

CITY OF CRANSTON
BOARD OF CANVASSERS
Meeting of March 19, 2025 – OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on March 19, 2025, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on March 13, 2025. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Kirk McDonough, at 5:08 p.m. It was held in the Canvassing Authority Office, Room 100, at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Quilcia Moronta, Kirk McDonough, Justin Erickson (Alternate, Acting Member due to vacancy)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections), David Iglozzi (Board Legal Counsel), Peter Rivelli (Board Alternate), Anthony Mastantuono (Public, Nominee to the Board of Canvassers)

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 – 12-5-2024 (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 AUTHORIZE THE REGISTRAR TO FILE CHALLENGES AGAINST VOTERS BELIEVED TO BE REGISTERED AT NON-RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ADDRESSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-9.1-28 ET SEQ. (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
 - B. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND ANY DUPLICATE SENATE COMPANION LEGISLATION: H-5708, H-5312, H-5516, H-5517, H-5518, H-5709, H-5300, H-5381, H-5514, H-5515, H-5872, H-5311, H-5315, H-5384, AND H-5084 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
 - C. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO TAKE A POSITION REGARDING THE FEDERAL SAVE ACT, AND ITS RAMIFICATIONS FOR THE BOARD'S STAFFING NEEDS AND OPERATIONS IF ENACTED (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
 - D. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO

- TERMINATE ALL ELECTION SECURITY SUPPORT FOR THE EI-ISAC, CISA ELECTION SECURITY ADVISORS, THE FBI, AND SECURITY INTELLIGENCE FOR ELECTIONS (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- E. THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND/OR VOTE TO SUPPORT THE FY2026 BUDGET REQUEST SUBMITTED TO THE MAYOR BY THE REGISTRAR (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- F. THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO ESTABLISH A CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM BY PARTNERING WITH CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOLS TO CREATE AN "I VOTED" STICKER CONTEST (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- G. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO HOLD AN ELECTIONS SECURITY TABLE-TOP EXERCISE TO TEST THE BOARD'S CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN IN THE SUMMER OF 2025 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)
- VIII. UPDATES FROM THE REGISTRAR (ALL ITEMS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY; NO VOTES TAKEN)
 - A. VOTER ROLL LIST MAINTENANCE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE OFFICE INCLUDING NCOA, UPDATES FROM RIDOH, RIDOC, ERIC, AND PROJECTS DIRECTED BY THE SOS
 - B. WINTER 2025 PARTNERSHIP FOR LARGE ELECTION JURISDICTIONS CONFERENCE REVIEW
 - C. ELECTION VERIFICATION NETWORK CONFERENCE IN MARCH 2025
 - D. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETINGS IN APRIL 2025 FOR BOTH THE EAC STANDARDS BOARD AND THE EAC LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
 - E. 2025 ELECTION SCIENCE, REFORM, AND ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE IN JUNE 2025
 - F. 2025 MS-ISAC ANNUAL MEETING IN JUNE 2025
 - G. SUMMARY OF DEMONSTRATIONS BY POLL WORKER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE VENDORS
 - H. REGISTRAR'S MEETING WITH THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES STAFF, AND PLANNED POLLING LOCATION ADA IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SUMMER OF 2025
 - I. NEW ELECTION OFFICIAL STATE TRAINING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE RI BOE AND RI SOS
 - J. STATUS OF BOE EFFORTS TO REVISE POLL WORKER TRAINING
 - K. STATUS OF BOE CONSIDERATION OF REVISED POLLING LOCATION SET-UP DIAGRAMS
 - L. WORK WITH URI ENGINEERING FOR DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE
 - M. EFFORTS BY RITCCA ELECTIONS COMMITTEE TO CREATE A STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE GUIDE
 - N. RENOVATIONS TO THE CANVASSING AUTHORITY OFFICE USING AWARDED ELECTION SECURITY GRANT FUNDING
 - O. SPRING 2025 HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES
- 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. Rivelli to approve the agenda as posted.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS – 12-5-2024 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked for a motion to approve the minutes listed.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Erickson to approve the minutes of 12-5-2024.

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

PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – CHAIRPERSON (NO VOTES TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough thanked the Board members and Mr. Lima who were able to testify on elections improvement legislation at the General Assembly.

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 AUTHORIZE THE REGISTRAR TO FILE CHALLENGES AGAINST VOTERS BELIEVED TO BE REGISTERED AT NON-RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ADDRESSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.I. GEN. LAWS § 17-9.1-28 ET SEQ. (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked Mr. Lima to explain the process. Mr. Lima noted the Board established a process several years ago when voters are discovered who potentially are registered from commercial property or non-residential addresses where they are highly unlikely to actually reside, which violates state law. Mr. Lima noted in most circumstances, it is inadvertent or an administrative error, such as a wrong address number being entered when the voter renews their license at the DMV, or a business owner becoming registered at a commercial property they own because that is where they have their mail sent to.

Mr. Lima said the first step in the process is to send a letter to the identified voters, in this case of which there are three, notifying them that it is illegal to be registered to vote from an address that is not their actual residence. Mr. Lima said he sends the letter to both the address they are registered and the address that is visible in the DMV database, if different, from the CVRS. If the voter has a phone number or email address on their record, Mr. Lima also tries to contact them via those means. Sometimes, there can be false positives, such as a voter who may actually live at a commercial address in an RV or some sort of temporary arrangement due to being homeless.

