

CITY OF CRANSTON  
BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
Final Canvass Meeting of May 12, 2020 – APPROVED MINUTES

The Cranston Board of Canvassers met on May 12, 2020, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on May 5, 2020. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Randall Jackvony, at 4:01 p.m. It was held virtually via electronic means on the Webex platform, conducted in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 in response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Randall Jackvony, Gary Vierra, Alice Petrone (For Mr. Joslyn)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Fred Joslyn

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections), Rob Rock (Director of Elections, RI Department of State), Theresa Bucci (Canvassing Aide), David Igliazzi (Assistant City Solicitor)

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 2-18-2020
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENT
- V. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS – RANDALL JACKVONY
- VI. 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 PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY ELECTION THAT IS TO TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2020
  - B. THE BOARD MAY HEAR FROM ROB ROCK, DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS FOR THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF STATE ELECTIONS DIVISION, REGARDING 2020 ELECTIONS LEGISLATION AND ELECTION PROCESS CHANGES RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
  - C. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE A FORMAL POSITION ON ELECTIONS LEGISLATION INTRODUCED OR PROPOSED IN THE 2020 SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, INCLUDING LEGISLATION SUBMITTED BY THE RHODE ISLAND SECRETARY OF STATE AND STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS
  - D. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND FORMALLY APPROVE THE SELECTION OF THE SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC LODGE AND

WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL POLLING LOCATIONS FOR THE  
JUNE 2, 2020 PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY

- E. THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND DISCUSS ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE REGISTRAR TO DATE, AND THOSE THAT ARE CURRENTLY PLANNED GOING FORWARD, TO SAFELY CONDUCT THE JUNE 2, 2020 PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY
- F. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS PLANS FOR PROCESS AND POLICY RELATED TO THE CONDUCT OF THE SEPT. 8, 2020 AND NOV. 3, 2020 ELECTIONS
- VII. UPDATES AND REMARKS
  - A. REGISTRAR / DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS – NICHOLAS LIMA
- VIII. COMMENTS OF BOARD MEMBERS
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Jackvony asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Lima said Mr. Joslyn was feeling under the weather and regretted not being able to attend.

MOTION: By Mr. Vierra and seconded by Ms. Petrone to approve the agenda as posted.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Jackvony asked the Board members to review the minutes of February 18, 2020.

MOTION: By Mr. Vierra and seconded by Ms. Petrone to approve the meeting minutes of 2-18-2020.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public present who appeared to speak. Rob Rock, director of elections for Secretary of State Nellie M. Gorbea, was present for a related agenda item.

CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHAIRPERSON – Randy Jackvony

Mr. Jackvony thanked the Board members for arriving promptly on the Webex call so the meeting could begin on time.

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 PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY ELECTION THAT IS TO TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2020

Mr. Lima said a Preliminary List of Cranston Voters had been posted in accordance with state law in the office and, with City Hall mostly not open to the public due to COVID-19, the list was also posted on the city's website. The list contains 58,246 registered voters, including 22,253 Democrats, 8,379 Republicans, and 27,614 unaffiliated voters. He said 3,164 are inactive but eligible to vote in the June 2, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary.

Mr. Lima said no members of the public appeared to present objections to the inclusion or omission of any voter on the Final Canvass, or filed objections with the office. The meeting was advertised in the Cranston Herald and The Providence Journal, and has been on the city's website for the last week and a half.

Mr. Vierra asked how voters will know that, due to COVID-19 and the state's decision to send mail ballot applications to all registered voters, of which the office processed nearly 12,000 responses, only two polling locations will be open on June 2. Mr. Lima said he has run a newspaper ad in the Cranston Herald advertising the two polling locations along with a message strongly urging residents to vote by mail due to the pandemic. The quarter-page ad is running for four straight weeks, and is also posted on the home page of the city's website. Voters can also look up their location at [vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov). Mr. Lima said there would be no city-wide mailing, and there would not normally be a mailing for polling place consolidations in any election.

MOTION: By Mr. Vierra and seconded by Ms. Petrone to certify the Final Canvass list of voters for the Tuesday, June 2, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary election as prepared by this office.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

B. THE BOARD MAY HEAR FROM ROB ROCK, DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS FOR THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF STATE ELECTIONS DIVISION, REGARDING 2020 ELECTIONS LEGISLATION AND ELECTION PROCESS CHANGES RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Mr. Jackvony introduced Mr. Rock, who started his presentation by noting that in the statewide mailing a few weeks ago, a letter was included stressing to voters that very few polling locations would be open on June 2 and that voters should check [vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov) before they go vote. Mr. Vierra thanked Mr. Rock for the additional information.

