



## Northampton Board of Registrars

### Meeting Agenda Date: May 10, 2022 Time: 5:30 pm Teleconference Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88106795563?pwd=YmRaU2hMTE5oNnV6VGZHRGZYcm4vZz09>

Meeting ID: 881 0679 5563  
Passcode: LK7gb7

Dial by your location

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Meeting ID: 881 0679 5563  
Passcode: 404012  
Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kja17cfxk>

1. Meeting Called To Order
2. Review Meeting Minutes From The Previous Meeting
  - 2.I. Approve Minutes Of March 8, 2022

Documents:

[BOR MARCH 8, 2022.PDF](#)

- 2.II. Approve Minutes Of April 12, 2022

Documents:

[BOR - APRIL 12, 2022CX.PDF](#)

3. ROV Statistics

4. 22.072 An Order For Special Legislation Relative To Ranked Choice Voting In The City Of Northampton

Process Note:

4/14/2022 - Presentation of Ranked Choice Voting committee recommendation presented by Robert Boulrice, Committee Chair

4/14/2022 - City Council approved sending item to City Services, Legislative Matters & Board of Registrars. This item will be placed on City Council agenda for 5/19/2022 for final vote. Committees are asked to complete their review of the legislation & provide their recommendation back to City Council no later than 5/16/2022.

Documents:

[22.072 RCV LEGISLATION ORDER - REDLINED.PDF](#)  
[22.072 RCV LEGISLATION ORDER.PDF](#)

5. Discussion Regarding Status Of BOR

6. New Business

7. Adjourn

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## CITY OF NORTHAMPTON

### Northampton Board of Registrars

Date: March 8, 2022

Time: 5:30 pm

### Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting Called To Order: At 5:36 pm Clerk Pamela L. Powers called the meeting to order. Present at the meeting were: Registrars Joseph Tarantino, Catherine Kay and City Clerk Pamela L. Powers.
2. Review Meeting Minutes From The Previous Meeting: Registrar Kay moved to approve the meeting minutes for the following meetings:
  - Sept. 14, 2021
  - Nov. 12, 2021
  - Dec. 14, 2021
  - Dec. 17, 2021Registrar Tarantino seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 4 Yes (Kay, Tarantino, Powers), 0 No, 1 Vacant.
3. ROV Statistics: not reviewed. Clerk Powers reports that the office has been getting caught up with voter registrations that had accumulated during the election season.
4. Update On Status Of Annual Street List: The annual street listing is delayed as our printer reports a world-wide paper shortage has been making it difficult to get envelopes. The revised target date to get the street listing out is March 21st. Two donation envelopes will be included with the street list this year and Clerk Powers asked the Registrars if they felt that the annual street list could go out later if a delay in supplies continues due to the non-profit envelope shortage causing the mailing delay.

Registrar Tarantino asked how many street listings were mailed out; Clerk Powers indicated over 14,000 are sent to non-vacant homes. Registrar Tarantino asked what percentage of request envelopes were returned to the non-profit; however, this information has not been made available to the city. Registrar Tarantino opined that it would be unfortunate for the non-profit if the city moved forward with mailing the street listing, especially if they paid for the donation envelope. Registrar Kay agreed as long as the city staff weren't burdened by the shortened deadline. Clerk Powers would consider separating the dog licensing from the annual street list to level out the workload. If necessary, the street list will be mailed separate from the dog licensing material giving a people an opportunity to license their dog earlier than responding to the street list.

5. Update on redistricting: Clerk Powers reports that the redistricting plan had been approved by the state, both at the Sec. of Commonwealth level with the redistricting committee, and at the state legislature level. The new ward and precinct lines are now official and the office is working

Catherine Kay . Joseph Tarantino . Pamela Powers  
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on updating the voter registration system (VRIS). The Elections Division is providing help by taking our newly drawn lines and matching up addresses to determine which ward and precinct a residential address falls. Once we verify the information on the spreadsheet, the information will be updated by the Help Desk @ the Elections Division. Once this is done, the Board of Registrars will send a letter to the affected residential addresses advising affected voters about their new polling location.

The newly defined maps for the city will be uploaded to the city's website by GIS Coordinator, James Thompson. Clerk Powers shares that James has been instrumental as a city staff person in making the necessary revisions to both the city map and the newly defined descriptions. He has a remarkable mapping skill set and amazing attention to detail which were critical to the success of the project.