After 30 days, if no response is received from the voter to either clarify that the office's determination is not a false positive or to update their address to their actual place of residence, Mr. Lima will file formal challenges against the voter's registration in accordance with state law. The voters will be mailed return-receipt certified letters notifying them of the challenge hearing, and the return as undeliverable of those letters may be admitted as evidence by the Board in the challenge hearing. If the voters appear, the Board may question the voter and decide to cancel their registration if found to be improperly registered. If the voters fail to appear, however, the Board can only choose to make the voter inactive and send a confirmation mailing, which starts the clock towards removing the voter if they don't vote in the next two federal elections. If they do vote from an address where they do not actually reside, the evidence of this challenge process can be used by the Board to pursue potential criminal investigations.

Mr. Lima said that in past challenge hearings regarding commercial property, no voter has ever appeared, but it is possible. Mr. Lima described the full process in detail for the Board. Mr. Rivelli asked what happens if a voter is made inactive as part of this process and appears later at a polling place with that status. Mr. Lima said they will be prompted to sign and complete a voter affirmation form, which, if done so fraudulently, could be further evidence used against a voter who is not properly registered as it establishes a paper trail bearing the voter's signature post notification by our Board.

Mr. McDonough noted that of the three voters being notified, they voted or attempted to vote using provisional ballots in the last election, which were either disqualified or qualified for federal offices only.

MOTION: By Ms. Moronta and seconded by Mr. Erickson to authorize the Registrar in his official capacity to file challenges against the three voters suspected of being registered at non-residential addresses, following an initial 30-day notice period.

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

B. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND ANY DUPLICATE SENATE COMPANION LEGISLATION: H-5708, H-5312, H-5516, H-5517, H-5518, H-5709, H-5300, H-5381, H-5514, H-5515, H-5872, H-5311, H-5315, H-5384, AND H-5084 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough noted Mr. Lima has already presented most of these concepts to the Board previously, although now there are formal bills with associated bill numbers

introduced the Board can express its position on. Mr. Lima briefly reviewed the bills including any new legislation the Board should consider supporting that was not previously reviewed by the Board at past meetings or legislative sessions. Mr. Erickson expressed frustration at opposition he has heard to attempts to reform the write-in tabulation process, due to the Board spending dozens of hours on that process last election to tabulate, by hand, fictional characters and ineligible persons.

Mr. Lima noted most of the bills are either procedural improvements in elections administration drafted by the Secretary of State or state Board of Elections that we were made aware of in the drafting stage last year, or are the bills that were drafted and introduced on behalf of local election clerks by the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association. Discussion ensued.

MOTION: By Mr. McDonough and seconded by Ms. Moronta to support all of the proposed General Assembly legislation as listed on the agenda as well as any duplicate Senate companion legislation.

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

C. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO TAKE A POSITION REGARDING THE FEDERAL SAVE ACT, AND ITS RAMIFICATIONS FOR THE BOARD'S STAFFING NEEDS AND OPERATIONS IF ENACTED (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough described the SAVE Act as currently proposed and how it would negatively impact our office's operations and disenfranchise thousands of Cranston voters who do not readily have a valid U.S. Passport or certified copy of their birth certificate on hand, or who have changed names through marriage or otherwise and do not have the required certified, original vital record documentation on hand. He explained that if enacted as proposed, all 60,000 Cranston voters would not only have to reregister in-person in front of Canvassing Authority staff at City Hall in order to vote in the next federal election in 2026, but also would have to re-register in-person and again show a passport and certified birth certificate each and every time they update their address, party, or name in the future.

Mr. Lima noted the office processes between 25,000 and 35,000 such transactions in a typical year, most via automatic voter registration and Motor Voter at the DMV, and some via online voter registration and registration drives, and some by mail. He noted that the SAVE Act as currently written would make all of these methods of voter registration, which comprise greater than 99% of voter registrations, effectively illegal, establish strict criminal penalties for election officials who make honest mistakes, add a private right to action for anyone to file suit against the Canvassing Authority, and other unworkable provisions, under the pretenses of solving a supposed non-citizen voting issue which facts and data show does not exist at any meaningful rate.

It was further noted that overseas and military voters would have to meet the same requirements when filing FPCA mail ballot applications. Mr. Lima, who is a U.S. Army veteran, said he does not know how that would be possible to appear before an election official and present original documentation for a sailor who is deployed on an aircraft carrier or a soldier who is forward deployed in a combat zone. Congress passed

UOCAVA with explicit instructions to provide an accessible form for overseas U.S. citizens to vote, and this would override that.

Mr. McDonough noted that the Real ID does not confirm citizenship because it is not listed on the ID card, and permanent non-citizen residents can be issued Real IDs.

Ms. Moronta asked why Real ID would not be good enough, because she had to show her passport and prove her citizenship when she applied for one. Mr. Lima noted that the issue with the SAVE Act is the document itself must list citizenship, which the Rhode Island Real ID, and most Real ID cards issued around the country, do not have, with the exception of Enhanced Real ID cards used by a few thousand residents in states along the Canadian border and come with an added cost.

