

# Election Process Review Committee

## Final Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 12, 2015

The regular meeting of the Election Process Review Committee Meeting on January 12, 2015 at 5pm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room, Independence Hall, 725 Old Post Road, Fairfield, Connecticut 06824.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Catherine Albin - Chairperson, Ron Pine – Vice Chairperson, Bryan Cafferelli, James Quinn

PRESENT:

Registrar Roger Autuori, Registrar Matthew Waggner, and Public

### **I. Call to order**

Mrs. Albin opened the meeting at 5:08 pm.

### **II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mrs. Albin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 5, 2015 was made by Mr. Pine, seconded by Mr. Cafferelli, passed on a vote unanimously of 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

### **IV. Comments from the public concerning the November 4, 2014 Election**

Mr. Richard Saxl, former town attorney served on various committees, is a Democrat from District 1 and he stopped by the polling location to take a look at 8:20 pm and stayed until 11:40 pm. There was a mechanical error and the scanner broke on a machine, and they had to use an absentee ballot machine. He commented on the integrity of the process. It is important to have a process that everyone respects and understands, as long as it is accurate. Voters were concerned their vote would not be counted. Accuracy is important, in District 1 there were people there from 5 am to 11:30 pm it was a long and difficult day. Subserving to state statute, accuracy is important versus the time it takes. People have the opportunity to vote and have their vote counted.

Mrs. Albin asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Pine asked which school was your district.

Mr. Saxl replies the Senior Center and there were 2400 votes casted. The entire stack had to be hand feed into the scanner when it was fixed.

Mrs. Albin asked was the stress with the mechanical machines that there was not enough spare to cover the breakdowns.

Mr. Saxl stated that the machines were tested and Mr. Autuori checked the machines two weeks before the election.

Mr. Quinn stated that he has known Attorney Sachs for a decade and a half. He asked in your experience did the breakdown take longer to repair.

Mr. Saxl stated the breakdowns usually happen faster or early in the day. In this case an optical scanner memory card broke later in the day. It was a long night. The accuracy of the process is what matters, as long as people can vote and their vote gets counted, that is all that matters.

The process matters more than anything, voters need to know their votes were counted

Mrs. Albin asked if any other members of the public that have anything they would like to share.

Mrs. Joyce Flynn stated on the Election Day, she was a stringer for Reuters and Associated Press and sent in the vote tally information. She sat in the lobby at old town hall and waited for the moderators come in for the night. Everyone said they must be the last one as they came in at 10 pm, 11 pm, 11:30 pm, and 12 am. They came in sad, some were crying, angry, or stating "I am not going to say anything." The emotions of the 10 different moderators was a gamut of frustrations. There were 21 Districts with some moderators that had 3 or 2 districts to manage.

Mrs. Albin asked as they were coming what were their frustrations.

Mrs. Joyce Flynn stated they were tired overwhelmed with a gamut of emotions, exhausted, sad, angry, and swearing,

Mrs. Albin asked how did this election compare to elections held in the past, was this the first and only one where the moderators had to come to town hall.

Mrs. Joyce Flynn never saw the people come in with all the reporting over the years.

Mrs. Albin asked Mr. Autuori is it because we counted the absentee ballots at the districts that the moderators had to bring things to town hall.

Mr. Autuori stated 10 pm or 10:30 pm was the latest they would bring things to town hall in the previous elections. The moderators dropped things off to the office, such as stationary, extra ballots and the absentee ballot moderator used to be upstairs.

Mrs. Albin asked Mr. Waggner do you concur.

Mr. Waggner stated yes.

Mrs. Joyce Flynn stated the first person came in at 10 pm.

Mr. Pine asked Mrs. Joyce Flynn when did you leave the town hall.

Mrs. Joyce Flynn stated I left at 1:15 am when the last district came in which was the district with a machine that broke. It was a difficult evening for the moderators.

Mrs. Albin asked if there are any other questions or public comments from the Fairfield 2014 Election Day that you would like to share.

Mrs. Laura Devlin stated my problem was with primarily with Dwight School, the school opened late and there was a line outside. I think it opened close to 10 minutes after 6 am.

Mrs. Albin asked a question, where you at the polls at 6am.

Mrs. Laura Devlin stated I was there to vote at 6 am an there was a line outside along the sidewalk.

Mrs. Albin stated I want to see the moderator's logs to see the time. We heard doors opened after 6am and we have yet to see the times logged in.

Mrs. Laura Devlin stated when the doors opened there was confusion with two lines, one for district 134 and one for district 132. People were told to go into wrong lines. They check ids and moved onto street name and address. A women left her id in the car and the husband vouched for her, they said it was fine. When her daughter went to vote she was given the wrong ballot.

Mrs. Albin asked what time did she vote.

