

CITY OF CRANSTON  
BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
Meeting of December 5, 2024 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on December 5, 2024, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on November 12, 2024. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Kirk McDonough, at 5:02 p.m. It was held in the Canvassing Authority Office, Room 100, at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steven Piscopiello, Quilcia Moronta, Kirk McDonough

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections), David Igliozzi (Board Legal Counsel)

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 – 10-15-2024, 11-5-2024, 11-6-2024, 11-7-2024 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- IV. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)
- V. PUBLIC COMMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- VI. OLD BUSINESS – NO MATTERS ON THE TABLE
- VII. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE CONDUCT OF THE 2024 ELECTIONS, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND/OR THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS FOR AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
  - B. PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-22-5.2, THE BOARD MAY CERTIFY THE CITY OF CRANSTON LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024 GENERAL ELECTION FOR THE FOLLOWING OFFICES AND BALLOT QUESTIONS (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN ON EACH ITEM):
    1. MAYOR
    2. CITY COUNCIL
    3. SCHOOL COMMITTEE
    4. CITY CHARTER REFERENDA
  - C. PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-8-5 (A)(4), THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO APPOINT AND EMPLOY NICHOLAS J. LIMA AS THE REGISTRAR / DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS, AND TO

FORWARD THE APPOINTMENT TO THE CRANSTON CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

- D. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO SUPPORT CONCEPTUAL LEGISLATION IN THE 2025 SESSION OF THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO IMPROVE ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION, MODERNIZE LEGAL ADVERTISING, REFORM WRITE-IN TABULATION, INCREASE THE VOTER PRECINCT CAP, IMPROVE ELECTION SECURITY, CLARIFY AND MODIFY EARLY VOTING PROCEDURES, AND MODIFY THE VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE, AND DISCUSS OTHER RELATED LEGISLATIVE IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION FOR CRANSTON VOTERS, AND TO DIRECT THE REGISTRAR TO LOBBY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD AND WORK WITH THE LOCAL DELEGATION TO DRAFT LEGISLATION FOR INTRODUCTION (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

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

- A. 2024-2025 ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND CERTIFICATION SCHEDULE
- B. VOTER ROLL LIST MAINTENANCE PROJECTS AND REGISTRATION BACKLOG PROCESSING STATUS
- C. 2025 BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETINGS AND ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE
- D. 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION STANDARDS BOARD, LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, AND EI/MS-ISAC CONFERENCE SCHEDULES

IX. ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

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 – 10-15-2024, 11-5-2024, 11-6-2024, 11-7-2024 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve the four sets of minutes listed. Mr. Lima noted the drafts had been emailed out to the Board in advance to review.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to approve the minutes of 10-15-2024, 11-5-2024, 11-6-2024, and 11-7-2024.

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

PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough congratulated Mr. Piscopiello on his nomination to be the city's new Director of Parks and Recreation. He said that Mr. Piscopiello's professionalism, humor, and work ethic will be missed on the Board of Canvassers but he looks forward to working with him in his new capacity.

Mr. Piscopiello thanked the Board for their acknowledgement and noted the confirmation process still needs to take place. Mr. Iglizzi also congratulated Mr. Piscopiello as he knows how invested he is in youth sports. Mr. Lima said he looks forward to working with Mr. Piscopiello in his new role since Parks and Recreation's building is also our early voting center.

Mr. Piscopiello said he looks forward to taking on his new role if confirmed by the Council, however, he wanted to point out that serving on the Board of Canvassers was a great experience, in part because of the great people on the Board and in the office who he has to work with, and he is sad to leave the Board. He said parks and recreation has been a passion of his for over 40 years, so he hopes he has the opportunity to do that, but even if he doesn't he would be happy to remain on the Board. He will have to resign if he is appointed, however, and if this is his last meeting he wanted to again thank the office staff and members of the Board for working so well together. Ms. Moronta wished him the best of luck.

PUBLIC COMMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

There were no members of the public present.

