

**Election Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
November 17, 2014**

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

Also Present: City Clerk David Olson

**Minutes**

The minutes from the September 22, 2014 meeting were reviewed. A typographical error was noted on the second page and corrected. A motion to approve the September 22, 2014 minutes as amended was made and seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Review of the conduct of the Elections held on November 4, 2014.**

Clerk Olson noted that things went very smoothly on Election Day. There was some concern in the office before the election because we had some new set-up and break-down crews, but everything went smoothly and everything was in its place for the opening of the polls.

Additional training had been provided for Wardens and Clerks before this election. After the September Primary we noticed that there was some confusion about the end of night tally sheets. The hands-on training that we provided translated into more confident completion of the Tally Sheets at the end of the night this time around.

There was only one voting location where we were short inspectors and this was due to an illness. Someone called in sick and the police officer helped out until we could get another individual in for the afternoon shift.

Commissioner McDermott observed that the Ward 2, Precinct 2, polling location at Cabot Park Village needed a Vote Here sign placed out near the street. There was one at the entrance, but one also needed to be at the street. Clerk Olson agreed. He noted that a new Vote Here banner was tried at the Library which seemed to catch people's attention. It was easy to spot and we will get more of those for additional polling locations.

Commissioner Huffman noted that there was a general problem that he observed. There were an awful lot of lines for those who were inactive. He questioned if we were communicating enough that residents need to return the census in order to not have a problem at the polls. Clerk Olson noted that everyone is inactivated on January 1 and gets reactivated when they return the census or sign someone's nomination papers. The office needs a signature to reactivate a voter's status. The number of inactive voters does not change that much from year to year, but when you get more voters

turning out at the polls the numbers of Inactive Voters goes up. For this election we had a 59% turnout. A lot of people who traditionally don't vote or don't return their census, showed up. When we get to a Presidential election, where we will see even more people turnout, it will seem even worse. However, in 2016, new election laws will be in place that will no longer tie active status strictly to the census. It will be tied to voting in Federal elections. We will also try to streamline the reactivation process at the polls by introducing a roster format. We will no longer use individual sheets of paper, but have people sign a roster to record their information.

Commissioner Huffman noted that he had heard from a number of people that when the City changed its Ward and Precinct lines, people were not notified that their polling location had changed. Clerk Olson noted that the reprecincting had taken place in 2011 and that there was notification that was sent out at that time. He is not sure what else can be done at this point. Commissioner Levine noted that even with the well done postcard mailing for the recent changes of polling locations, there were individuals who did not heed the postcard. People who are not politically active did not pay attention. Commissioner Huffman noted that he had heard that the only notification that people had received in 2011 was a note at the bottom of the Census form that year. Commissioner McDermott remembered a mailing had gone out at the time of the reprecincting.

A resident at the meeting, who was an inspector at the polls in Ward 6 Precinct 3, noted that they only had the exact number of staff needed and with dinner breaks it was difficult for the Inspectors because there were not enough people. Commissioner Levine asked if there was a pool of substitute poll workers that could be called on if needed. Clerk Olson noted that we do have substitutes and place them as needed and available.

Clerk Olson stated that he had requested comments and suggestions from the Poll Workers and had received comments from several workers. He noted that he would be looking at those suggestions to see what could be done.

Commissioners Levine and Butler asked about handicap access at the Waban Library Center. They noted that the handicap parking was far from the entrance and that there was no railing on the concrete ramp. They would like to see these problems improved. Clerk Olson stated that he would talk with the Public Buildings Department about improving the ramps. Commissioner Butler asked if it would be possible to put a handicap parking space on Beacon Street to be close to the metal ramp.

### **To Continue Review and Discussion of moving Polling Locations**

Clerk Olson presented a list of the polling locations that were being reviewed for change in the next few years. The locations on the list were reviewed against specific criteria needed for a polling location. The staff will be looking at the first five or six in the coming year. He noted that the location that was at the top of the list was Fire Station

#1. Second on the list was the Bowen School for the cramped quarters at the school. Memorial Spaulding is third for its location, space, car exhaust issues and accessibility concerns. Commissioner Levine noted that there were problems that she had encountered including the exhaust and smells from the dumpsters. Commissioner Huffman suggested that we adjust the HVAC number down for this location. Next on the list was the Church of the Redeemer because of space, accessibility and parking.

Clerk Olson asked if the Commissioners wanted to adjust any of the locations on the list. Commissioner Huffman asked about Countryside because he noted that poll workers were complaining about cold air coming in. It was asked if the location could move back to the gym. Clerk Olson stated that for security reasons, the location had been moved to the cafeteria and the school was not willing to move it back to the gym. He suggested that the layout of the polling location could be adjusted to address the issue. He also noted that the Countryside PTO had asked if the polls could be moved out of the schools. The PTO was concerned because an individual had wandered into the corridors. Clerk Olson suggested that to remedy this, another police officer could be hired by the school to police the corridor. This is being done by the schools where there may be access to other parts of the building. Commissioner Huffman asked if there was a door at the end of the hallway that could be closed to limit access into the school. Clerk Olson responded that there was, but was told by someone from the PTO that the staircase to the second floor is just before that door and students need to use that staircase for access between the floors.

Clerk Olson asked if it would be acceptable to combine some of the precincts to reduce the number of polling locations. He asked because when the Aldermen were considering reprecincting in 2011 they wanted to make sure that the polling locations were as central and accessible to the precinct as possible. He asked that Commissioners for their opinions. Commissioners McDermott and Levine felt that it was better to keep them in the precinct. Commissioner Levine asked about the new Fire Station as a location. Clerk Olson noted that it may have the same issues as can be found at Station #1 which we are trying to move out of.

Commissioner Huffman asked if the Commissioners could have input on future municipal building projects to make sure the buildings can accommodate multiple purposes. Clerk Olson responded that the Commission could definitely express its opinions in the process.

Clerk Olson noted that he will begin to present alternate locations for the high priority locations at the next meeting.

**Certification of the State Elections held on November 4, 2014.**

The City Clerk distributed for approval the complete results of the November 4, 2014 election.

He noted that there were some minor changes to the numbers from what the Commissioners saw on election night. Changes included adjustments for hand count ballots, UOCAVA ballots and provisional ballots.

The Commissioners certified the election and signed the certification sheet.

**Setting the Date of the Next Commission Meeting.**

The Commission set the date for the next Commission meeting on Monday, February 23, 2015.

**The meeting adjourned.**

Submitted by

Marjorie Butler, Chair