Mrs. Laura Devlin stated that she voted a little after 6 am. Her daughter was at the school doing soft sheeting.

Mrs. Alvin asked if she stayed throughout the day, once you voted were you outside the building.

Mrs. Laura Devlin stated she had a team of people who did have information from inside the building. She read an email to do with the process that was sent to her. "My comments are that the system is antiquated, sign in should be electronically, and screen seniors for hearing impairments."

Mrs. Albin voted at Dwight School in the afternoon around 2pm or 3 pm and it was running smoothly. There was someone directing traffic and wanted to know the street name. I knew where to go and there is one line for each district by street number and name. I had to show my drivers license for id.

Mr. Quinn stated you indicated you were there and there was confusion, was there a traffic director there.

Mrs. Laura Devlin said it was not obvious.

Elizabeth Harkawik stated that there was someone directing traffic but she was clueless as to how to direct people.

Mr. Pine asked are you the one who got the wrong ballot.

Elizabeth Harkawik stated that her shift ended at 9 am and then she voted. She was given the wrong ballot and went to the table to inform them. They did not know how long they were giving out the wrong ballots. No one stopped handing out the wrong ballots until, she had to essentially yell.

Mr. Cafferelli asked what ended up happening.

Elizabeth Harkawik stated afterward they took the new ballot and called the old ballot a spoiled ballot.

Mrs. Devlin state she had soft sheeters at Dwight School, St. Pious Church, and North Stratfield School. They were to document wrong ballots, check in procedures and instructed not to talk.

Mrs. Albin asked if people saw issues with checking ids.

Elizabeth Harkawik stated people would hand ids and assume the name and address were correct, without asking.

Mrs. Albin stated that checking ids has changed over time and is not as specific.

Mrs. Devlin stated that the soft sheeters were to speak to no one and report back, there were issues in the morning and seemed to clear up by the afternoon.

Elizabeth Harkawik stated that she saw one of the official people fill out their ballot in front of people and found it disrespectful.

Mrs. Albin stated that it is not illegal. If you want to show your ballot to the world, you can.

Mr. Pine asked if Mrs. Devlin talked to the registrars.

Mrs. Devlin stated she called Mr. Autuori and Mr. Waggner

Mrs. Albin asked if there were any more statements or questions.

Mr. Pine ask the registrars if they had a recollection for 6:10 am the report from the Moderator Sharon Brzozowski, if she also reported the polls opened at 6:10 am.

Mr. Quinn stated that I would like to see the moderator login notes

Mr. Albin gave congratulations to Mrs. Devlin being sworn in as a state representative.

Mrs. Devlin said thank you and your committee has quite a task.

Carol Way from District 5 stated that this is not in connection with the types of thing you are looking at tonight, it is something related to North Stratfield School. Outside of the polling place, a women not that old on the heavy side parked as close as possible and she had a cane. I had personally learned that there was an option of curb side voting. So I did go up to her and said it looks like you are having difficulty. I believe there is some way you can have curbside voting. I thought there would be a sign or someone to contact. I went inside and saw the moderator who first said are you here to vote. The moderator was abrupt and did not cooperate at first. I explained there was a women outside around 4:30 pm and they got someone to designate the doors. They had her drive around and it was taken care of. We could be more voter friendly, have a sign or number to call to for anyone physically impaired. I think we need to have signage or something.

Mr. Quinn stated that there are procedures for curbside voting in state statute 9-261b.

Carol Way stated that she was amazed that she was not aware.

Mrs. Albin asked if there are any other people who would like to comment from the public.

Mrs. Devlin stated that she had soft sheeters at three locations Dwight School, St. Pious, and North Stratfield School.

## **V. Committee discussion, questions and requests for information**

Mrs. Albin stated that as a committee we can move on to continue our discussion and if other members from the public come in they can share in the discussion. We have spoken with Registrar Mr. Autuori, Registrar Mr. Waggner, and Holly Lanese. In reviewing the minutes, I would like to start looking at them to outline our next steps. I will not be in town Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>. Before we finish we can look at the rest of the schedule as to how much time we need to complete our work.

Mr. Cafferelli asked if we will meet the 60 day deadline.

Mrs. Albin stated that if we need more time it can be granted by the Board of Selectmen. If we are done in mid-February, we will meet the deadline.

Mr. Quinn stated that he did not think we will need an extension.

Mrs. Albin stated it will be 60 days from the mid of December to February 16<sup>th</sup>. Unless someone has another way to go through the information, that she would suggest to start going through the minutes to answer questions. There may be further questions for the Registrars. The floor is opened for the committee to ask questions.

Mr. Pine stated that he would like to have the moderator's logs.

Mrs. Albin stated she wants the log to ask questions.

Mr. Pine asked the Registrars if we can get the moderators logs.

Mrs. Albin stated let us see the logs for all 10 districts.