OLD BUSINESS – NO MATTERS ON THE TABLE

There was no old business posted on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

A. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE CONDUCT OF THE 2024 ELECTIONS, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND/OR THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS FOR AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough said a law change for the tallying of write-in votes was the highest priority for the Board. Mr. Piscopiello noted he has never seen such an unnecessary process in his entire life, given the Board's dozens of hours of work to hand tabulate write-ins for Donald Duck, Ham Sandwich, Jesus Christ Jackson, and Captain Caveman. Mr. Lima noted the Board members spent 9 hours the day after the election, 13 hours the next day, and another 6 hours the third day in hand-aggregating write-in votes. Mr. Piscopiello said none of that work had any bearing on any election, and there must be a better way than to go to that exercise.

Mr. Lima invited the Board members to join him in testifying at the General Assembly in the spring, as he has been working with the state Board of Elections on the write-in reform bill for the last seven years. He noted that very few, if any, states require undeclared, ineligible, fictional write-in votes to be hand-tabulated and added up by local election offices. He said the more people who testify about our experiences, the better, and while it can take several hours to wait while testifying, it is worth it.

B. PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-22-5.2, THE BOARD MAY CERTIFY THE CITY OF CRANSTON LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024 GENERAL ELECTION FOR THE FOLLOWING OFFICES AND BALLOT QUESTIONS (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN ON EACH ITEM):

Mr. McDonough asked for motions to approve each certification separately. Mr. Lima said the state Board of Elections has certified all election results, and the Board of Canvassers' action here is ministerial as required by state law.

Mr. Lima said the official, audited vote tallies have been certified by the state BOE, and after these votes to certify, he will ask the members to sign the official election certificates that list the final, certified vote totals for each local contest as provided by the BOE. Members will also sign the certificates of office that will be presented to the new officials at inauguration in January.

Mr. Lima noted there are triplicate original copies of the certificates for the Board to sign. One will be kept on file permanently in the Board of Canvassers vault; one will be hand-delivered to the Secretary of State for their records, and one will be sent to the City Clerk, which is the copy to be used at inauguration.

#### 1. MAYOR

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to certify the Nov. 5, 2024 General Election results for Mayor.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

#### 2. CITY COUNCIL

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to certify the Nov. 5, 2024 General Election results for City Council.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

#### 3. SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to certify the Nov. 5, 2024 General Election results for School Committee.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

#### 4. CITY CHARTER REFERENDA

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to certify the Nov. 5, 2024 General Election results for the City Charter referenda questions.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Mr. Lima noted both charter questions passed, and he will send copies of the certification to all relevant departments, the administration, and the city solicitor in addition to the Secretary of State and City Clerk, as required by the state Constitution.

C. PURSUANT TO R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-8-5 (A)(4), THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO APPOINT AND EMPLOY NICHOLAS J. LIMA AS THE REGISTRAR / DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS, AND TO FORWARD THE APPOINTMENT TO THE CRANSTON CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Piscopiello said the decision to reappoint Mr. Lima was obvious. Ms. Moronta said it is well-deserved.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Piscopiello to appoint and employ Nicholas J. Lima as the Registrar / Director of Elections and to forward the appointment to the Cranston City Council for approval.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Piscopiello, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Mr. Lima thanked the Board for their continued confidence. Mr. Piscopiello said Mr. Lima does an outstanding job.

Mr. McDonough asked how the Council advice and consent process works legally. Mr. Igliozi provided the Board with a summary of the state law that provides for local boards of canvassers to appoint and employ their clerical assistants, where in Cranston the Board's appointment is additionally subject to Council approval by law.

D. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO SUPPORT CONCEPTUAL LEGISLATION IN THE 2025 SESSION OF THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO IMPROVE ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION, MODERNIZE LEGAL ADVERTISING, REFORM WRITE-IN TABULATION, INCREASE THE VOTER PRECINCT CAP, IMPROVE ELECTION SECURITY, CLARIFY AND MODIFY EARLY VOTING PROCEDURES, AND MODIFY THE VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE, AND DISCUSS OTHER RELATED LEGISLATIVE IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION FOR CRANSTON VOTERS, AND TO DIRECT THE REGISTRAR TO LOBBY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD AND WORK WITH THE LOCAL DELEGATION TO DRAFT LEGISLATION FOR INTRODUCTION (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said this is something that he will be working on extensively in the coming months in his role as both the lobbyist for the Board and as chairman of the Elections Committee of the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association. He said he has a meeting with the League of Cities and Towns to advocate for their support for priority local election improvement bills, as well.