Registrar Kay asked if voting precincts needed to be changed; Clerk Powers stated that the committee redefined precinct lines so that there would be no new or different polling locations.

6. Update On Ranked Choice Voting Initiative: Clerk Powers reports that the RCV committee has completed its task to make a recommendation back to City Council on how to implement RCV in Northampton. Attorney Seewald has prepared the legislation that will be presented to the City Council for review and recommendation. Bob Boulrice, chair of the committee, and Catherine Kay, vice-chair of the committee drafted a letter/report outlining the recommendations of the committee. She feels that it is just a matter of time before RCV will be implemented in the city. It is highly likely that whether to use RCV in Northampton will need to be placed on a ballot for the voters to decide. If the state legislature is approved in 2022, then RCV could be the city's method for voting beginning in 2023.

Registrar Tarantino asked if there was anything he could do to object and stop the process from moving forward. Registrar Kay reports that the City Council will be discussing RCV at an upcoming meeting. There will be public comment. Registrar Tarantino can also contact city councilors to talk about why this is a very bad idea.

Registrar Kay clarified that the Charter Review Commission recommended RCV as the election method for the City. The RCV committee was tasked with deciding on the specifics of how RCV would be implemented. Attorney Seewald had initially been asked to draft legislation that matched what the Charter Review Commission recommended; however, Attorney Seewald did not feel comfortable with making policy decisions. If City Council approves, the state legislature will have to approve the revised charter language and then there will be a city wide referendum. Registrar Kay hopes that there is really good discussion about this.

Registrar Tarantino wondered what the problem was that this will solve. The Athenians used the current voting method since 2500 B.C. and he predicts that this will be a disaster. The process is too complicated. He looks forward to the discussion about this.

Registrar Kay noted that it eliminates the need for a preliminary election. This represents a cost savings and will be more efficient. It is thought that RCV increases participation of both voters and candidates. These are benefits of RCV. On the other hand, the major concern is the level of complexity that RCV brings to the voter. It will be the job of the Registrars to ensure that this voting method will carry the full trust and confidence of the public. Voter education is the number one factor in making RCV work in any municipality. While Registrar Kay feels confident that the RCV committee made good choices, she has a concern about voter education. Clerk Powers feels that Registrar Kay, in her capacity as a RCV committee member, represented the concern that whatever method that would be adopted, identified the intent of the voter. Registrar Tarantino is concerned that voters will develop strategies to out maneuver the system. He feels it

is a solution in search of a problem. Registrar Kay hoped that voters will understand what the pros and cons are. Registrar Tarantino is concerned that this will raise court cases because the process will deny voters the opportunity to bullet vote if they so desire.

7. New Business: Clerk Powers noted that the legislation to allow 16 & 17 year olds to vote in municipal elections is now in the hands of the state legislature. Attorney Seewald has been given ideas about how to maintain voter confidentiality for minor voters. The issue of 16 and 17 year olds running for office has also been addressed by adding a clause prohibiting them from running for a municipal elected seat. Minors who are allowed to vote will also be prohibited from signing nomination papers for local candidates.
8. Adjourn: At 6:10 pm Registrar Tarantino moved to adjourn the meeting; Registrar seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 3 Yes (Tarantino, Kay, Powers), 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Meeting Minutes recorded by Pamela L. Powers, City Clerk



## Northampton Board of Registrars

### Meeting Agenda

Date: April 12, 2022

Time: 5:30 pm

1. Due to lack of a quorum the meeting was not called to order. The following information was shared:
2. Nomination papers are out and the office is getting them back. They are due back by May 3<sup>rd</sup> and so far the office has received 51 sets of nomination papers for a total of 95 sheets of names that need to be certified. Candidates for district seats can go to more than one community to get signatures, so candidates may be sending their papers to those communities where the residents live.  
The ROV office has added 212 people to the voter rolls; 672 voter profiles have been amended; 128 voters have been deleted since February 8<sup>th</sup>. As of February 8<sup>th</sup>, there are 21,790 registered voters in Northampton.  
The Street List will be going out by Friday, April 15. The office had a chance to review the addresses that were slated to have ward and precincts changed as a result of the 2020 Federal Census redistricting project. Six addresses were identified as incorrect; the Elections Division HELP desk uploaded the information to the VRIS database. The office then reviewed the Street Lists that were generated after the upload was completed. There were over 100 addresses that still had incorrect ward and precincts associated with them. We have notified the Census Division and the Help Desk that corrections were required. A large number of the errors were the Fairway Village community.
3. Change of polling location notification will take place right after the annual street list project is complete. This will likely take place in June.
4. Ranked Choice Voting initiative will be going to city council on April 14<sup>th</sup>.
5. Both Catherine Kay and Joseph Tarantino's appointment are expiring soon. If either candidate is interested in continuing on the BOR, they should reach out to the Mayor's office and submit an application. The application will need to be reviewed by the City Council.
6. The meeting ended at 6:00 pm. No votes were taken.

