Board for Registration of Voters

Tuesday, June 4, 2024, 6:00 PM,

Sharon Bushor Conference Room, 149 Church Street, Burlington, VT, 05401 OR remotely via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/93712437108

Meeting ID: 937 1243 7108

1. Agenda

1.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda

2. Meeting Length

2.1. Set Meeting Length

3. Adopt Minutes

3.1. Motion to adopt previous meeting's minutes

File Attachments		
1.	Draft Minutes 05072024	Draft Minutes 05072024.pdf

4. Public Forum

5. Clerk's Report

6. Approval of Voter Challenges

7. Annual Board Report to City Council

7.1. Annual Board Report to City Council

File Attachments		
1.	BRV Annual Report FY2024 FINAL DRAFT (redline)	BRV Annual Report FY2024 FINAL DRAFT (redline).docx
2.	BRV Annual Report FY2024 FINAL DRAFT	BRV Annual Report FY2024 FINAL DRAFT.docx

8. Voter Outreach Discussion (continued)

9. New Business

10. Adjournment

10.1. Motion to Adjourn

BOARD FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

May 7th, 2024 at 6:00pm

Called to order at 6:06pm

Where: Sharon Bushor Conference Room, City Hall and remotely via Zoom

Present: Lauren Ebersol, Alison Harte, Helen Rock, Grace Grundhauser, Annie Schneider, Michelle Lefkowitz, Karen Rowell, Mike McGarghan, Olga Bravo, Alex Demoly, Lesley Gendron, and Youth Member Will Cunninghan

Absent: All members present.

Also Present: Assistant City Clerk, Sarah Montgomery

Agenda: Grace Grundhauser said she would like to amend the agenda to add a section for announcements, right after the meeting length item. Michelle Lefkowitz made a motion to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Alex Demoly. Passed unanimously.

Meeting Length: Set for one hour.

Announcements: Applications are being accepted for 3 seats on the board – one position is open due to a Thea Knight's recent resignation and two are opening due to Helen Rock and Annie Schneider's terms coming to an end. Helen Rock announced that she will not be reapplying for a new term on the board. She served on the board for a total of 12 years. She said she would still help on Election Days. Annie Schneider isn't sure if she will be reapplying. Applications for the seats are due on 5/15. At least one application has been received in the clerk's office at this point. Grace Grundhauser posted on Front Porch Forum to share information, but members can also share the information independently. Karen Rowell said that another avenue to post would be Vermont Daily Chronicle. Grace Grundhauser will share the ad with the whole board so folks can share individually.

Minutes: Michelle Lefkowitz made a motion to adopt the minutes from February and April. Seconded by Lesley Gendron. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Clerk's Report: Sarah Montgomery reported that there are currently 32,923 registered voters in Burlington, 7,470 of which are challenged. 116 of our total registered voters are resident voters. In April, there were 129 new registrations, 164 voters were transferred out of town, and 33 voters were purged from the checklist.

Approval of Voter Challenges: Sarah Montgomery reminded the board that they had not approved voter challenges since before the Annual City Election ballots were mailed out in January. The spreadsheet that she shared with the board prior to the meeting shows three different groups of voters that the clerk's office is recommending the board challenge. The total list contains 2,488 voters. Sarah Montgomery explained:

- The first group of voters on the list are voters who had ballots returned as undeliverable to the clerk's office, who did not update their voter registration since the ballot was mailed, and who

did not vote in the election. Voters who had ballots that were undeliverable, but which were noted by the USPS as being temporarily away, are not included on this list.

- The second group of voters, labelled as cross-state movers, were added to this list based on information provided by the Secretary of State's office that identified these voters as likely having registered to vote or having voted in another state more recently than their last voter activity in VT. Michelle Lefkowitz asked: why are these voters only being challenged, not removed? Sarah Montgomery answered that if the clerk's office would have received a direct notice from another state that our voter had registered there, we would remove them from our checklist, but since this information was just gathered in a data comparison of national voter information, a challenge is appropriate. Grace Grundhauser asked if this is the first time we have utilized the ERIC data to take action on our checklist. Sarah Montgomery said this is the first time since she has been with the City. She also shared that the SoS is using the ERIC data to re-send challenge letters to already challenged VT voters that were identified – this is because a more current address was identified for them.
- The third group of voters included routine challenges – based on property being sold and undeliverable voter registration letters.

Michelle Lefkowitz made a motion to challenge all the voters on the spreadsheet. Seconded by Lesley Gendron. Passed unanimously.

Voter Outreach: Grace Grundhauser said that she added this as an unstructured agenda item due to discussion about this being requested by members at prior meetings.

Helen Rock mentioned that there was a voter registration outreach kit previously that was helpful for pop-up registration. She asked Sarah Montgomery if this was still around at City Hall? Sarah Montgomery said she wasn't aware of it. Grace Grundhauser noted that it sounds like something that could be recreated.

Alison Harte asked if there was data to show what wards or groups might have low voter registration or voter turnout. If identified, voter outreach could be targeted to areas where there is low turnout or registration.

