

**Election Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
January 26, 2016**

Present: Marjorie Butler, Jan Huffman, Nancy Levine, John McDermott - Chair

Also Present: City Clerk David Olson; Asst. City Clerk Eneida Tavares

**Update on the Discussion regarding Bowen School as a Polling Location**

Clerk Olson said that both he and Asst. Clerk Tavares met with Mr. Cronin, as well as the Head Custodian and Principal of the Bowen School, to go have a tour of the spaces within the school and to hear from the principal what she felt comfortable with, and what could be considered, as a space for the polls at Bowen. There was a tour of the school that included the library space, the stage of the auditorium and the gym. In discussions with the principal, she was least comfortable giving up the gym as losing it for the day had the biggest impact on the program, but was comfortable allowing the use of the library or the auditorium stage. The gym would be the last choice. Clerk Olson distributed a floor plan for Commission members to look at. He pointed out that the library space is larger than the Teacher's Lounge and felt this space could work for the primaries, both in March and September. The possibility was left open that for November there would be consideration for using the gym. After the March primaries, there would be further discussion with the Principal, Head Custodian and Mr. Cronin to make a determination as to whether this would work adequately for November and if not, make plans to move into the gym. The stage area in the auditorium is small, there are stairs going down to the auditorium floor and there is concern for older adults trying to navigate those stairs. Clerk Olson felt a good compromise was reached with the use of the Library that pleased the Principal and Mike Cronin. It was also noted that it was handicapped accessible. Police Officers could be stationed at appropriate places.

Clerk Olson stated that he had double-checked with the Weeks House to make sure that they did not have a hidden big space in the building, and they do not. The Week's House does not have a gym. The current, one-precinct location in the lobby is all that is going to fit there.

**Update on the Waban Library accessibility issues.**

The DPW has been able to have the pathways created from the parking lot to the handicap ramp. The lot has been striped for handicapped parking. The one piece that is still in process is the non-compliant handicapped area. Josh Morse from Public Buildings has measured the space and concurred with Ms. Murphy that it was not correct. The manufacturer was notified that this does not meet the standards and two additional sections will be added. This will be done by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Butler asked if the State had to come back to recheck it. Asst. Clerk Tavares stated that all we needed to do was to notify the State that they issue had been corrected.

**Update on preparations for the March 1, 2016 Presidential Primaries**

Clerk Olson noted that the absentee ballots for the Presidential Primaries have arrived and are being sent out as well as being available over the counter. The Secretary of the Commonwealth's web site has announced that absentee ballots are now available statewide. The elections webpage will be updated to indicate that absentee ballots are available for March 1<sup>st</sup> primary. It was explained that family members can submit an application, but the ballot will be mailed to the individual.

Clerk Olson noted that he was still waiting for the official ballots to be used on March 1, but that they should arrive in the next week or so.

Clerk Olson announced that Patricia Schiavoni has been hired, Census Coordinator, she has been doing a great job. Asst. Clerk Tavares noted that it will be very helpful to have one person assigned to one specific job. Clerk Olson told the Commission there have been a number of individuals who are doing senior tax work-off for the office. They have been helping to open census envelopes and organize census forms. A poll worker is has also been working in the office, helping to organize the absentee ballot applications. Finally, a second new individual, Tyler Church, will also be starting and will help with absentee ballots and organizing material to go out to polling locations.

On the City Council side of the office, Linda Finucane, Assistant Clerk to the Council, for 23 years has retired. There will be a search for a new person.

Clerk Olson noted that there has been a pretty good response from the census for people who would want to work at the polls. If there are names of people who would like to be poll workers that can't be used in March we will be able to use them in the fall.

#### **Approval of Minutes of December 14, 2015 & January 6, 2016 meetings.**

Commissioner Huffman suggested that on page three of the December 14<sup>th</sup> minutes, the fourth paragraph, the end of the third line should have the word united added to it. He also noted that after the first actual sentence in the paragraph, it says "it will be the vendor for the census" and would like to insert "vendor for printing the census this year." He would like to make it clear that the census has not been contracted out. Motion to accept changes was approved.

Changes to January 6<sup>th</sup> minutes. Commissioner Levine offered a change on the first page on the January 6<sup>th</sup> minutes. First page, second paragraph, the word "and" should be changed to "an". Also Eneida's name should be changed to Asst. Clerk Tavares. On the last page the phrase "the process will most likely like" should be changed to read "the process will most likely be like" Motion to accept January 6<sup>th</sup> minutes as amended was approved.

#### **New Business**

Commissioner Huffman presented an e-mail from Joshua Norman was read regarding write-in votes being counted. Poll workers will be made aware that there will be a number of write-in votes.

Commissioner Huffman also presented an email he received from the League of Women Voters inviting all members to a meeting on February 3, 2016 from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. in the conference room at NewTV. The meeting would include a general conversation about how the Commission works, what issues and challenges currently being faced, how to accommodate the new voting conditions and how the League could potentially assist the Commission as it works to insure a smooth Election for Newton voters. Scheduling for that meeting will be difficult for many Commission members. Commissioner Huffman will report back on the discussions at the next Commission meeting.

On the agenda for the Programs and Services Committee there is an item to request moving from Memorial Spaulding to Temple Beth Avodah. This has not been scheduled for discussion but it is expected that it will be up for discussion in the next few weeks. When this item is scheduled, Clerk Olson suggested that Commission members should attend. Some Councilor members from Ward 8 said they would not support it as they want it to remain at Memorial Spaulding. It was suggested that all Election Commission members be present when it is scheduled for discussion. The Commissioners asked that a request to the Chair of Programs & Services to try and schedule it for their meeting on Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:45 pm.

**Setting Date of next Meeting.**

The Commissioners decided that there was no need to meet again before the election and chose to meet after the election to certify the election. Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 5:00 pm was chosen.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded and adjournment was approved.**

Submitted by,

John McDermott, Chair