Mr. McDonough noted the staff hours for Canvassing, if the SAVE Act is enacted, would require the hiring of additional staff in order to process tens of thousands of in-person voters showing documentation. He said the City Clerks office would also have to increase staff, because they would see a large increase in requests for vital records like certified birth certificates and marriage licenses from citizens who want to register to vote.

Mr. McDonough also noted that all of the requirements of the SAVE Act are completely unfunded mandates by the federal government, and upon passage, take immediate effect with no implementation period. Ms. Moronta said the stress this would create for election officials, where if they make even a single mistake they could be held criminally liable, would be unreasonable.

Mr. Lima noted there is no grandfathering, which means this would apply not only to new registrations and updates going forward, but all 60,000 current registered voters in the city. He estimated we would need another two or three full-time staff in order to handle that volume of voter interaction, in addition to more staff in the City Clerk's office. Mr. McDonough questioned the legality of the act because it is basically a poll tax.

Mr. Igliozzi said that the addition of the private right to action meant that any individual could sue the city if they felt we were not complying fully with the law, even if we were, opening the door to costly and repeated litigation. Mr. Erickson said he is strongly against this.

Mr. Lima noted he has had calls with colleagues at the local, state, and national level about this and it will be a major topic of discussion at upcoming meetings and conferences he is attending. He said it is likely to pass the U.S. House, but its prospects are uncertain in the Senate.

Mr. Igliozzi suggested the Board's action could go to the City Council so the city itself could take a formal position, rather than just the Board of Canvassers. Mr. McDonough felt the Board, as an independent agency, can take positions on matters that affect its operations, similar to the state Board of Elections does, and those positions are not necessarily those of the city itself but are just expressing the views of the Board. Discussion ensued. Mr. Igliozzi wondered what would happen if the Council debated taking a position on an issue that was counter to the Board's position, and, as a

hypothetical, if it was a matter before the General Assembly, which resolution would be sent on behalf of the city. Mr. McDonough noted that as a former Councilman himself, the Council can take positions on behalf of the City Council via resolutions, which express the Council's opinion on behalf of the city, but the Board is not taking positions on behalf of the city, just on behalf of the Cranston Board of Canvassers as it directly relates to our operations and ability to carry out our core functions and responsibilities, which is well within our authority. Mr. Iglioizzi advised caution about the Board going out on a limb if the Council were to take an opposite position.

Mr. Rivelli asked if we should talk to the Council about adopting a resolution to further support and reinforce the Board's position. Mr. Erickson also asked whether we should make recommendations to the Council. Mr. Iglioizzi said in state law, the functions and powers of duties of local boards include a number of areas, including canvassing rights which by law were transferred from councils. Mr. Lima said in the 1800s councils ran their own elections, until boards of canvassers were established by the General Assembly in the 1920s to take elections administration and voter registration out of the authority of political bodies and establish local boards as independent municipal agencies that report to the state Board of Elections. Mr. McDonough noted that aside from the approval of the city budget and appointments, we do not report to the Council on any election matters.

Mr. Iglioizzi noted that to lobby for legislation at the General Assembly requires registration. Mr. Lima said he is registered as a lobbyist with the Secretary of State on behalf of the Cranston Board of Canvassers and in his role as chairman of the Elections Committee for the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association, the state's association of local clerks and election officials, which for decades has taken positions on and lobbied for or against elections administration that impacts cities and towns. Mr. Lima said he files regular reports and wears a lobbyist badge when testifying on behalf of the Board and Association at the State House. Mr. Iglioizzi understood that but just cautioned that we clarify that we are not taking a position on behalf of the city, but just in a role as election administrations. Mr. Lima said that is exactly what we do.

Mr. Rivelli said some Board members are testifying this week at the General Assembly on bills the Board supports, such as the write-in tabulation bill, and asked Mr. Iglioizzi for guidance. Mr. Iglioizzi said Board members can absolutely testify, so long as they do not state or imply that their testimony is on behalf of the city, the Council, or the Mayor, just that of the Board or themselves as individual Board members describing their experiences in elections administration and ways to improve it for the General Assembly to consider. Mr. Lima agreed that is important to clarify. He noted that when he testifies, he also ensures to first get Board permission so he does not testify on elections administration legislation that the Board has an opposite position on. In the past, Mr. Lima has brought some ideas to the Board, which the Board debated and ultimately decided to either take a position on, not take a position on, and in some cases disagreed with Mr. Lima, for which Mr. Lima followed the Board's directions accordingly.

Ms. Moronta noted that when the Board takes positions on elections improvement bills, they are based on the Board's own experiences in conducting elections, and the Board directs the Registrar accordingly to express the Board's position to decision makers who have the power to update our laws. It was noted this is true with the SAVE Act, federal

election laws, state legislation, or even with rules and regulations under consideration by the state BOE that can affect the local boards' budget, operations, staffing, and ability to best serve the voters.

Discussion among the Board members continued. Importantly, Mr. Lima noted that in addition to having sole discretion over elections matters and canvassing rights under state law, the Council also granted express authority to the Board and Registrar via ordinance to "lobby the general assembly to request changes to the state's election laws when directed by the board of canvassers; and to the extent practicable represent the board of canvassers on task forces, committees, and special commissions when requested in order to improve the efficiency, integrity, accessibility, and accuracy of the elections process," which Mr. Lima noted the SAVE Act falls well within the parameters of the efficiency, integrity, accessibility, and accuracy of the elections process. Mr. McDonough agreed. Mr. Lima also noted the state BOE, which all 39 local boards report to and under state law are required to follow directives from, has sent out emails asking local boards to take positions on their legislation and assist in advocating for its passage, which is a longstanding established practice.

