to respond to it as best we can and plan for as much as possible.

C. THE BOARD MAY ISSUE ITS WARRANT FOR THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024 RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ELECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-18-3 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima showed the Board the election warrant and said it will run for two weeks in the Cranston Herald. Mr. Lima will also have it posted at City Hall, the Central Library, and the Cranston Senior Center.

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to issue the Board's warrant for the November 5, 2024 General Election.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

D. THE BOARD MAY CERTIFY ALL MAIL BALLOT APPLICATIONS THAT ARE RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-20-10 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough and the Board members signed the certification sheets.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Mr. Erickson to certify all mail ballot applications received by the deadline for the November 5, 2024 General Election pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-10.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

UPDATES FROM THE REGISTRAR (ALL ITEMS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY; NO VOTES TAKEN)

A. REVIEW OF ANTICIPATED GENERAL ELECTION TABULATION, RETURN, RECOUNT, AUDIT, AND CERTIFICATION TIMELINE AND POST-ELECTION BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. McDonough gave the floor to Mr. Lima to provide his updates to the Board and joked that this is favorite part of the meeting as we get to hear updates from Mr. Lima. Mr. Lima sarcastically joked that the Board hasn't heard updates so far from him in this meeting and the Board must surely be anticipating him to say something.

Mr. Lima said we want the Board here on Election Day at 5:30 a.m. to start the election meeting because at 6 a.m. the phones are already ringing and he wants the Board all here by then and the business portion of the meeting concluded so he can begin to dispatch individual Board members to troubleshoot issues at polling locations or run out needed supplies to poll workers. He knows this is a half hour earlier than in the past, but it will help ensure things go smoothly in the morning to ensure we can have maximum personnel out in the field to get all the polls open on time.

The day after the election, he would like the Board to convene at 9 a.m. Provisional ballots will not yet be ready, but the Board can start on write-in tabulation while our staff works on the provisionals to get them ready for Board adjudication.

He said there will be thousands of write-ins to tabulate, so the Board should be prepared to put in many hours hand tabulating those write-ins. He said we usually have a lot for President, and many for uncontested races like General Assembly and School Committee.

Once staff has enough provisionals ready, the Board can begin adjudication of those ballots, of which there are several hundred. We will probably go to 5 or 6 p.m., and resume the following day for another full day, given how long these two processes have taken in past General Elections. It's important all of the provisionals and write-ins are adjudicated in a public meeting. Once all write-ins are complete, they can be tabulated by individual Board members, as that portion no longer requires Board action or discussion. In the past, Board members have worked through the weekend to add up write-ins and fill in the spreadsheets so we can get them to the state BOE with our returns on Monday or Tuesday following the election. Mr. Lima said our returns for provisionals are due to the state BOE on Friday, so we must complete adjudication on Thursday, 48 hours after the election. It will take our staff a lot of time to input dispositions for several hundred provisionals in the system.

Thursday, Dec. 5 at 5 p.m. will be the local certification meeting for the Board. Mr. Lima said he will be going on vacation the following week. Mr. Lima said we certify in December due to the Thanksgiving holiday, as the state BOE will not typically complete recounts and the risk-limiting audit and certify statewide results, then produce and send us final numbers, until just prior to or just after Thanksgiving. Since the city officers aren't sworn in until January, we have less of a ticking clock to certify local results than other towns that require certification sooner.

Post-election, Mr. Lima said that unless there's a special election next year, there is not a lot of good reason for the Board to meet as often as it has this year. He envisions the Board meeting quarterly at most in 2025 so he can provide general updates on list maintenance, legislation, and other projects, which he also sends out the Board via email on a regular basis.

Mr. McDonough confirmed with Mr. Igliozi that he will be available on Election Day if needed for any legal counsel.

ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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