Mr. Rock said the Cranston Board of Canvassers already supported the Secretary of State's early voting legislation last year. He said that and the other two pieces of legislation were all introduced prior to the start of the pandemic, but remain priorities. Mr. Rock described the early voting process, where voters would sign in on a PollPad at

municipal town halls, receive a ballot, and cast it directly into a DS-200 voting machine. The process change would mark a significant improvement for voters and be an administrative time save for local boards of canvassers and the state Board of Elections, and reduce the number of ballot remakes and last-minute ballot deliveries to the BOE that delay election results. A voter would check in on the PollPad using a voter ID. Mr. Rock did say that the legislation includes requiring one weekend of early voting at city and town halls prior to the election.

Mr. Rock noted the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks Association, of which Mr. Lima is a member, has supported the bill multiple times. Mr. Jackvony asked how far in advance the bill opens up early voting, and Mr. Rock said the timeframe would be unchanged, at 20 days before the election, just like the existing emergency period.

Mr. Vierra asked when the bill would go into effect if passed. Mr. Rock said if it's passed, if or when the General Assembly returns to session, it will depend on timing as rules and regulations will need to be developed in order for it to be effective for the upcoming elections.

Ms. Petrone asked if the office has worked out how staffing will be handled. Mr. Lima said he was confident the department could make it work, particularly given the administrative time saved by the near-total elimination of the emergency application and certification process that would result from the bill's passage.

Mr. Rock described the next bill, which would establish a cybersecurity assessment task force comprised of multiple federal, state, and local agencies to ensure all election systems at the state and local level are as secure and airtight as possible to mitigate cyber attacks. He said the Secretary would like this enshrined in state law to ensure cybersecurity remains a top priority on a regular basis in perpetuity, not just for elections security but for cyber defense statewide. The task force would establish communication protocols in the event of a cyber attack, and would essentially create incident response teams to ensure the state is ready to respond to any type of cyber disruption. Mr. Rock said that while elections are a high priority, any networked system can be compromised and jeopardize the election, even if the initial system affected isn't elections-related.

Mr. Jackvony asked if there's an existing cyber task force at the state level. Mr. Rock said there are several ad-hoc groups, along with teams from the Rhode Island National Guard and DoIT, but no concrete group enshrined in law, which this bill would accomplish.

Mr. Rock explained the third bill would clean up a convoluted process involving voter registrations processed by local boards of canvassers from voters who move between cities and towns within 30 days of an election. He said the process is confusing and disenfranchises a small number of voters who have not updated their registration to their new town within six months of the election. The bill will allow that limited number of voters who are affected to vote at the polling place of their new town, just as voters who moved within the town can presently do despite how long ago they changed their address. Given the statewide nature of the Central Voter Registration System, it doesn't make sense to maintain to separate rulesets for voters who are registered to vote but simply haven't updated their address.

Mr. Lima said a voter today applied for a mail ballot application who moved to Cranston from Johnston eight months ago. She's a registered voter there, but now lives here and would like to vote. Legally, she cannot vote – even though she's registered – and this bill would allow her an opportunity to vote. If the voter had moved within the city, she would have been allowed to vote, but because she crossed a town line and six months have passed, she can't. Mr. Lima said the existing law is a relic of a time when the 39 cities and towns maintained their own independent, decentralized voter registration systems and no longer applies today.

Ms. Petrone asked if this was new legislation. Mr. Rock said it's a new bill for this year. Because of the pandemic, there hasn't been a hearing yet, so he doesn't know if there's any opposition. He reiterated that this is more of a procedural update, and is only applicable to people who are already Rhode Island registered voters – so it's not same-day voter registration.

Mr. Rock said the odds of any of the bills getting a hearing are low with the General Assembly not meeting, but said it would be great to have the Board's support nonetheless. Mr. Jackvony asked Mr. Rock if he wanted to provide any updates about how the pandemic is affecting the election.

Mr. Rock said 780,000 were sent out in April and over 124,000 have come back from voters who want to vote by mail. The previous high was 35,000 mail ballots. Mr. Rock said it's unprecedented for the state to have processed this many applications for mail ballots. He said Mr. Lima's team have been working weekends and nights and that he can't stress enough how good a team Cranston has in elections. He said about 56,000 mail ballots will be sent out in the next couple of days, with thousands to follow on a rolling basis. Mr. Rock wanted to stress to the Board how well Cranston has done at keeping up with the work demanded of the staff.