MOTION: By Mr. Erickson and seconded by Ms. Moronta to express the Board's position in opposition to the federal SAVE Act as currently written.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Erickson, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

Mr. Erickson asked if it's possible to take one vote on all items on the agenda, if the Board is supportive of all items. Mr. Lima said that because the agenda was posted with individual items, we will need to take separate votes on each item, rather than combining them into one motion. Mr. Iglizzi said in the future, if there are routine items that it is anticipated the Board would be in favor of without issue, we could consider adding a consent agenda item to adopt those items as a block, if posted that way.

D. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO TERMINATE ALL ELECTION SECURITY SUPPORT FOR THE EI-ISAC, CISA ELECTION SECURITY ADVISORS, THE FBI, AND SECURITY INTELLIGENCE FOR ELECTIONS (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said he wrote an op-ed expressing concerns about the drawback of federal support for elections security, which the Board has enjoyed for the last seven years and included cybersecurity support, penetration testing, guidance, intelligence reports, situational awareness, election security advisors, table-top exercises, and several other directs means of security support for both physical and cybersecurity of our elections, elections equipment, and personnel. He said the Dept. of Homeland Security, and in particular CISA, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, have signaled they are terminating nearly all existing support for state and local election offices.

CISA has also eliminated all funding and support for the EI-ISAC, or Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center, which the Board is an active member of and has been participating in for the last five years. Mr. Lima said EI-ISAC had been providing us with daily updates, including threat intelligence, updates on

physical attacks against elections, attacks by foreign nation state actors, and support used by the city's IT Department to help defend the city's networks and IT infrastructure against phishing attempts, DDOS attacks, and other cyber threats. We also received extensive training and regular partner calls through CISA, EI-ISAC, and other entities, which are being terminated by the federal government.

Mr. Lima noted all, or nearly all, of the personnel who worked in intelligence and elections security support at CISA have been fired or put on leave. He said the FBI task force that dealt with threats against elections infrastructure has also been disbanded by the new Justice Department leadership.

Mr. Lima said state and election offices all over the country, from both political parties, have expressed public concern over the termination of this funding, support, and resources from the federal government, especially CISA Election Security Advisors and the EI-ISAC. Mr. Lima said the federal government has also cut off funding and fired staff that were on the cybersecurity front lines fighting off direct cyber attacks from Russia, China, and Iran, which is deeply concerning to him as it puts our office on the front lines of defending against those cyber attacks without federal intelligence or operational support going forward.

He said these services are all being pulled away, and nothing is being stood up in their place, at a time when threats against election offices and election officials are at an all-time high in American history, which included bomb threats against hundreds of polling locations and incendiary devices placed on mail ballot drop boxes in November 2024, as well as incidents in Rhode Island that included a suspicious white powder envelope mailed to the state BOE from the "U.S. Traitor Elimination Army."

MOTION: By Mr. Erickson and seconded by Ms. Moronta to express the Board's grave concerns regarding the federal cuts to election security support and funding.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Erickson, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

E. THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND/OR VOTE TO SUPPORT THE FY2026 BUDGET REQUEST SUBMITTED TO THE MAYOR BY THE REGISTRAR (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. McDonough asked if we should take a position on this or just have Mr. Lima advocate for the Board's budget request himself. Mr. Igliozzi said it's OK for the Board to vote to support Mr. Lima's budget request to the Mayor, as it expresses the Board's operational needs for the upcoming fiscal year to effectuate its statutory mandates, provided that it is Mr. Lima as the department head actually submitting the budget, since the Board itself doesn't control the budget. Mr. McDonough agreed.

Mr. Lima said he initially submitted \$20,000 for elections operations, which would include FY2026 funding for Board stipends, envelopes, postage, and several improvements he would like to make to polling locations to improve ADA compliance and lighting. He said the School Dept. is able to make some of those improvements, and additionally, others that he has reviewed are far beyond our price range to implement without grants, so he has asked the Finance Dept. to amend that request to

\$10,000, which will allow for the smaller ADA improvements. He said the construction of ADA parking spaces at Cranston East Gym and behind Eden Park would not be feasible, as it could be \$50,000 to \$100,000 to remove trees, relocate poles, and pave and stripe regulation parking spaces and curb cuts.

Mr. Lima said there is an increase from \$400 to \$600 on the education line item, which covers our office's organizational annual dues and membership in three organizations: PLEJ, the Partnership for Large Election Jurisdictions; the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association; and the Elections Center, which is the national association of election officials. Mr. Lima said it is a good investment, as we get thousands of dollars of benefits, free training, and services from these organizations.

Mr. Lima said that contractually, the new Teamsters contract will include a raise for our three staff members in the \$4,000 to \$5,000 range each, due to the contract having expired over a year ago and this year's budget including two years of contractual COLAs.

The Board members expressed their support for the budget request Mr. Lima submitted to the Mayor.

MOTION: By Mr. Erickson and seconded by Ms. Moronta to express the Board's support for the FY2026 Board of Canvassers operating budget request submitted by the Registrar to the Mayor.

