

Election Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2013

Present: Ken Hartford (Chair), Marjorie Butler, Nancy Levine, John McDermott

Also Present: City Clerk David Olson

Memorandum of Agreement

The Election Commission discussed the Memorandum of Agreement that was requested by the Law Department to facilitate the reorganization of the City Clerk and Elections Offices. The City Clerk reported that the Programs & Services Committee of the Board of Aldermen had an initial review of the document and was in support of the Agreement. They have not voted on it yet as they will wait until after a Public Hearing is held on the reorganization on May 8th.

The Chair of the Committee opened the floor for questions and suggestion on how to proceed with the Memorandum of Agreement. It was asked if the office would always have the window for citizens to come up to and get information about elections. The Clerk noted that the plan calls for a combined Clerks and Elections Office with a single counter that will stretch across the entire front of the office from the current door of the Clerk's Office to the current door of the Elections Office. This will allow for a very long counter that will accommodate a number of people.

It was noted that the Elections Office can get busy with people coming in. It is expected that this will be addressed with the combined staff which will allow for more people to be available to handle both Elections and City Clerk requests and questions. Instead of just two or three people with elections training, there will now be seven who can assist customers.

It was asked if there would be any union issues with the reorganization of the department. It was reported that it is undetermined at this time. The Human Resources Office has been involved and has been reviewing the job descriptions. The initial review from HR is that the job descriptions in each department are similar, there will not be a major shift in the types of work performed although the staffs from both offices will need to be trained in new information.

It was asked if the Elections staff would remain designated elections staff after the reorganization. It was explained that the current elections staff would all become part of the City Clerk's Office, and all of the Clerk's Office staff would be cross-trained to answer questions about both clerk's office information and elections. However, each staff member will have a

specialization. There will be three staff with specialization in elections and census work and four with specializations in Clerk's Office topics. A concern was raised that there is a lot of specific information regarding elections and it is important that those specializations remain and that residents get the correct information when they come to the office.

An Election Commissioner was concerned that not having a separate elections office was atypical as her research on-line indicated that they all had separate offices. It was asked if any research was done on what other cities do. It was noted that that research had been done. Having a combined office was not unusual. Concern was raised that the new Assistant Clerk position would be the only position that was in charge of elections and that it was more involved than the work of the Clerk's Office where staff only goes to a database and gets some statistics. The Commissioners wanted to make sure that there was someone full time who is tasked with making sure the Elections, Census, and Campaign Finance material were being handled correctly. The City Clerk noted that the assistant City Clerk for Elections will have that roll and be trained in the information and will be working with the assistant City Clerk for Vitals to make sure there is back-up so that if someone goes on vacation or is sick there is not a loss of continuity. It was reiterated by the Election Commissioners that they wanted to make sure that the Assistant Clerk for Elections has the authority and time to do their job.

The City Clerk distributed copies of the proposed consolidated budget and noted that the City Clerk's budget retained the specific categories of divisions that had been in the Elections Department Budget. There will still be a census division and an elections division. A question was raised about the specific goal under elections of creating an advisory group to assist the clerk. The Clerk explained that it was his hope to create an advisory group made up of current Wardens and Clerks to get their ideas for improvements to election day set-up and for poll worker training.

It was noted that the organization chart had been modified to reflect the requested change of reporting structure of the Election Commission that the Commissioners had requested at their last meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Levine to accept the Memorandum of Agreement seconded by Commissioner McDermott. The vote of the Commission was unanimous. 4 Yeas, 0 Nays. Chairman Hartford signed the agreement on behalf of the Commission.

Minutes of May 2, 3013 Commission Meeting

The Clerk distributed the minutes of the May 2, 2013 Commission meeting for the Commission's information. As they were not able to be distributed before tonight's meeting, he asked that they be approved at the next Commission meeting. This will give Commissioners

time to review them. It was asked if the City Clerk would be writing the minutes in the future. The Clerk responded that he will take that responsibility.

Update on the April 30, 2013 Primary Election

The Clerk reported that the staff has done a fantastic job organizing, arranging and getting things ready for the Election. Sue, Eneida and Ben have been fantastic in getting absentee ballots, polling location material and the supplies bags packed. They have also been arranging for poll workers, police to cover the polls and DPW staff to deliver the voting booths and ballot boxes to each polling location. As of today, things are ready to go to be delivered on Monday including some additional signage for Tuesday.

The City Clerk noted that he authorized the purchase of a new Accu-vote machine. When the new Ward 2, Precinct 4 was created, one of the two spare machines was used to cover this polling location. The Clerk felt uncomfortable having just one spare machine and used some of the additional funds allocated for the special elections to purchase a second spare. It was asked if the machine at Zervas that had broken down during the last two elections had been repaired. The Clerk reported that our vendor LHS had been out to service both the machines and the ballot boxes. It was asked by a Commissioner if we would need double ballot boxes in June. The Clerk responded that we would not need two ballot boxes in June as the Accu-vote machines can recognize up to six ballots per election, so both ballots can go through one machine. The ballots at the end of the night however will need to be sorted and packed separately.

June 25th Dual Elections

The City Clerk reported that the he hoped to get the advisory group mentioned earlier will be able to get together to get some advice on training and set-up to assist the poll workers with the dual election. His initial thought was to have two check-in books at the check-in table, one for the Special Senate and one for the Special Municipal. He noted that there was a suggestion to continue to alphabetically split the book, and to have each of the two inspectors have two books, half the alphabet for the senate and half the alphabet for the municipal. He does not agree with this suggestion, but would like to get the advisory group in to discuss it. The Commission agreed with the Clerk that it should not be split.

The Clerk reported that identification badges have been created for all of the poll workers to help citizens identify poll workers and for school personnel to identify who belongs at the polls. It was asked if the discussion of school security could be included in the Election Advisory Committee discussions. The Clerk thought that this could definitely be a part of the discussions,

and also noted that the Commission talked about looking at moving polling locations out of the schools. The moving of locations will need to be a larger discussion amongst commission members to look at where they might be moved.

The Clerk related that a few years ago the Election Commission had voted to move the Zervas School polling locations to the Waban Library, but that it could not be done because of issues of handicap access to the Library Building. He noted that he has heard from Public Buildings and John Rice that a handicap ramp will be added to the Waban Library Building so that it can be a useable space if the Commission wants to go ahead and use that space this fall.

The Clerk reported on modifications to the new entrance to the polling location at Memorial Spaulding to address handicap access. Mike Cronin of the School Department and David Turocy of the Department of Public Works have worked together to create an asphalt ramp for the door. Mr. Cronin will also make sure that the cafeteria tables at the polling location are out for the room.

The Clerk noted that additional signage will be put out at the polling locations to make the entrances more visible to the public. The Clerk and a staff member will be going out on Tuesday morning to make sure that signs have been placed appropriately. A manual will be created for the future that lays out where signs should be placed. The Commission asked that the Clerk make sure that the handicap entrances at the polling locations are also sufficiently signed.

Census Update

The Clerk reported that the Census processing is going along well and is ahead of schedule at this point. The envelopes have been opened and sorted and those census forms that have no changes have been updated in the VRIS system to indicate that they were returned.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2013

Respectfully submitted

Kenneth Hartford, Chair