

Minutes of Worcester Board of Election Commissioners Meeting
October 29, 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

The first order of business was acceptance of the minutes from October 11, 2012 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

The first order of new business was to approve and recommend the list of Deputy Commissioners to the City Manager. Chair Mohieldin read the names to be recommended:

Joe Scully – Democrat
Ana Rodriguez – Unenrolled
Shreena Bindra – Unenrolled
Jack Stewart – Republican
Mary Mullaney – Unenrolled
Craig Olsen – Republican

The list was unanimously approved and Chair Mohieldin stated she would submit it to the City Managers office.

The second item of new business, motion to adopt new observer rules discussed at previous meeting, was declared to be moot by Chair Mohieldin as the

Secretary of Commonwealth's office had basically adopted substantially the same rules that the commission had set forth in the previous meeting.

City Clerk Rushford stated that the 2010 guidelines issued by the Secretary of Commonwealth and the commissions rules were given to poll workers in training and also to police officers and would be handed to observers at the polling locations.

Rushford thanked the commission for their efforts to require the observers to identify themselves in the same way the voters, and the poll workers and the police officers do at the polling location and expressed that it appeared the Secretary of Commonwealth's office had incorporated the commissions rules in to their observer training which was recently held.

Chair Mohieldin asked if there were any additional questions or concerns regarding observer rules. Commissioner Dube asked if observers would be required to sign in at the polling location thereby creating a record of who was present at the location to observe. City Clerk Rushford replied that he had spoken with the City Solicitor and at this time the City Solicitor had recommended against requiring this.

Additional discussion ensued and it was agreed that the Clerk at the precinct would record the observer names, if provided by the observer, in the Clerk's record only.

The third item of new business was to get an update from the City Clerk regarding the progress of poll worker and police training.

City Clerk Rushford replied that to date, 132 poll workers were trained at the October 25, 2012 training session and 106 were trained at the October 27, 2012 training session so that approximately 72 were left to be trained either the next day, or if necessary, in person in City Hall if they could not attend scheduled training sessions.

City Clerk Rushford stated that 34 police officers were trained on October 24, 2012, another 38 trained earlier in the day October 29, 2012 and the rest to be trained on October 31, 2012.

Rushford stated that the feedback from poll workers and police officers regarding the training was favorable.

The fourth item of new business was to discuss issues created by the 2-ballot election.

Assistant Director of Elections Meduna stated that the machines would count each ballot separately therefore the total that would register on the machine

would reflect each ballot, so to estimate how many voters had voted you would have to divide this number in half. He advised the commissioners that this would not be entirely accurate because some absentee voters may only return one of the two ballots. He suggested this was happening as some of the absentee ballots that had been returned already were lighter than others.

Meduna also stated that additional bags had to be purchased so that all of the ballots could be delivered to the polling locations.

Chair Mohieldin asked how many absentee ballots were returned so far. Meduna said that there were 4,000 requests for absentee ballots and about 2,300 were returned so far.

Commissioner Goggins asked what the deadlines were related to absentee ballots. Meduna replied that they must be requested by noon the day before the election and mailed back or dropped off by a family member, household member, or nursing home staff before the end of the Election Day at City Hall.

Meduna also explained the overseas ballot process.

Commissioner LaPierre asked what the deployment strategy would be for the spare wardens and deputy commissioners suggesting that they be used at busy locations to expedite the voting process.

Discussion ensued among commissioners regarding the proper use of these additional resources and it was determined that their placement would be determined as needs arose throughout Election Day.

Commissioner LaPierre asked if additional cruisers would be assigned for the commissioner's use on Election Day.

Rushford replied that the Worcester Police Department was providing 5.

Commissioner LaPierre expressed his approval of the work done by the City Clerk, Meduna, and their office.

Rushford advised the commissioners that the staff was working evenings and weekends and that Meduna had notified the parties and began testing the machines. He also advised that the Worcester Police Department had changed procedures regarding how the police officers arrived at the polling locations. At the next election 5 officers who are assigned for traffic duty will accompany the ballots to the locations rather than have one of the officers assigned to a poll location do this. This allowed all officers assigned to a poll location to arrive timely.

Rushford further advised that Lt. Jim Johnson was going to each polling location and re-measuring the 150' mark and marking a fresh yellow "E" where necessary.

Commissioner Goggins asked if this was done by laser sites. Rushford replied that it was done by a roller as it is measured by how a pedestrian walks, not as a crow flies.

Rushford said that all poll worker handbooks, the observer memo and voter certificate would be mailed to poll workers on November 1, 2012.

Commissioner Goggins thanked Rushford and Meduna for their work regarding observer rules. Rushford credited the commissioners for their effort to promulgate new rules.

The next meeting date was set for November 26, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.