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

F. THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO ESTABLISH A CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM BY PARTNERING WITH CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOLS TO CREATE AN "I VOTED" STICKER CONTEST (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Lima said most local election offices around the country already do this, especially in cities, including offices that are much smaller than ours. However, in Rhode Island, no local election office has ever designed or created their own "I Voted" stickers expressing unique facets of the municipality, instead relying on the state BOE to provide generic stickers.

He said this is inexpensive and a common-sense civics education program to partner with Cranston's high schools to have students submit designs for Cranston-specific "I Voted" stickers. The School Dept. will review the designs, and select up to 10 to forward to the Board of Canvassers for consideration. The Board can then choose to adopt whichever stickers it chooses to, whether it is one design or several, and print them for use at 2026 polls, which would be under the FY2027 budget and would cost at most a few hundred dollars.

Mr. Lima said he met with the principals and art teachers at both high schools and informed the Superintendent, and they are all very enthusiastic about this program. He said students will design stickers in Fall 2025, which can then be reviewed and selected in the Spring of 2026 by the Board. If successful, this could become a regular civics education program, with new sticker designs by new generations of students each

election every two years, which is how similar programs run in other states, counties, and local governments. Mr. Lima shared with Mr. Iglizzi a draft of the program's rules and a release for parents or guardians to sign for the 10 selected designs that will be reviewed publicly by the Board and provide the students public credit for their work. The program is designed to be flexible to allow the Board to choose one or more winning designs if multiple would work well as stickers.

Mr. Lima said the designs can't have political partisan concepts, or commercial imagery, so while Del's Lemonade is headquartered in Cranston, unfortunately a Del's themed sticker would not be allowed. Winning designs will receive recognition, and Mr. Lima will ask the City Council to acknowledge students with a resolution, although there is no cash award, Mr. Lima said he can ensure students get a roll of stickers featuring their created design.

The Board members expressed enthusiasm about the program and its potential to engage students in learning about the voting process and having their artwork showcased on stickers given to thousands of Cranston voters at the polls. Mr. Rivelli asked if the program will extend to middle and elementary school students, and Mr. Lima said he discussed that with the high school administrators, and there is certainly potential to expand it in the future to all Cranston students after this initial trial year. Mr. Erickson agreed in that we should walk before we run and that future expansion could be wonderful. Ms. Moronta noted the stickers will be collectors items with proud parents looking forward to getting their child's design at the polls when they go to vote.

MOTION: By Mr. Erickson and seconded by Ms. Moronta to establish an "I Voted" sticker contest partnership with Cranston high schools as part of the Board's civic education commitment.
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0 – Mr. Erickson, Ms. Moronta, and Mr. McDonough voting aye.

G. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND VOTE TO HOLD AN ELECTIONS SECURITY TABLE-TOP EXERCISE TO TEST THE BOARD'S CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN IN THE SUMMER OF 2025 (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

Mr. Iglizzi said this is a great idea given the many threats to election officials. Mr. Lima said legal advice is considered an important part of election security incident response and planning and he invited Mr. Iglizzi to attend and participate in the exercise.

Since a quorum of the Board will be present, and sensitive security operations plans will be discussed, the exercise will be held at the next Board meeting in June, after the commercial property hearings, and will be held in executive session with invited guests from the Cranston Police, Fire, IT, Administration, and Legal departments. Mr. Lima is also extending an invitation to the RI BOE and RI Department of State Elections Division staff.

The purpose of the TTX will be to review various security and natural disaster scenarios that could realistically happen on Election Day, and in most cases have happened in other states or in past elections in Rhode Island, and test the Board's adopted Continuity of Operations Plan and how the Board and its staff would need to partner

with other city and state agencies to respond to incidents and continue voting operations as best as possible. The TTX is just as helpful for the partnering agencies to participate in as it is for the Board, as while we think about and plan for election security all the time, it reminds those agencies of the need to support us and have plans in place of their own to respond to Election Day incidents, cyber attacks, threats, or severe weather events that impact voting operations.

No vote of the Board was needed as the members indicated their availability to meet on June 18 at 6 p.m. Mr. Lima will schedule the agenda item accordingly when that meeting is posted, and will book Council Chambers for the meeting and TTX.

Mr. Lima said following that meeting, the Board may not need to meet again until the Fall, as it's a non-election year and we are mostly doing routine voter maintenance. The Board met nearly 30 times in the last year, so he would also like to ensure not to burn out the members by having unnecessary meetings too frequently.

Ms. Moronta noted she had to leave in a few minutes to attend another meeting at 6:30. Mr. Rivelli was designated to take any remaining votes for Ms. Moronta after she has to go, however the only remaining agenda item for voting purposes was adjournment.

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

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

A. VOTER ROLL LIST MAINTENANCE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE OFFICE INCLUDING NCOA, UPDATES FROM RIDOH, RIDOC, ERIC, AND PROJECTS DIRECTED BY THE SOS

Mr. Lima said the NCOA process is underway under the direction of the Secretary of State which will be used to update or remove thousands of voter records in Cranston for those who have newer addresses on file with the U.S. Postal Service than they do on their voter record. This includes voters who have moved within the city, to or from another city or town in Rhode Island, or out of state, each of which prompts a letter sent to the voter and specific procedures for our staff to follow to update their address on file. There are several rounds of contact required for some voters in the project.