Mr. Lima said he and his colleagues from many other cities and towns had a meeting with Secretary of State Gregg Amore and his staff earlier today to discuss the Secretary's and the local clerks' legislative priorities in the 2025 session. Mr. Lima noted there are currently five proposed bills, all of which the Board has supported in the past, that the Secretary is looking for support from local boards of canvassers for. This includes making it a felony to threaten an election official, moving the primary up one week due to the danger of violating the MOVE Act and to allow more time to prepare ballots for the General Election, removing "mail voter" from the top of early voting ballots, removing the 30-day registration deadline from the state Constitution to allow the General Assembly to discuss a shorter deadline in the future, and regulating synthetic, AI-generated media in election communications, which is a growing concern because of the ability to put out false election information, like polling place hours, using AI. Mr. Lima described the implications of each bill and how they will improve our office's election operations.

Mr. Lima also noted the write-in legislation, precinct cap legislation, and early voting and online ad bill that the Board put in last year that will be introduced again in 2025. He noted that the precinct cap is important given the increased popularity of early voting, and that Cranston set the record for the most voters in the state, even more than Providence or Warwick, because of our convenient location and decision to have the most staff of any early voting site in Rhode Island, allowing us to process voters more efficiently. There was discussion among the local clerks about reducing the total days of early voting for special elections and lower-turnout primaries, but there's no definitive discussion of a firm number of days yet.

He said new bills this year from the local clerks include improvements to the permanent mail ballot application process and clarifying gray areas in the law regarding board of canvassers appointments. He said adding a deadline to make appointments to local boards would help mitigate scenarios where vacancies persist for many months. He said he will be working on language for a draft bill and circulating it with colleagues in other cities and towns.

There were also discussions from the local clerks about the language of the certification statute stating "immediately," which is not possible to comply with given the Open Meetings Act and the variable date of when final results will be available from the state BOE, not to mention the need for the local Board to schedule and attain a quorum. He noted that requirement predates the OMA, and likely heralds to a time when local boards did not have to comply with the procedures we have in place today.

Mr. Lima asked the Board for some leeway and discretion in having these conversations with other cities and towns, the BOE, and SOS, as many of these legislative ideas are still in the conceptual or drafting stage, and some minor details still need to be determined as bills are being drafted for introduction. He noted he will bring these ideas back to the Board again in 2025, but may need some permission to act on the Board's behalf in case hearings take place before the Board meets again.

Discussion ensued. Mr. McDonough noted it would be helpful if the state, in its budget, purchased more tabulators for early voting, which would free up the existing tabulator inventory for more at polling locations, given the difficulty the Board had in getting its desired number of tabulators in November at the busiest polls. Mr. Lima noted the

Clerks' Association will likely lobby actively for increased funding for voting equipment in the state budget, alongside the BOE and SOS. Mr. Lima noted the state BOE will be trying to replace and upgrade the PollPads on a rolling basis in the next three years.

Mr. Lima said that it's rare for a state to control all voting equipment, in that in most other states, our office would have direct control over the equipment. We are fortunate in that we don't have to deal with the headache of funding, maintaining, storing, programming, securing, testing, certifying, and delivering the voting equipment, but we are also left to the state's interpretations of turnout projections and equipment allocation priorities, which does affect our own operations.

Mr. Lima noted that the statewide clerks meeting to endorse legislative priorities for 2025 will be held in January, and that many of these topics will be discussed there.

MOTION: By Mr. Piscopiello and seconded by Ms. Moronta to authorize the Registrar to exercise broad discretion consistent with his testimony before the Board in expressing the Cranston Canvassing Authority's support for elections administration improvement legislation.

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)

Mr. McDonough asked Mr. Lima to provide his updates.

##### A. 2024-2025 ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND CERTIFICATION SCHEDULE

Mr. Lima noted the Electoral College is coming up at the State House on Dec. 17 at noon and all Board members are invited to attend the meeting, with an RSVP required. He said he plans to attend himself, as he will be back from vacation that day. He said the Electoral College's documents they create that day will then go to a joint session of Congress on Jan. 6, 2025.