Mr. Lima said Western Hills Middle School and Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge will be the polling locations for June 2. Mr. Rock said a low in-person turnout is expected, and this election will be a good trial run for a predominantly mail-ballot election because we don't know how the September and November elections will need to be run. Mr. Rock said the hard work from Cranston' staff is unparalleled, and that the SOS is appreciative of Mr. Lima's support and work on various task forces, legislation, cybersecurity, and with the Central Voter Registration System modernization project. Mr. Rock said Mr. Lima has been the lead local election official in assisting building the system, and he can't stress enough how important the work he and the Cranston team has been to the project. Ms. Petrone and Mr. Vierra said Cranston have a great team in place, and everyone works hard and well together. Mr. Jackvony thanked the staff for their hard work on nights and weekends on behalf of voters.

C. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE A FORMAL POSITION ON ELECTIONS LEGISLATION INTRODUCED OR PROPOSED IN THE 2020 SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, INCLUDING LEGISLATION SUBMITTED BY THE RHODE ISLAND SECRETARY OF STATE AND STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Mr. Jackvony asked for the Board to vote on each legislative item one at a time. Mr. Lima said early voting was strongly supported by this body last year, and he says it's even more important to support it now due to the record rates expected this fall for mail ballots. He said the office has processed more mail ballots for this presidential primary than the last five general elections combined. He said the office's ability to manage the election during the emergency period, if heavily utilized by voters, will be compromised without significant changes in law to make the process work better.

Mr. Lima said we have an emergency voting process now that voters are already using as early voting, but we don't have the means to handle it at the volume it's being utilized. He said this bill gives us the means.

**MOTION:** By Mr. Vierra and seconded by Ms. Petrone to continue the Cranston Board of Canvassers' support of early voting legislation as proposed by the Secretary of State's office.

Mr. Jackvony suggested sending a letter to the Cranston delegation noting the Board's support. Mr. Lima said he could do so administratively.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

**MOTION:** By Mr. Vierra and seconded by Ms. Petrone to support the Secretary of State's legislation regarding the cybersecurity initiative.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

**MOTION:** By Mr. Vierra and seconded by Ms. Petrone to support the voter registration legislation proposed by the Secretary of State for voters who have moved within the state.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

Mr. Rock thanked the Board for their support.

Mr. Lima said the Board of Elections also has several bills that were introduced this session, which he summarized to the Board. The BOE has a competing emergency voting proposal, among other procedural changes. Mr. Jackvony noted the Board of Canvassers preferred the language in the Secretary of State's early voting bill. The Board decided not to take these bills up at this time until there's more information available on the BOE's bills. Mr. Lima said we don't know if or even when these bills will have a public hearing, so if it looks like one will happen, he will ask the Board to meet to discuss them then. Mr. Lima said most are procedural, although the write-in bill is one the Board has supported in the past. Mr. Jackvony thanked Mr. Rock for coming to the meeting.

**D. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS AND FORMALLY APPROVE THE SELECTION OF THE SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC LODGE AND WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL POLLING LOCATIONS FOR THE JUNE 2, 2020 PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY**

Mr. Jackvony noted the plan has been thoroughly communicated to the Board by Mr. Lima in recent weeks following the rescheduling of the April 28 primary, and he asked for a motion to approve the selection of these polling places for the June 2 primary.

MOTION: By Mr. Vierra and seconded by Ms. Petrone to approve the use of Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge and Western Hills Middle School as the two polling locations for the June 2, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary.  
PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 3-0

#### E. THE BOARD MAY REVIEW AND DISCUSS ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE REGISTRAR TO DATE, AND THOSE THAT ARE CURRENTLY PLANNED GOING FORWARD, TO SAFELY CONDUCT THE JUNE 2, 2020 PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY

Mr. Lima said the office's efforts to process mail ballot applications has been monumental, and he has had to bring in staff from Public Works, Economic Development, the Tax Assessor's Office, and the Planning Department to assist the office staff in processing mail ballot applications. Work stations were hurriedly set up with extra equipment, bar code readers, and printers to make this possible. Mr. Lima said there are still thousands of applications to process, but so far the office has processed over 7,400 and seems to have gotten the majority onto the system in record time. Volume has begun to decline to the point where most can now be processed within 24 hours of receipt, whereas at one point last week, upwards of 2,000 were being received per day, which necessitated a multi-day processing time even with nine people working simultaneously on the project. Mr. Lima said he has taken over processing of rejected mail ballot applications and has had trouble keeping up with those alone due to the quantity received, as they require extra individual attention and copying.