Ms. Moronta asked how often we do list maintenance via NCOA. Mr. Lima said it used to be once every two years, but thanks to the Let RI Vote Act NCOA projects can now happen as many as four times per year on a rolling basis, but can't be done by federal law within 90 days of a federal election which limits what we can do in election years. This makes off years important for list maintenance, and we haven't had a true election off year since 2019, however we have been doing NCOA every year in recent years regardless, among other list maintenance projects to improve the voter rolls.

Mr. McDonough noted the CVRS has been down frequently as of late and asked if that could affect the NCOA process. Mr. Lima said it would not, as the SOS has been working on a lot of back-end coding and improvement projects to the complex system but downtime is still relatively infrequent and has little impact on our operations – for

instance, if the system is down for a couple of hours in the morning, our staff adjusts by doing afternoon work first. Mr. Lima said this is fairly routine as the CVRS is constantly being improved and updated each year by the SOS.

B. WINTER 2025 PARTNERSHIP FOR LARGE ELECTION JURISDICTIONS CONFERENCE REVIEW

Mr. Lima described his attendance at the PLEJ Conference, which he attended at no cost to the city. Mr. Lima said our membership with PLEJ includes numerous resources, including two conferences per year where he can talk to other election officials who face similar problems and challenges to what we have in Cranston and have figured out good solutions.

Mr. Lima said one interesting note at PLEJ was finding out about the Alliance for Election Assistance, which is a new form of accreditation program for local election offices, the first of its kind in the country. The program is in the start-up stage and will allow local election offices to be certified to non-partisan standards of excellence in election administration. At this stage, they are seeking 75 election offices around the country to participate in further developing and fine-tuning the standards, prior to a national roll-out in 2026. Mr. Lima said he intends to apply to be one of those 75 offices, as any form of accreditation can be used to further illustrate the integrity of our staff's work and apply for future grant funding opportunities, similar to accreditation that sought by Cranston Police, libraries, and educational institutions, but has never until now existed for election offices.

C. ELECTION VERIFICATION NETWORK CONFERENCE IN MARCH 2025

Mr. Lima said he is paying out of pocket to attend the EVN conference in Washington, D.C. for two days in March. EVN focuses on election integrity, including using academic research, expertise of computer engineers, and other election advocacy groups to discuss election auditing, security, and integrity standards. Mr. Lima said he attended EVN in 2023, but was unable to go last year as we were too busy with the Presidential Primary and June Special Election in 2024, so he looks forward to participating in the discussions this year.

D. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETINGS IN APRIL 2025 FOR BOTH THE EAC STANDARDS BOARD AND THE EAC LOCAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Mr. Lima is a member, appointed by the Secretary of State, of the EAC Standards Board, representing all Rhode Island local officials at the federal level. He is also a member, appointed by the RITCCA, of the EAC LLC, which consists of two local election officials from every state. Mr. Lima said most EAC Advisory Board members are partisan election officials, as it is common in most states for local election directors and county clerks to be directed elected, and in some states, such as Connecticut, each party has their own "co-director" in charge of the local election office. Each state on the Standards Board and LLC is required to have no more than one representative from each party, and as Mr. Lima is registered as an unaffiliated independent, that meets the requirement.

The two federal boards meet at least on an annual basis, and attendance at the meetings is paid for by the federal government at no cost to the city. This year's annual meetings are being held back-to-back in Charlotte, North Carolina in April.

Mr. Lima said he expects a lot of discussion about national election administration issues, a lack of funding, security concerns, and other hot topics. He noted he is also on the EAC LLC Executive Committee, serving as Chair for the Northeast Region, and is up for reelection from his peers in the Northeast to continue serving on the Executive Committee.

Mr. Lima said these are vital boards, and so far have avoided cuts by DOGE or other cuts to the federal government in the new administration. He said the Standards Board has a congressionally mandated role in reviewing the standards for certification of voting equipment used in all 50 states, which the EAC commissioners ultimately choose to adopt or modify. The LLC, meanwhile, is the only national board that has local election officials from all 50 states and allows those officials to discuss matters of important concern to local election offices and address them directly to the EAC.

E. 2025 ELECTION SCIENCE, REFORM, AND ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE IN JUNE 2025

Mr. Lima said he was encouraged by Deputy Secretary of State Rob Rock to attend the ESRA conference in June, which he has not been to previously, due to the important topics in elections administration that are discussed there and are unique compared to other conferences. He plans to attend and will apply for funded attendance so it would not cost the city anything to go. The conference has a more academic and data-driven focus to improving how elections work.

F. 2025 MS-ISAC ANNUAL MEETING IN JUNE 2025

Mr. Lima is paying out of pocket to attend the MS-ISAC annual meeting in June 2025, due to the cuts in federal CISA funding that eliminated funded attendance. Mr. Lima previously attended this meeting twice when it was funded by the federal government. Cranston remains an MS-ISAC member, despite elimination of the EI-ISAC, and we continue to receive some free cybersecurity services from MS-ISAC, which has also seen funding cuts from DHS. The conference will cover a wide array of security and election security topics, which are more important now than ever to discuss due to the federal funding cuts. Mr. Lima expects there to be significant discussion at this meeting on the future of support for elections security, including efforts by the states themselves to stand up their own shared programs to replace the federal government's pullback of support.