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**City of Northampton**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

*In City Council, April 14, 2022*

*Upon the recommendation of Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra and Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III*

22.072 An Order For Special Legislation Relative  
To Ranked Choice Voting In The City Of Northampton  
(redlined)

***Ordered, that***

- WHEREAS, In accordance with Section 10-6 of the City Charter and Chapter 9 of the Code of Ordinances, in January 2019, the City appointed a Charter Review Committee; and
- WHEREAS, On December 12, 2019, the Charter Review Committee filed its Final Report with the City Clerk; and
- WHEREAS, the Charter Review Committee made recommendations for certain changes to the City Charter among them the adoption of ranked choice voting in municipal elections; and
- WHEREAS, the City Council referred issues regarding implementation of ranked choice voting to the ad hoc Ranked Choice Voting Committee; and
- WHEREAS, the Ranked Choice Voting Committee filed its report along with proposed special legislation; and
- WHEREAS, The City Council wishes to authorize the Mayor to seek special legislation to effectuate the change to ranked choice voting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED

*Voted, to petition the General Court to the end that legislation be adopted precisely as follows. The General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill unless the mayor approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court. The mayor is hereby authorized to approve amendments which shall be within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition.*

**AN ACT RELATIVE TO RANKED CHOICE VOTING IN THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the Authority of the same, as follows:

Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2012, shall be amended as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 8 is hereby amended by deleting section 8-1 and section 8-2 in their entirety, and by renumbering section 8-3 to section 8-1, section 8-4 to section 8-2, section 8-5 to section 8-3, section 8-6 to section 8-4, section 8-7 to section 8-5, and section 8-8 to section 8-6.

SECTION 2. Article 8 is hereby amended by deleting in section 8-2, as amended by SECTION 1, the first two sentences in their entirety and replacing them with the following sentence:

The order in which names of candidates for each office appear on the ballot shall be determined by a drawing, by lot, conducted by the city clerk on the fourth Tuesday in September prior to the regular city election.

SECTION 3. Article 8 is hereby amended by deleting in section 8-6, as amended in SECTION 1, the word “preliminary,”.

SECTION 4. Article 8, as amended by SECTION 1, is hereby further amended by deleting section 8-5 in its entirety and by replacing it with the following:

#### SECTION 8-5. RANKED CHOICE VOTING

(a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

“Batch elimination” is the simultaneous defeat of multiple candidates.

“Concluded ballot,” a ballot that does not rank any continuing candidate ~~or contains an overvote at the highest ranked continuing candidate.~~

“Continuing candidate,” a candidate who has not been defeated or elected.

“Election threshold,” the number of votes sufficient for a candidate to be elected in a multi-seat election. It is calculated by dividing the total number of votes counting for continuing candidates in the first round by the sum of the number of seats to be elected and 1, disregarding any fractions, and then adding 1.

“Highest-ranked continuing candidate,” the continuing candidate with the highest ranking on a voter's ballot. Where a ballot omits one or more ranks, the next highest ranking shall be used for determining the highest-ranked continuing candidate.

“Ranked choice voting,” a method of casting and tabulating ballots in which voters rank candidates for office in order of preference.

“Last-place candidate,” (i) the candidate with the lowest vote total in a round of the ranked-choice voting tabulation; or (ii) a candidate that is defeated in batch elimination.

“Overvote,” a circumstance in which a voter ranks more than 1 candidate at the same ranking.

“Ranking” means the number assigned on a ballot by a voter to a candidate to express the voter's preference for that candidate. Ranking number 1 shall be the highest ranking, ranking number 2 shall be the next-highest ranking, and so on.