Mr. Lima said the support from the staff who have helped the Canvassing Department has been outstanding, and he will be sending thank you notes to those departments when this is all over. He said new procedures will be put in place for the emergency process, where voters will be able to keep the pen they use in our office, regular sanitization will occur, and plexiglass screens will be installed at the front counter. Mr. Lima doesn't expect many voters during the shortened 12-day emergency period due to the numbers who voted by mail.

For June 2, Mr. Lima said there will be two police officers per location to assist with security and line control. There will also be three poll workers who will specifically be in charge of line control, and multiple Building Maintenance personnel will be cleaning and sanitizing the locations constantly throughout the day. The Board of Elections has provided bleach, cleaning supplies, masks, gloves, face shields, and sanitizer, as well as floor social-distancing dots. Voters will be provided a one-time use stylist/pen combination. The office has bought its own supplies, including extra highway cones, signage, folding tables, and floor-marking tape. Building Maintenance has custom built 13 five-foot plexiglass screens for the poll worker stations, and is providing extra masks, gloves, and sanitizer.

Mr. Lima said lines are not anticipated, but are being prepared for just in case due to the limited number of in-person locations and unknown turnout projections. Both polling

locations will operate at 20 percent of fire marshal capacity due to COVID-19, and one of the line control poll workers will maintain an accurate count of the number of people inside at any given time. Western Hills is more centralized in the city, so a higher turnout is expected there; Scottish Rite is mostly expected to serve Ward 1 and Ward 2 residents. Cones will be set up outside of each facility for voters to line up against, separated by six feet, in case lines proceed outside the buildings due to limited internal capacity. The BOE has provided three DS-200s and extra privacy booths for both locations, and Mr. Lima said this election will be micro-managed and even over-managed as much as possible in the interests of voter safety and ensuring all eventualities are accounted for. The Board members will be assisting at the polls on election day, as well as Elections Assistant Thomas Rotella, a poll worker who filled a similar role in 2018. Each location will also have two moderators. Mr. Lima said we've never had an election with so much centralized command and control, so the instant that any incident happens, we will be right there to respond to it thanks to having so many personnel in the field concentrated on two "super poll" vote center locations.

Mr. Lima said that as we get closer, we'll get additional guidance from the BOE. He said we will not have printed paper back-up poll books, master lists, and a street list, but will instead use city-owned laptops containing the voter files that have networking disabled for security. That will save on printing and transporting many thousands of pages. Each polling location can serve any voter in the city.

#### F. THE BOARD MAY DISCUSS PLANS FOR PROCESS AND POLICY RELATED TO THE CONDUCT OF THE SEPT. 8, 2020 AND NOV. 3, 2020 ELECTIONS

Mr. Jackvony said we're in completely uncharted territory. He said what we learn from the conduct of this Presidential Preference Primary, and how the pandemic develops over the summer, will inform that discussion. He said Mr. Lima and the staff have done well to prepare for every eventuality on June 2, and that it's been a stressful time for the team.

Mr. Lima reminded the Board that we will be meeting the day after the election to tabulate write-ins and adjudicate provisional ballots.

#### UPDATES AND REMARKS

##### REGISTRAR / DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS – Nicholas Lima

Mr. Lima said that, thinking ahead to the fall, if we were to do a predominantly mail-ballot type election again, whether it's in September or November – which for us would mean the bulk of the work takes place in August and October – we would have to consider diverting significant resources from the \$175,000 just passed in the city budget for conducting the fall elections to hiring staff to process mail ballot applications. While due to the shutdown, staff from several departments were available to help this time, that may not be the case again in the fall, so additional outside help may be required. Administratively, there may be a need to triple our staff, which is unprecedented. There's a possibility we could see 35,000 to 40,000 applications this fall, which would comprehensively overwhelm our office if the city and the state don't start preparing



soon. Mr. Lima stressed that time is short to put the logistics in place to make that operation even remotely feasible.

COMMENTS OF BOARD MEMBERS

There were no comments from Board members. Mr. Jackvony thanked the Board members for keeping things efficient despite the number of important items on the agenda. Mr. Lima thanked Mr. Iglizzi for his attendance, as well.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

APPROVED by the Cranston Board of Canvassers: July 30, 2020