Mr. Cafferelli stated another way for the committee to break up the topic and list what is outstanding or what we need to know.

Mrs. Albin stated we can do it either way, she found herself referencing the minutes. Initially we had machinery.

Mr. Caffernelli stated while we go through the minutes, we can put them in different buckets.

Mrs. Albin stated we have Training, Absentee Ballot counting District vs Central.

Mr. Cafferelli asked do we put Election Day Registration in the same category.

Mr. Quinn stated he thinks it is separate.

Mrs. Albin stated when we have the moderators logs which should show us opening and I am sure other bits of information. We have the issue of split districts and ballots issues of incorrect ballots handed out.

Mr. Pine stated to add the testimony about ballot colors.

Mrs. Albin stated that it would go with Ballot issues as to the different colors and printing costs. We need to tie it all together with all of the topics.

Mr. Pine stated he had not had a chance to contact the SEEC and would follow up on any complaints reported.

Mr. Pine stated we had testimony from the Moderators about counting absentee ballots in districts and the time it took.

Mr. Quinn stated the training and issues with absent poll worker.

Mrs. Albin stated we can put it under Staffing for the training and issues with absent poll workers. She asked are there any other categories that we can think of to add.

Mrs. Albin asked about the budgets. Is the information provided actual or budget?

Mr. Autuori stated he provided the actual costs and budgets.

Mrs. Albin stated we will look at the budget and actuals along with the different methods. Are there any other parts that effected Election Day?

Mr. Cafferelli reviewed the list Registrar issues, Absentee Ballots, Polling Places, I think we covered it.

Mrs. Albin stated I would like the committee to review the issues not necessarily the order we wrote them. The goal is to work with what we have and getting subsequent questions or information in order to develop a report and give recommendations. The election process has an order and we can try and follow that order and start with Staffing and the rest of it falls in line.

Mr. Quinn stated Machinery should be number two.

Mr. Cafferelli stated to follow the order then the split Districts and Ballots, being ordered before the election, then the Absentee Ballots and Election Day Registration.

Mrs. Albin C- They can be handled under different sub titles. Moderator logs, the Budget. Once we identify the issues we can look at the budget and see if the committee needs more information.

Mr. Quinn stated the committee should peruse the moderator handbook to look at the opening and closing procedures, it gives a great idea of the concepts. It helps to have the knowledge to ask the right questions

Mrs. Albin requested to have the handbook copied.

Mr. Pine requested a copy of the handbook and Moderators Log

Mr. Autuori stated that Holly Lanese has the moderator logs. His copies are dark and may not come out well if copied again.

Mrs. Albin requested to have Holly Lanese email the moderator logs.

Mr. Quinn stated that we may want to review the procedures for Absentee Ballots, when we get to the section.

Mrs. Albin stated it is good there are two weeks before our next meeting and asked Mr. Pine if he would have enough time to contact the SEEC. What information will we need to complete this task? Looking at the calendar we have January 26, February 9, and February 16. Once we get all this information, we will be able to fill in any holes. If we have remaining questions to ask, we can contact and have questions answered by the Registrars Mr. Autuori and Mr. Wagner, Holly Lanese, and Moderators.

Mr. Pine stated that there is one question on the issues regarding the testimony on the wrong ballot. How can we find out how many ballots were given out to the wrong districts?

Mrs. Albin asked if we would be able to quantify and identify the wrong ballots.

Mr. Wagner stated we look at the ballots if we expected 500 and there were 495.

Mrs. Albin stated that she suspected some voters were not aware of the candidates or that they were given the wrong ballots.

Mr. Cafferelli stated is there a way to know the number of ballots and number of people who voted in the district.

Mrs. Albin said let us say hypothetically in districts 134 and 132 there are 500 people voting. In district 132, there were 495 voters but we don't know if 10 or 30 votes should have been given a ballot form the other district.

Mr. Cafferelli asked if you start with 1,000 ballots and 500 voted for District 132. How would you know the number of spoiled ballots?

Mr. Quinn stated you would not know the number of spoiled ballots.

Mr. Wagner stated it is difficult to get the exact number but you would get a sense. You will never have the exact match but you may get a good sense if it is 10 or 40.

Mrs. Albin stated when the voter knows who they are voting for they will see the wrong ballot. If they do not know the candidates they will probably vote within their party. We are only really going to know within a range from the people who knew they had the wrong ballot and handed it back.

Mr. Quinn asked if we can quantify the information. Once there was an error it was corrected.

Mr. Cafferelli asked is there a reason we do not know every ballot that was it spoiled.

Mrs. Albin stated we would not know if that tells us if someone was given the wrong ballot.

Mr. Cafferelli stated I would like to ask the moderators to give the information and asked Mr. Waggner if he would get the copy of the moderator tapes.