Mr. Lima noted that as with all work-related conferences and meetings, Mr. Lima is attending without accumulating any comp time and will be in regular contact by phone with the office staff, and checking and responding to emails throughout. The timing of the conferences is also outside of critical operations which makes his attendance feasible.

G. SUMMARY OF DEMONSTRATIONS BY POLL WORKER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE VENDORS

Mr. Lima said he and the staff have had demos from three different poll worker management software vendors. Unfortunately, the costs for the software are likely beyond the capability of the city to independently afford, despite the significant benefits and cost savings on staff overtime they have the potential to produce. Mr. Lima said he and the RITCCA Elections Committee are actively advocating for the RI BOE and RI SOS to purchase a statewide contract for a poll worker management system, which will include payroll, assignments, online training, and the ability to email and text all 350 poll workers in the event of an emergency or for routine reminders.

The cost for these programs is in the \$14,000 to \$20,000 per year range for a city the size of Cranston. Mr. Lima said we used to have a program under the old CVRS, which was terminated in 2020 and not reinstated in the new system due to higher system development priorities during the pandemic and with many state law changes that followed that required state resources to reprogram the system. He said the state has been actively exploring ways to bring back this important resource which our staff could benefit from to manage the recruitment, retainment, hiring, on-boarding, training, assignment, payroll, and communications with hundreds of poll workers, rather than having to manage these tasks using Excel spreadsheets, thousands of phone calls, and hand-written notes. Such a system would also capture and maintain significant institutional knowledge currently held by our staff and allow new staff in the future to more easily adapt to these difficult job tasks.

If we can find a program that can work within the city's budget, especially if there are off-setting overtime costs by saving our staff time, Mr. Lima will explore vendor options in next year's budget request, if the state does not provide a solution.

H. REGISTRAR'S MEETING WITH THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES STAFF, AND PLANNED POLLING LOCATION ADA IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SUMMER OF 2025

Mr. Lima had a productive meeting with the GCD staff to discuss a list of suggested ADA improvements for polling locations, some of which would be required prior to the 2026 elections. Mr. Lima said the office has a great working relationship with the GCD staff, who are helpful in sending personnel out on Election Day and afterwards to inspect locations for ADA compliance and suggest improvements to signage, parking, smoothing out sidewalks and door jams, ramps, and other accessibility needs as required for all polling locations under federal law.

Improvements will be made to Glen Hills School (lighting) and Waterman School (ADA parking signage), and Mr. Lima noted he would like to make additional improvements at Pastore Youth Center, the Portuguese Club, Cranston East, and other locations to improve access for voters.

Mr. Lima applied for a grant from the Sherlock Center for Disabilities at Rhode Island College of up to \$3,000 to support these improvements. He would also like to purchase new ADA signage, which is a minimal expense, that the Highway Dept. can install to

replace aging or inadequate signage at polling locations throughout the city this summer. He noted that will only cost a couple of hundred dollars and not require hiring a vendor since city Public Works Dept. personnel have helped us make similar improvements in the past.

I. NEW ELECTION OFFICIAL STATE TRAINING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE RI BOE AND RI SOS

Mr. Lima said this new program began from conversations between him, Rob Rock, and BOE Commissioner Randy Jackvony, a former Cranston Board of Canvassers chairman, and was quickly made a priority and adopted by the BOE and SOS over a year ago. The staff of both agencies have worked diligently to get a rigorous training program schedule off the ground in order to professionalize and certify local election officials who complete the program.

It is mandatory for staff, but optional for Board members to attend. Most of the trainings, which will be held throughout the year, are held during business hours which will be difficult for the Board to attend, but Mr. Lima noted it would be useful for members to attend when possible to better understand the complex regulations and rules the staff follow in our day-to-day voter registration and elections administration work. The program covers a wide array of topics from security, to ADA compliance, to election law, to polling place best practices, to routine office procedures in elections.

J. STATUS OF BOE EFFORTS TO REVISE POLL WORKER TRAINING

Mr. Lima noted this was something the Board noted needed improvement in the last election cycle, as did other local election offices, and he reported that the state BOE staff has heard us and is already actively working on improvements to the effectiveness of training poll workers. This could include more interactive classes, multi-component hybrid classes that are both in-person and online, and integrated training quizzes to test poll worker knowledge prior to certification.

The staff of the BOE is working on this throughout this year to roll out improvements for the 2026 election cycle, taking in feedback from local election offices. Mr. Rivelli noted the RI Voter ID card example should be added to the training, as poll workers who had not seen the card before were confused by it in 2024 and a photo of what the card looks like was not previously in the training. This resulted in a problem involving a provisional ballot at Hope Church last November that could have been mitigated by better training. Mr. Lima agreed and said he has already communicated that to the BOE.

K. STATUS OF BOE CONSIDERATION OF REVISED POLLING LOCATION SET-UP DIAGRAMS

Mr. Lima added that the BOE is also working on updating the set-up diagrams for all 490 precincts around the state. The equipment for voting, including tables, chairs, and booths, are set up carefully to ensure proper line queuing and access to power outlets, using programs from the URI Engineering for Democracy Institute, URI Votes, and 3D modeling.

Mr. Lima said he will be working with the state BOE to visit polling locations to review the new diagrams, which will have to be redesigned because, in the future, the PollPad battery back-ups we have been using for electronic pollbooks since 2016 will not be available as they age out and a suitable replacement is not on the market.