##### B. VOTER ROLL LIST MAINTENANCE PROJECTS AND REGISTRATION BACKLOG PROCESSING STATUS

Mr. Lima said we've had a backlog of around 3,000 voter registrations that built up during the 30-day registration deadline and the week following the presidential election, where we weren't allowed to process them. As of today, Mr. Lima noted our office staff have done extensive work to completely catch up on that backlog. He said hundreds of the registrations are from the President Only precinct which take a lot longer to process because they are hand-written, require voting history to be imported in the system, and in many cases have an additional online registration pending that is accompanying them.

He noted there are now well over 5,000 voter registrations that need to be filed in our vault, going back to prior to the September Primary, which our staff will be working on in addition to list maintenance, daily processing work, and other projects well into

February. He said the new year will also bring some records destruction projects as older records time out and can be legally destroyed. He noted we need the room in our ballot storage area, as the Election Day, recount, and audit ballots will all need to be put in 22-month storage upstairs.

Mr. Lima said that list maintenance projects will include NCOA, ERIC, and voters inactive for two federal elections, of which there are thousands. He said that any voter on the inactive list who did not vote in the 2022 or 2024 elections can now be cancelled by our office. These projects collectively will require weeks to months of work by office staff to process them in the system and generate and send out notices, much of which could not be legally done while the elections were ongoing.

He also noted that the No Labels Party will be decertified Wednesday by the state BOE, and the 150 or so voters in Cranston who are members of that party will be changed to unaffiliated and sent notices and letters from our office explaining that the party is no longer recognized in Rhode Island, which is another process our office staff will have to complete.

Ms. Moronta asked if the party was only in place for this election, and Mr. Lima said the party was recognized via a petition process at the start of the year, during which our office validated over 6,000 signatures. He said that by law, if a party fails to earn 5% of the vote in a statewide race like Governor or President, they are decertified, and in this case No Labels has not functioned as a party or fielded any candidates. Mr. Lima said the decertification should not change the ongoing state criminal investigation regarding the fraudulent No Labels signatures, which was forwarded from our office and several other local boards. He noted he has continued to work with the Attorney General's office to provide relevant information for that case.

#### C. 2025 BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETINGS AND ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

Mr. Lima informed the Board that meetings will only be necessary on an as-needed basis in 2025 due to their being no elections scheduled. It is likely we will only need to meet three or four times, the first being in early spring. The next meeting will discuss legislation, list maintenance, and other projects.

Mr. Lima said because we do not have any set meetings, he will post a notice on Jan. 2, 2025 stating that while we have no meetings scheduled, all meetings that do take place will be published in accordance with the supplemental notice provisions of state law. This is because we are required to post an annual meeting notice even if we do not meet regularly or have any meetings scheduled at this time.

The Board members noted they had met more than 20 times in 2024 and were notably happy to have some degree of a break in the meeting schedule.

#### D. 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION STANDARDS BOARD, LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, AND EI/MS-ISAC CONFERENCE SCHEDULES

Mr. Lima said he is a member of the EAC Standards Board and the EAC Local Leadership Council. They two bodies are meeting back-to-back in April, and he will be



flying out on Easter Sunday to Charlotte, NC the week of April 21. He said the meetings are funded by the federal government, so there is no cost to the city.

He also noted he may attend the Partnership for Large Election Jurisdictions conference in February if funding from the organization is available from Feb. 11-13.

He said the MS-/EI-ISAC conference is expected in June, and the Election Verification Network conference is in March. He said he plans to attend both conferences, and will likely pay out of pocket to attend at no cost to the city.

Mr. Lima said he was nominated to serve on the Government Coordinating Council for the Elections Infrastructure Subsector, which is under the Department of Homeland Security. He has been told that the Council meets twice per year, and consists of secretaries of state, state and local election directors, and other stakeholders who coordinate with the federal government on election security, which is designated as national critical infrastructure. He does not know when the Council will be meeting, but as a federal advisory body his attendance would be covered by the federal government.

#### ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

APPROVED by the Cranston Board of Canvassers: March 19, 2025