

Northampton Board of Registrars
Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2019
5:30 pm
210 Main Street, Room 4

Northampton, MA 01060

1. Meeting called to order:

At 5:35 pm the meeting was called to order. Present were: Registrars Klepacki & Kay and City Clerk Powers. Registrar Polachek was absent.

2. Review/approve meeting minutes from February 12, 2019 meeting. (Note: March meeting was cancelled). Registrar Kay noted that the title of the document presented as committee minutes from the last meeting actually read, "Meeting Agenda". She recommended replacing "Meeting Agenda" with Meeting Minutes". Registrar Kay motioned to approve the meeting minutes as amended; Registrar Klepacki seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Registrar Polachek).

3. Annual Street List update-

- a. Scanning "no change" households into VRIS: The clerks continue to work on entering data into the state's database. "No change" street lists scanning is continuing.
- b. Updating households with changes: The clerks have not yet begun to update the households with changes; however, it is expected that this should begin within the next few days. Most street lists with changes will be entered by the end of April.
- c. Review total cost of 2019 Street List: The cost of the census includes: printing of FAQ (\$787.50); printing of the census (\$5,704) and postage (\$6,200); total = \$ 12,691.50.

4. Election Calendar

The following is the 2019 Election calendar as approved by the BOR and also includes campaign finance due dates as well:

2019 MUNICIPAL ELECTION CALENDAR

At its February 19, 2019, the Board of Registrars reviewed and approved the following 2019 Election Calendar. The dates, as noted, comply with MGL Chapter 54 and Northampton City Charter Article 8.

April 2 - Nomination Papers Available

July 19-5:00 pm-Last day/time to submit nomination papers to Board of Registrars

August 2-5:00 pm-Last day/time to submit papers to the City Clerk in order for candidate's name to appear on the ballot.

August 8 - 5:00 pm-Drawing of names for position on preliminary ballot, if necessary

August 28-8:00 pm-Last day to register to vote in the 2019 Preliminary Election

Sept. 9-Campaign Finance Report Due (8-Day Prior to Preliminary, only if preliminary election takes place)

Sept. 17-Preliminary Election, if necessary

Sept. 20-Certified Preliminary Election Results available from City Clerk

Sept. 23 5:00 pm-Last day to petition for Recount of Preliminary Election results

Sept. 24 5:00 pm-Drawing of names for position on municipal election ballot

October 16-8:00 pm-Last day to register to vote in the 2019 Municipal Election

October 28-Campaign Finance Report Due (8-Day prior to Election)

November 5-Municipal Election

Nov. 20-Certified Municipal Election Results available from City Clerk

December 4-Campaign Finance Report Due (30 Day After Election)

January 21, 2020-Campaign Finance Report Due (Year End)

5. Discuss whether the Board would support a change to voting procedures for municipal elections.

The committee discussed the option of mailing a ballot to every registered voter in the city. The committee felt that this would be a great idea for municipal elections and would likely result in increased voter participation for the municipal elections. The cost of doing this is recognized as likely increasing the cost of voting overall; however, the statistics show that on average, only 34% of all registered voters actually vote in municipal elections. The committee agreed that it was within its purview to recommend a change in voting procedures that would likely positively influence voter participation for city elections.

6. Review April 29 forum being held by Charter Review Committee concerning elections. The public is invited to attend.

- Ranked Choice Voting: The committee discussed ranked choice voting and felt that at first glance our recommendation should be to determine what, if any, impact this voting process would have on municipal elections. Easthampton was considering this voting process for single-seat races only. They are trying to get something on the ballot for their municipal election in November; however, they are still a long way off before they are ready for this. One issue remains that state House and Senate bills have not yet passed in order to allow municipalities to adopt this voting method. They also have not yet completed their special act legislation to amend their home rule charter. They would be the first municipality to adopt this voting in Massachusetts. Cambridge uses a modified ranked choice voting procedure referred to as "proportional representation".

- 16 and Over Voting: The committee discussed 16 and over voting that was proposed by the Northampton Youth Commission. The BOR felt strongly that this should come with strong recommendations as follows:
 - The city needs to determine whether 16 year olds will be able to hold elected offices. Right now the only requirement to hold an elected position is that the person is a registered voter in the city.
 - There is conflict of interest law that prevents use of tax dollars to promote candidates and ballot initiatives. This may affect whether schools will be able to discuss such measures as part of the a civics curriculum. It is advised that the City Solicitor give an opinion on this issued with guidance about how ballot measures can be addressed at the school level.
 - The Clerk raised the specific concern about the Youth Commission's drafting of legislation passed by the YC and the City Council when many of the YC meetings have not met open meeting law standards.
- "No-excuse voting": Clerk Powers will make a presentation at the April 29th meeting to discuss "no excuse" voting.

7. Review ROV statistics--The committee did not cover this topic during the meeting.

8. Can we use internet for 2020 street list data collection? Discussion only. Currently an option in Worcester.

The committee looked at the City of Worcester's website employed to collect street list information. The BOR thought it would be useful tool for the 2020 census.

9. Who is running the municipal election this year? There is a question about what functions the City Clerk can do this year since she is on the ballot. The Clerk will put together a plan in the coming months to be sure there is no conflict on election day.

10. New Business: the next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2019.

11. Adjourn: At 6:45 pm Registrar Klepacki moved to adjourn the meeting; Registrar Kay seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Registrar Polachek).

Board of Registrars Members: Catherine Kay, Charles Klepacki, Daniel Polachek, Pamela Powers