

**Election Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2016**

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

Also Present: David Olson (Clerk)

Early Voting

Clerk Olson reported that there was not too much to add regarding early voting since the last meeting. The State has not yet issued its final regulations. On June 15th and June 16th the Massachusetts City and Town Clerks Association Conference in Plymouth will be held and Clerk Olson will attend. One of the topics on the agenda for the conference is early voting. There is some expectation that the Secretary of State's Office may provide the regulations at the conference, however, Chief Legal Counsel Michelle Tassinari, who would traditionally make that presentation is not scheduled to be there.

Clerk Olson is looking into the possibility of using poll pads for early voting. This is a hand-held voter check-in system that is not yet authorized by the State for general elections, but has been suggested might be approved for Early Voting. With this device it will be possible to put the complete voter list on the poll pad instead of having a massive book printed out for every ward and precinct. The State Legislature however has not authorized the use of these devices yet.

Early Voting Survey with the League of Women Voters

Clerk Olson reported that he had met with Linda Green of the League of Women Voters to discuss doing an early voting meeting to ask residents about Early Voting. After the conversation it was thought that it would be more efficient to do this with an on-line survey than trying to call together a group of people to discuss these rather specific issues. Clerk Olson said the survey would consist of seven simple questions. There would be an educational piece as the opening page and then the questions. Answers to the survey questions could help the Commission to make further decisions. It was suggested that the survey be sent before summer vacation started.

General Plans

The budget has passed and the pay increases for the poll workers are in place. For the fall elections, there will be one additional Assistant Warden at each polling location to help get people to the right location, sit in for those on breaks, and to help count write-in ballots at the end of the night. It is expected that the additional person will make things run more smoothly on Election Day. Once the final plan is ready for early voting, poll workers will be hired to come in and staff Early Voting at City Hall. More help will be needed in the office to process the Early Voting requests and applications.

It is important to make sure that voter registration is accurate. Clerk Olson will be developing a promotional campaign which will encourage people to go online to the State's web site to check their voter status and make sure that their information is correct. By checking beforehand a voter, when they go to the polls, can just walk in and vote. If the person is inactive, a form will be need to be filled out to reactivate their status. It is important to have as many people as possible check their status before they go to the polls. There will be a second round of marketing promoting Early Voting. There will be sandwich boards across the city to direct citizens to the website where they can check their status.

There will also be information regarding how a Voter get an application form for an early ballot which they can fill out at home and bring with them to the early voting site. Clerk Olson explained the state will send a booklet out with all of the ballot questions before the November election. It was suggested that the booklets be available at the library, in super markets, and that they are sent home with school children. Clerk Olson said these were all possibilities and that any additional marketing costs could be included in the Supplemental Budget that will be needed for Early Voting. Clerk Olson also suggested working with NewTV to get the word out. At the next meeting, Clerk Olson will have a marketing plan.

A concern of Clerk Olson is finding a new person with elections experience to fill the current opening in the department. He noted that he is looking for someone that could step in and take on that job, and perhaps bring a different perspective that could possibly make things more efficient and easier. At this point, there are 15 different candidates that have management experience but do not have elections experience. There is one internal candidate that is fantastic, has a law degree and would be a good candidate if there is not an applicant found with specific experience. Right now, City and Town Clerks are not keen to lose their assistants with the upcoming election. Clerk Olson hoped that by early July a decision on the position could be made. If the internal candidate is chosen, his current position will have to be filled.

Election Internship Program

Election internship positions will be posted at both Newton North High School and Newton South High School. Advertising might be a good idea and some outreach will be pursued. A schedule will be worked out for the students to visit polling locations at the start of the internship. It was suggested that the interns attend an Election Commission meeting. They would also be asked to take poll worker training. A League of Women Voters member, Sharon Roberts, currently goes out to register students at Newton North and brings the registration forms to the clerk's Office. This might be able to be incorporated into the internship program. It was suggested that there be focus on voter registration at Newton North High and also to see if students could be recruited from the group to assist Sharon. Since it is the end of the year, the timing might make this difficult.

Clerk Olson noted that the interns could be early voting poll workers. If the students were early voting poll workers and underwent the training, they could be paid. It was noted that there is no Community Service requirement at the high schools.

Clerk Olson let the Commissioners know that he, Mayor Warren and Superintendent David Fleishman made a presentation regarding volunteering on Boards and Commissions to high school students and approximately 50 students attended. The training and workshops could be expanded to include other students who might want to participate in the educational component of this program. The High School Civics group may be able to sponsor a discussion on election trends as this coming election will cover a variety of different views. **It will be** important to balance the number of students; possibly two from Newton North High School and two from Newton South High School. Clerk Olson felt a total of four students could be included in this program and possibly expanded in the future. There was concern that there is a short amount of time to accomplish this program. Suggestions included having information in the student newspapers, posters and bulletin boards.

Setting of date for next Election Commission meeting

The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, July 12th at 5:00pm.