Mrs. Albin asked if that would provide the information we are looking for.

Mr. Autuori stated that there are hourly counts for the day that are called in, if you checked at 9am you would have gotten a count of the number of ballots used at that time.

Mr. Cafferelli stated that he would prefer not to get the raw information. I would ask the Registrars or Holly to review the tapes and give a summary.

Mrs. Albin asked if that can be done by Holly Lanese, and that she will request the information from her. Is there further information looking at the sub categories.

Mr. Cafferelli asked do we have a list of the poll workers who were absent.

Mr. Quinn asked if we have a list of people serving but did not show.

Mr. Autuori stated that all of my workers showed up.

Mr. Waggner stated he was pretty sure only one called out sick.

Mr. Autuori stated that some of the workers did show up late.

Mrs. Albin asked if we can we get all that information.

Mr. Autuori stated that it should be in the moderator's log.

Mr. Quinn stated that he would like the list of who was late.

Mr. Pine stated that it looks as if one traffic Director Nance VanCliff was late.

Mr. Waggner stated that he was in charge of the traffic directors for Districts 1-5 and Mr. Autuori was in charge of the traffic directors from Districts 6-10.

Mrs. Albin asked is there any other back up information anyone is looking for.

Mr. Cafferelli asked if we know anything about the training? Is there a procedure in place that the Registrars follow?

Mr. Quinn asked for the protocols.

Mrs. Albin stated she has questions and if it is not in the manual we may have to reach out to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Quinn stated that he is curious as to towns in similar size, what are their best practices.

Mrs. Albin stated that she can reach out to some towns if you give me some names of towns, West Hartford, Glastonbury, and Greenwich. I can check to see if they have multiple polling districts.

Mr. Pine suggested Westport and Stratford.

Mrs. Albin said that I can certainly can check with 3 or 4 towns.

Mr. Quinn stated that some sampling would work.

Mrs. Albin ask if there is anything else. If you think of something after tonight you can always contact me and we can get the information.

Mr. Cafferelli stated that I have one question in terms of machinery.

Mrs. Albin asked if the breakdown was due to the number of split districts we have in 10 polling places and not having a certain amount of supplemental machinery for breakdowns for the 10 poling locations and 21 districts.

Mr. Waggner stated there are 28 scanners and 8 in the Senior Center storage facility.

Mrs. Albin asked was it enough to cover.

Mr. Waggner stated that normally a machine breaks first thing in the morning and it is fixed at 7 am verses having a large number of ballots to be reissued. The machines go through an annual maintenance and there were no issues with the machines at the time of testing.

Mr. Caffernelli asked what the two machines were used for at the locations.

Mr. Waggner stated that one was used for regular voting and the second for the absentee ballots.

Mr. Cafferelli asked if the absentee ballots were counted centrally, what would the second machine be used for.

Mr. Waggner stated that there are two machines at each polling location. District 1 had a machine that broke.

Mr. Autuori stated that District 3 had a jamming motor and was not flipping the ballots.

Mr. Cafferelli stated that where I was going was that 2400 ballots piled up, if there was a backup would that have helped.

Mr. Autuori stated that the Moderator did not know what the problem was and kept saying the machine was jamming and eventually we needed a new machine.

Mr. Waggner stated the two machines are programed identically they both can be used interchangeable.

Mr. Cafferelli asked could it help if we had a written report from the Registrars about the machinery, showing the Election Day started out with 22 machines and two at each polling location. Then chronologically show each machine and number of districts and how the process and plan of what should happen and then what did happen. We had one machine down and would like to see the life of the machines.

Mr. Pine asked for the logistics of the machines for this elections and last year elections

Mr. Cafferelli stated that if the second machine is half a backup, worst case scenario if you have 8 problems they would be able to replace the machine. Are we short siding machines using them as absentee ballots in the districts? It sounds like it was a personnel problem not machine issue.

Mr. Quinn stated that the DPW delivers a new machine if there a problem.

Mrs. Albin stated we send out machines, a machine broke, used the absentee ballot machine used, I would like to have a report of the machines that had problems. We are hearing antidotal information and we need to see the facts.

Mr. Pine asked if voting I put my ballot in the machine do not work are the the ballots are piled up on the side.

Mrs. Albin stated we have an agreement to meet on January 26<sup>th</sup> and now we are ready to start digging in and wrapping up. I will get all my information and distribute it via email or hard copy. Mr. Pine will contact the SEEC attorney Kevin Ahern. We will then meet on February 9<sup>th</sup> and February 17<sup>th</sup>. She would entertain a motion to adjourn.

## **VI. Adjournment**

Motion made by Mr. Pine to adjourn the meeting at 6:34 pm, seconded by Mr. Quinn and passed on a vote unanimously of 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Flynn  
Recording Secretary