

**Election Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2016**

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

Also present: David A. Olson - City Clerk, and Tyler Church - Asst. City Clerk

Introduction of new Assistant Clerk for Elections

Clerk Olson introduced Tyler Church, Assistant Clerk for Elections. Tyler had been the department's Compliance Coordinator and now has been promoted to Assistant City Clerk. Currently there are two open positions in the office, one for Compliance Coordinator and the second for Licensing Coordinator. Interviews are scheduled to start on Thursday, July 14th and the positions should be in place this summer and be ready for the fall elections.

Continued discussion of Early Voting before the November 8, 2016

The survey has shown good results. When the data was printed out, there had been 534 respondents. This number has risen to 576 as of noontime on July 11th. The response percentages have not changed. The survey was sent out to League of Women Voters, Area Council e-mail lists and to over 2,000 dog owners in Newton. The survey has also been included in the City Council Newsletter and on the Village 14 Blog.

The survey started with a basic question stating when early voting would be available. Early voting – Monday through Friday at City Hall, regular office hours, would you take advantage of it? 56% of respondents said they would take advantage of it during regular operating hours. If the answer was No, additional follow up questions were asked including: If early voting was available during additional hours, would you take advantage? Only 33% said they would take advantage if expanded beyond regular hours. It was asked if early voting was available on the weekends, would you take advantage of it? No was the larger answer, but 44% did say Yes. If there were additional evening hours would you take advantage of it, 37% said Yes they would take advantage of it. If it was at other locations would you take advantage was an even split between Yes and No.

This was not scientific but our previous estimate of 25% taking advantage of early voting might be a little low; a bigger turnout for early voting is possible. Worcester did its own survey, Boston has done a survey and have seen a lot of interest in early voting.

In looking at the survey and thinking of staffing, there will definitely be general operating hours; looking at staying open until 8pm every night, Monday through Friday, not just the Tuesday nights which are regular operating hours. Two alternate locations for the one weekend cycle are also being looked into, as well as at City Hall from noon to five. Clerk Olson asked the Commission members what they would like to see. In response it was suggested that Friday

night not be included as well as not opening City Hall on weekends. It was also suggested that interns cover one night.

Clerk Olson noted that at the last Presidential election in 2012, there were 57,700 registered voters and an 80% turnout for the election, about 45,000 people voted. Of those 45,000, 5,700 voted absentee. That was about 10% of the registered voters. If 35% of registered voters voted early, it would be about 20,000 people. Significant numbers of people will be needed to handle this with added cost. The Mayor's office has set aside some money in a reserve account to pay for this.

Newton South High School was being considered for voting on Saturday and Sunday. Aquinas was a possibility. There will be discussion with the School Department to see if these are viable locations. Newton North will be a possibility, if City Hall is not open on weekend.

Election Internship Selection

Clerk Olson suggested that for this pilot program acceptance be limited to seniors and hold the number of participants to 4.

Commissioner Butler (via conference call) suggested that there be conversations with the applicants to be sure they really want to do this and that an email be sent out requesting an interview. Clerk Olson felt that the nine possible interns could be contacted to ascertain their level of interest. They all could be invited to a meeting for a half-hour informational session. An email will be sent out with a date of July 19th at 5:30. Another email will be sent out to the ones not selected. Tyler Church, Assistant Clerk of the Elections, will be available to attend that meeting on that date.

Setting of date for next Election Commission meeting

Tuesday, August 9th at 5:00 pm