

Minutes of Worcester Board of Election Commissioners Meeting
November 2, 2012

Call to order by Chair Mohieldin at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Commissioners present:

Chairperson Diane Mohieldin
Commissioner Mary Anne Dube
Commissioner John Goggins
Commissioner David LaPierre

Commissioners absent:

Commissioner Robert Winant

New Business:

The only order of business on the agenda was to clarify the protocols concerning the observers at the polls on November 6, 2012.

Chair Mohieldin submitted two documents, the letter from the Secretary of the Commonwealth (SOC) dated October 30, 2012 and the revised protocol for observers.

Commissioner Goggins asked if the revised protocol was approved by the attorney for the SOC. Deputy City Solicitor Traynor said it was.

Commissioner LaPierre asked how we knew that.

Traynor stated that he spoke with the attorney for the SOC and she approved them after a minor adjustment to the protocols submitted. Her approval was in writing as well in an email that was sent to the commissioners late in the day.

Commissioner LaPierre asked how we got to that point and what kind of communication took place to get us there.

City Clerk Rushford said he did not have any direct contact with the SOC about observer protocols.

Commissioner LaPierre presented a time line of events as he understood them and stated that the lack of communication with the SOC and himself was unacceptable.

Rushford stated that he had communicated to the commission that there was no communication from the SOC regarding the observer rules at previous meetings. He confirmed some of the time line of events that Commissioner LaPierre presented but denied that others occurred.

Commissioner LaPierre handed out copies of email correspondence between himself and the SOC which included copies of other emails that were sent from the SOC to the City Clerk's office.

Commissioner LaPierre stated that the City Clerk's office was not keeping him in the loop, or keeping the SOC in the loop and he demanded more transparency.

Commissioner LaPierre requested that the issue of communication problems between the City Clerk, SOC and Board of Election Commissioners be taken up at the next meeting.

Commissioner Dube stated that the City Clerk had communicated what was going on and she took issue with Commissioner LaPierre for not advising the commission that he was communicating directly with the SOC.

Commissioner LaPierre stated that he had notified the chairperson and that he was concerned communicating further would violate the open meeting law.

Chair Mohieldin stated the time line of events that occurred on Thursday October 25, 2012 leading up to the first poll worker training session and stated that she instructed the City Clerk to go forward with the training using the protocols unanimously approved by the commission in a previous meeting.

Commissioner Goggins addressed the Deputy City Solicitor Traynor and asked if the protocol document before the commission comported with SOC guidelines and the law. Traynor stated it did.

Chair Mohieldin proposed that the modified protocols be mailed to all of the wardens along with a copy of the SOC October 25, 2012 memo and a cover letter the following day, and that copies of the documents go out in the supply bags on Election Day with enough copies for all poll workers, police officers and observers.

This proposal was unanimously approved by the commissioners.

Chair Mohieldin invited the Mayor and members of the public to speak. The following individuals addressed the commission:

Bonnie Johnson, Boylston – question about 2-ballot process
Chris Roberge, Worcester – request for copies of observer protocols
Mary ???, Worcester – question about page 9 of poll worker handbook
Linda Brosnan, Worcester – question about 2-ballot process
Veronica Ward, Worcester – question about voters using phones in voting booth
Donna Winant, Worcester – comments about confusing media stories
Jacquelyn Norton, Worcester – promoting use of AutoMark machines
Mayor Joseph Petty, Worcester – thanks and support for the efforts of the commission
Ron Motta, Worcester – request that all poll workers be mailed the materials to be sent to the wardens.

City Clerk Rushford said they would prepare and mail all materials to all of the poll workers, not just the wardens, in order to have them delivered before Election Day, and that the materials would be posted on the city website on Monday November 5, 2012 as well.

Chair Mohieldin motioned to add another name to the Deputy Commissioner list to be submitted to the City Managers office for approval. The name was mistakenly left off the list at the October 29, 2012 meeting. The commissioners voted unanimously to add the name of Tony Ingrisano – Unenrolled, to the list.

Next meeting scheduled for November 20, 2012 at 6:15 p.m.

City Clerk Rushford provided an update on absentee ballots stating the 2008 level had been surpassed. At this time there are 4,575 absentee requests received in the election office.

Meeting is adjourned at 6:40 p.m.