As such, PollPads will need to be plugged in to a wall outlet during the day, and to avoid ADA issues such as wiring being run along the floors of school gyms and social halls, the set-ups at all 27 of Cranston's polling locations will need to be reevaluated to keep a good flow of voters but also allow the supervisor check-in and clerk's tables to be aligned next to a wall where there is access to power sockets. This requires realignment of voting booths, party checker tables, and where the ADA ExpressVote BMD and DS-200 tabulators are located in the room.

Ultimately, this is a best practice, as most jurisdictions around the country that use electronic pollbooks do have them plugged in throughout Election Day, and don't try to use 20-hour battery back-ups as it's expensive and impractical, and the back-ups are difficult to charge and have a short useful life given how election equipment is used over decade-long periods.

L. WORK WITH URI ENGINEERING FOR DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE

Mr. Lima said URI is also working on a study involving exploring ways to improve the storage of ballots and efficiency in storage spaces. EDI personnel recently came to Cranston to look at our vault and ballot storage area on the 4th Floor to take measurements, and are doing similar work around the country to develop new practices and ideas, since storage space is usually a major concern for election offices. Mr. Lima said he offered URI whatever assistance would be helpful as they work to create this new helpful program for election administrators. He noted URI also presented at the PLEJ Conference, and their work to improve elections from an engineering perspective is quickly becoming adopted around the entire country.

M. EFFORTS BY RITCCA ELECTIONS COMMITTEE TO CREATE A STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE GUIDE

Mr. Lima said the RITCCA Elections Committee has created a sub-committee to create a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guide, which will be useful for both current and new election clerks around the state and help us better standardize operations, how to process voter registrations, how to enter data like apartment and unit numbers consistently, etc.

Mr. Lima said he is far too busy to be directly involved with this project, but will find its work product very helpful and is thankful to his colleagues in five other towns who sit on the committee for stepping up to take the lead on it. As Chair of the Elections Committee, he said he advised his colleagues to take their time and try to tackle developing standardized procedures for one task at a time, and develop this project over the course of the year. He felt eventually it can be incorporated into the state's new training program, as well.

N. RENOVATIONS TO THE CANVASSING AUTHORITY OFFICE USING AWARDED ELECTION SECURITY GRANT FUNDING

Mr. Lima said he has been working with Mark Marchesi in Purchasing and Building Maintenance on exploring getting a contractor to fix the issue with the mold and water leak in the office sink and adjacent supply closet. He has shown the problem to the Mayor and Administration who are supportive in getting a permanent fix in place, which may involve tearing open the wall to find and plug the source of the occasional leak that has caused this issue. He noted the pain on both sides of the wall, opposite the defunct dumb waiter elevator that is between the wall, has significant amounts of paint chipping and peeling off, which leads him to believe the leak is not related to the sink but to pipes or drainage within the wall. He said the staff is OK with removing the sink entirely as we could always use the sink in the breakroom as needed upstairs, if it means resolving the mold issue and water leak, which has caused us to have envelopes and office supplies stored in the closet damaged in the past.

We still have access to over \$45,000 of election security grant funding from the SOS, as well, which Mr. Lima would like to use to make improvements to the office doors, front counter, panic buttons, and ballot storage area. He is actively seeking funding for other projects that are beyond the funds available, such as upgrading the security of office windows. Of the original \$50,000 grant award, the portion spent thus far was used to add two new security cameras and purchase needed hardware to extend the recording time period for the cameras that observe the mail ballot drop box well beyond the minimum required by state law.

As the security improvements to the office are permanent changes to the building, they will require approval from the Administration before proceeding. Mr. Lima is awaiting the full-time appointment of the new Public Works Director to have a conversation with him and Chief of Staff Moretti about moving forward with getting quotes and vendors for the projects we can afford with the remaining grant funding.

O. SPRING 2025 HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

Mr. Lima said our office will be conducting voter registration drives at all three Cranston high schools this spring, as is required annually by all local boards under state law. Emerson Brito has been assigned to coordinate with each school and run the drives in collaboration with the high school civics teachers, principals, students, and the SOS. In the past we have been able to register hundreds of juniors and seniors to vote at these annual drives, as any student who is 16 or 17 can preregister to vote.

Mr. Rivelli asked if we include volunteering to work as a poll worker as part of the voter registration drive. Mr. Lima said all of our voter registration forms include a checkbox to mark as interested in being a poll worker, and high school students are highly encouraged to do so as state law explicitly allows high school students to work the polls on Election Day if they are at least 16 years old. This is especially helpful because schools are closed for all election days and primaries, except for smaller special elections.

Mr. Lima said he additionally reaches out to Superintendent Nota-Masse and the principals at the high schools during each election cycle in order to get notices out to both students and parents about our office's needs to recruit poll workers, and the principals have been helpful in getting that messaging into their school newsletters and announcements.

Mr. Rivelli said his daughters loved working the polls and encouraged their friends in school to join them, and hopes more students will become interested as it is a great civics learning experience, and we also always need the extra poll workers.

ADJOURNMENT (VOTES MAY BE TAKEN)

MOTION: By Mr. Erickson and seconded by Mr. Rivelli to adjourn.
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY – VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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