“Surplus fraction,” the number equal to the difference between an elected candidate's vote total and the election threshold, divided by the candidate's vote total.

“Transfer value,” the proportion of a vote that a ballot will count to its highest-ranked continuing candidate. Each ballot shall begin with a transfer value of 1. If a ballot counts to the election of a candidate under subsection (d)(1), it receives a lower transfer value.

(b) All city offices shall be elected by ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting elections shall be tabulated in rounds pursuant to this section.

(c) In any single-seat election, each round shall begin by counting the number of votes for each continuing candidate. Each ballot shall count as 1 vote for its highest-ranked continuing candidate. Concluded ballots shall not be counted for any continuing candidate. Each round shall end with 1 of the following 2 outcomes:

(1) If there are more than 2 continuing candidates, the last-place candidate shall be defeated or the last-place candidates shall be defeated in batch elimination, and a new round shall begin; or

(2) If there are 2 continuing candidates, the candidate with the fewest votes shall be defeated, the candidate with the most votes shall be elected, and tabulation shall be complete.

(d) In any multi-seat election, each round shall begin by counting the number of votes for each continuing candidate. Each ballot shall count, at its current transfer value, for its highest-ranked continuing candidate. Concluded ballots shall not count for any continuing candidate. In the first round only, the election threshold shall then be calculated. Each round shall end with 1 of the following 3 outcomes:

(1) If at least one candidate has more votes than the election threshold, then all such candidates shall be elected. Each ballot counting for an elected candidate shall be assigned a new transfer value by multiplying the ballot's current transfer value by the surplus fraction for the candidate. Each elected candidate shall be deemed to have a number of votes equal to the election threshold in all future rounds, and a new round shall begin;

(2) If no candidate has more votes than the election threshold and the sum of the number of elected candidates and continuing candidates is more than the sum of the number of seats to be elected and 1, the last-place candidate shall be defeated or the last-place candidates shall be defeated in batch elimination, and a new round shall begin; or

(3) Otherwise, the continuing candidate with fewest votes shall be defeated, all other continuing candidates shall be elected, and tabulation is complete.

(e) Batch elimination shall apply to the largest possible group of continuing candidates such that the sum of the votes of candidates in the group is less than the individual number of votes of every continuing candidate not in the group, and provided that the number of continuing candidates not in the group is at least 1 more than the remaining number of positions to elect.

(f) If 2 or more last-place candidates are tied and batch elimination does not apply, the candidate with the fewest votes in the prior round shall be defeated. If 2 or more such tied candidates were tied in the prior round, the second tie shall be decided by referring similarly to the standing of the candidates, in terms of votes, in the second-prior round. This process shall be applied successively as many times as necessary, a tie shown in any prior round shall be decided by referring to the standing of the candidates in the round immediately preceding the tie.

(g) The City Clerk, subject to the approval of the City Council, shall establish and maintain procedures ~~may make any changes to the~~for ranked choice voting ballot and tabulation processes necessary to

ensure the integrity and smooth functioning of the election, provided that ranked choice voting shall still be used and the fewest number of changes are made to achieve such purpose.

SECTION 5. The following question shall be placed on the ballot to be used at a regular state or municipal election or at special election called for the purpose of presenting the question to the voters: Shall an act entitled “An Act Relative to Ranked Choice Voting in the City of Northampton” be accepted?

The city solicitor shall prepare the summary of the proposed amendment to the special act charter of the city of Northampton which shall appear on the ballot along with the question provided in this section.

If a majority of votes cast in answer to the question is in the affirmative, the city shall be taken to have accepted the amendment to the charter of the city of Northampton, but not otherwise.

**City of Northampton**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

*In City Council, April 14, 2022*

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(g) The City Council may make any changes to the ranked choice voting ballot and tabulation process necessary to ensure the integrity and smooth functioning of the election, provided that ranked choice voting shall still be used and the fewest number of changes are made to achieve such purpose.

SECTION 5. The following question shall be placed on the ballot to be used at a regular state or municipal election or at special election called for the purpose of presenting the question to the voters: Shall an act entitled “An Act Relative to Ranked Choice Voting in the City of Northampton” be accepted?

The city solicitor shall prepare the summary of the proposed amendment to the special act charter of the city of Northampton which shall appear on the ballot along with the question provided in this section.

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