

BOARD OF REGISTRARS
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM 201
WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
SEPTEMBER 16, 2021
5:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Board of Registrars member Karen Fanion at 5:16 PM in Room 201, Municipal Building, Westfield, MA.

The following Registrars were present: Karen Fanion, Rene Laviolette, and Linda Saltus. Daniel Smith was absent.

City Clerk/Chair Karen Fanion began by handing out an official copy of the July 30, 2020 Board of Registrars minutes

Upon motion of Registrar Rene Laviolette, seconded by Registrar Linda Saltus it was VOTED : That the July 30, 2020 Board of Registrars minutes be ACCEPTED. The motion passed 3-0 with Registrars Fanion, Laviolette, and Saltus voting YES.

City Clerk/Chair Karen Fanion introduced the third item on the agenda which was Amendments for Election in 2021 Session Law Chapter 5 & 20 Acts of 2021 which pertains to Early Voting in person and by mail. Election Clerk Marisa Colon explained that there are several amendments that will be implemented for the 2021 local election year. They are as follows: 1) Mail-in early voting for local and state elections until December 15, 2021, 2) In person early voting for local and state elections until December 15, 2021, 3) Check out or out board is not required at the polling location, and 4) Cities and towns can continue using a secure drop box for the purpose of ballot drop off. Board of Registrar Laviolette asked if the state provides funds to cover early voting. City Clerk/Chair replied, no and because early voting in person is an option, the Board of Registrar is required to make a recommendation to the City Council for a vote. Board of Registrar Saltus asked if the City Council is aware that the State will not be funding early voting and will they have to make an adjustment to the budget to pay for this. City Clerk/Chair replied that during her FY22 budget hearing she explained that more changes from the legislature may affect the amount of money she will need to conduct the 2021 local election, therefore, they are aware that appropriations may be needed. She stated that it is on the City Council agenda and perhaps it will go into committee so they may ask these types of questions. Board of Registrar Laviolette asked if early voting in person is necessary and if this is something that should or should not be done. City Clerk/Chair replied that she believes early voting should be implemented because people participate and because of the uptick in COVID cases there are voters who do not to wait in line. She further explained that people prefer mail-in voting for the convenience and safety and prefer to come in during early voting to have their sealed voted ballot not put through the mailing system. She stated that it is a Board decision and whatever the Board decides will be reported to the Council. It is more work for the City Clerk's office and election workers are needed to run the in person early voting which does incur added expenses but the benefits outweigh the expense. Registrar Laviolette stated that the city can have early voting in person to see if it is worth it to continue offering it for future local elections. City Clerk/Chair stated that this option expires on December 15, 2021 and may not be offered in the future. Registrar Saltus asked if there is discussion on whether or not this will be a permanent change as many other states have done. Election Clerk Colon explained that the City Clerk's office anticipates there will be more changes made prior to the 2022 State elections, therefore, there may be


a possibility for this to become permanent. City Clerk/Chair stated that the early voting in person will take place in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The days and hours as follows: Saturday, October 23rd, from 8 am to 1 pm, Monday through Friday, October 25th to October 29th, from 9 am to 5 pm with extended hours on Thursday, October 28th from 9 am to 7 pm. She stated that City Hall is currently open to the public but if it closes, then early voting in person will be downstairs in the basement of City Hall just like last year. She further explained that the law does not require that early voting be done on weekends or evenings, but for the convenience of the voters who work during normal business hours, the proposal includes one Saturday and one evening. Registrar Saltus stated that overtime is required for the City Clerk staff on the Saturday and evening but all these hours have to be manned by how many election workers. City Clerk/Chair explained that there is one shift on Saturday, 2 shifts Monday through Wednesday and Friday, 3 shifts on Thursday and 3 people per shift. Registrar Saltus asked if there are enough election workers who have signed up for the shifts. City Clerk/Chair replied that elections workers have already signed up and there are approximately only 6 shifts available. The pay is per shift which is \$60, which is the same amount for working on Election Day at the polls. She explained that the cost will be less during early voting because there is no need to supply a warden or clerk to do special paper work or problem solve when an issue arises. The City Clerk's office will take care of voters who do not appear on the list or who are on the inactive list. Registrar Saltus asked if the early voting in person process will be the same as last year. Election Clerk Colon replied yes and explained that the City Clerk's office purchased two additional poll pads and two label printers to make it easier for the check in process. A discussion took place between the board members regarding whether or not City Hall will remain open to the public and if the City of Westfield will be requiring people to wear masks as COVID cases rise and other municipalities begin to change policies. Registrar Saltus asked if the City Clerk will publicize any changes that may take place such as mask wearing, change in location, etc. City Clerk/Chair Fanion stated yes and explained that there will be articles written in the local papers, notices posted on the City's website and social media blasts. Registrar Saltus asked if the cost for early voting will be approximately \$5,000. City Clerk/Chair replied, yes, approximately. She explained that she budgeted for the Preliminary that would have been held in September and for the November election. Because there is no September Preliminary, there is more money to use in preparation for the November election. Registrar Saltus stated that she believes the city should offer early voting in person because there are voters who look forward to voting early because they don't want to wait until Election Day.

Upon motion of Registrar Linda Saltus, seconded by Registrar Rene Laviolette it was VOTED: That the Board of Registrars recommend the location for Early Voting for the November 3rd 2021 Local Election be held at Westfield City Hall and the dates and times are as follows: Saturday, October 23rd, from 8 am to 1 pm, Monday through Friday, October 25th to October 29th, from 9 am to 5 pm with extended hours on Thursday, October 28th from 9 am to 7 pm to be REFERRED TO CITY COUNCIL FOR FINAL APPROVAL. The motion passed 3-0 with Registrars Fanion, Laviolette, and Saltus voting YES.

Upon motion of Registrar Linda Saltus, seconded by Registrar Rene Laviolette it was VOTED: That the signature stamps of the members of the Board of Registrars are allowed to be used by the City Clerk's staff in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws and CMR's, be APPROVED. The motion passed 3-0 with Registrars Fanion, Laviolette, and Saltus voting YES.

At 5:29 PM and upon motion of Registrar Rene Laviolette, seconded by Registrar Linda Saltus it was unanimously VOTED: To ADJOURN.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marisa Colon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marisa" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Colon".

Marisa Colon, Principal Clerk