

**Election Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2017**

Present: Commissioners John McDermott, Jan Huffman, Marjorie Ann Butler

Absent: Commissioner Nancy Levine

Also present: David A. Olson - City Clerk

Discussion of a recommended date for the September 2017 Preliminary Election

Clerk Olson started the discussion by explaining that the Election Commission will need to make a recommendation to the City Council for a date for the Preliminary Election if one should be needed. He noted that the City Council is the body that will set the date, but that the Council takes the advice of the Election Commission. Clerk Olson suggested that Tuesday, September 12, 2017 be the date recommended for the Preliminary Election. The date is after Labor Day and the start of school, and does not fall on the Jewish holidays. Also the second Tuesday of September is the traditional day for the preliminary.

Commissioner Butler asked about what would trigger a preliminary election. Clerk Olson noted that if there are three or more candidates for Mayor, there will be a preliminary. If there are five or more candidates for a Councilor-at-Large seat, there will be a preliminary. In the instance of three or more candidates for School Committee or Ward Councilor, there also will be a preliminary. For the Ward Councilor seats there will be an election in just that Ward for that particular race. The at-large candidate races will be city-wide. The nomination papers will not be available until May 1st.

Clerk Olson recommended Tuesday, September 12th for the Preliminary and Commissioners Butler, Huffman and McDermott voted in favor.

Discussion of a Potential Referendum request.

Clerk Olson noted that recently the Council passed a leaf blower ordinance which curtails the use of leaf blowers during the summer months. A number of landscapers in Newton have been in touch regarding collecting just under 2500 signatures which will have to be certified showing that they are Newton residents and registered voters. If they are able to get those signatures, it will force the City Council to decide whether they want to rescind their recently passed leaf blower ordinance or place the question on the ballot.

Clerk Olson also noted that the Election Commission will need to send a mailer to households regarding the New Charter before the November Elections. The mailer will need to include a summary of the Charter and statements from the proponents and opponents. If a leaf blower referendum does end up on the ballot in November, this item would also need to be included in the mailer.

Discussion of the Internship program for Fall 2017

Clerk Olson let the Commissioners know that the Internship Program is something that he and his staff would like to do again in the fall. In view of this being a smaller election, four to eight students would be an appropriate number. Seniors will be considered first.

Commissioner Butler suggested having the Fall Interns back in to hold a discussion on what happened around the country with the November Elections. Commissioner McDermott thought that this was better as an unofficial meeting and it was suggested that this could possibly be done in conjunction with the League of Women Voters. Commissioner Huffman cautioned that the League is a political entity and takes political stances, but in the case of this type of discussion it would not be an issue. Commissioner Butler volunteered to contact League member Linda Green to assess their interest.

Additional Poll Worker Training Courses

Clerk Olson let the Commissioners know that there will be some supplemental training sessions for poll workers in May and June. There will be more in-depth information regarding specific topics. The traditional training will still be done in October for the fall elections. After the audit recount was finished, there were a number of poll workers who were interested in finding out more about what a recount would entail. As a training session, we could do an audit of one more precinct. Four or five different sessions will be undertaken.

Potential Use of Poll Pads for November Municipal Election

Clerk Olson let the Commissioners know that Knowink, the company that makes our poll pads, is trying to get certification of their product for municipal and state elections this year. One of the requirements for certification is that they have been used in a successful election in the state. The Secretary of State's office will designate a few cities and towns as test sites for poll pads and if they work as they are expected to work, then they will be certified by the state. Newton is being considered as a test site and all of the poll pads needed would be supplied by Knowink for this test. The poll pad would be used for check in and check out instead of using the books. No additional equipment will be needed this fall for the Municipal Election.

Results of Post-Election Audits in November

Commissioner Huffman asked if we had heard anything back from the State regarding the audit that we had to conduct after the November election. Clerk Olson noted that he had not heard anything, but that on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's web site under elections, all of the results of the audits are shown for every community. Newton came out very much like the other communities.

Next Meeting of the Election Commission

The next meeting of the Commission will be on February 14, 2017 if the referendum signatures are filed. If the signatures are not filed this meeting will not take place and Clerk Olson will get in touch with the Commission members to set a date in the future.