Will Cunningham suggested doing voter outreach at schools, especially for upper class students. He recommended that it might be more effective to have a guest speaker come to speak to classrooms than just providing a handout.

Lauren Ebersol added that 17 year olds can vote in the primaries if they will be 18 before the General Election. She asked if there was a civics teacher that could be worked with directly.

Mike McGarghan said that it is great if individual board members want to do outreach on their own, but that he doesn't think the board has the time to focus on voter outreach at this time since there are a lot of other items that the board also needs to focus on.

Grace Grundhauser shared that this is part of the board's purpose and she thinks it is important to the current members of the board. While there is other work that takes priority, the board does have a calm moment to focus on this topic.

Lauren Ebersol said that maybe it could be added to future agendas as an open item – addressed if there is time, but only if other higher priority items have been given the time they need first.

Annie Schneider shared that she is working with the Secretary of State to help with civic engagement. Would the clerk's office be interested/ able to do voter outreach in schools? Sarah Montgomery said she would be interested in this.

Annie Schneider asked if outreach should be done in schools now, prior to the primary election in August. Will Cunningham shared that this might be a difficult time of year since the end of the year is busy for students. Next year might work better.

Michelle Lefkowitz asked if there would be something that could be done more passively since we are on a tight timeline – put up a table in the lobby of the school, etc.

Olga Bravo suggested that something basic be done right now, but then that something more robust be done next school year. The reason to do something small now would be to get information to the 2024 class before they graduate, then do a more comprehensive educational push next school year.

Mike McGarghan said that it would be helpful to know what Burlington's voter turnout data looks like in comparison to other towns and counties. It would be helpful to know how we are doing, so we can better make judgements about where/if outreach should be done.

Helen Rock noted that we generally have pretty low voter turnout in Burlington.

Mike McGarghan said that some people have been alienated from the voting process. Outreach methods utilizing only technology may also exclude certain people who don't have access.

Annie Schneider recommended a light touch for this school year – making a poster and posting at the local high schools, including a QR code that links to the voter registration site. Will Cunningham said this would be a good idea, but mentioned that a video might be more effective.

Annie Schneider said that videos about how to register to vote do exist – created by the Secretary of State in previous years.

Alison Harte mentioned that she has a connection at BHS (her daughter) that she could utilize to share information with students there.

Olga Bravo asked if the City could use social media to share information.

Helen Rock noted that the board members collectively have connections with BHS, Rice, and Winooski.

Grace asked if it might be an option to set up voter registration tables at graduation. Helen Rock said that might not be utilized since students are there celebrating with families. Lauren Ebersol added that might also be confusing for folks who are leaving VT to go to college in another state.

Grace asked: what action can the board take now? Action would need to be taken before the next board meeting since the school year is ending soon.

Olga Bravo said she likes the poster idea. Alex Demoly agreed.

Michelle Lefkowitz said she still thinks setting up a table at the school before the end of the school year could be doable. Helen Rock noted that it can be tricky to get into schools for security purposes. Will Cunningham said that he has seen similar things happening in his school. He said this could be achievable for this year

Olga Bravo asked if there might be an existing career fair that the board could table at. Annie Schneider answered that the school does host an event like this, but it already occurred this year.

Olga Bravo asked if the schools could share information through their social media. Annie Schneider said the kids do not follow the schools' social media.

Grace Grundhauser suggested creating a poster with a QR code to mini-video and another QR code to the voter registration portal.

Will Cunningham said the video should be informational instead of persuasive, explaining what you need to register and what steps to take.

Grace said it might be helpful to include information about residency.

Lesley Gendron said the information should be concise.

Helen Rock made a motion that the board make an accessible poster to potential voters at Rice, Winooski, and BHS before June 10th. Seconded by Annie Schneider. 1 opposed, 10 in favor. Motion carries.

Alison Harte asked: How will this happen logistically? Grace said she will communicate via email and sort out the details with anyone who is interested in helping.

Michelle Lefkowitz shared a list (made by Helen Rock) of places for tabling for voter registration drives: Market 32, the farmer's market, Hannaford, the fair. Lesley Gendron also suggested posting the poster with the QR code at these locations.

Annual Board Report to City Council:

Grace Grundhauser explained that this is the report that the board submits to City Council each year. Sarah Montgomery attached the previous report to the agenda for reference and Grace Grundhauser will share a draft version she created of the current year's report. Grace would appreciate any feedback prior to the next meeting. The board will vote on this in June.

New Business: No new business**.**

Alison Harte asked when the August Primary is. Board members answered: August 13th. Generally, the board has skipped a meeting in July. Grace Grundhauser said that due to new board members joining and the August election, it may be helpful for the board to meet in July this year. This can be decided next month.

Adjournment: On a motion by Annie Schneider, seconded by Olga Bravo, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Sarah Montgomery, Assistant City Clerk

To: **Members, Burlington City Council**
From: **Board for Registration of Voters**
Date: **July 1, 2024**
Re: **FY2024 Annual Report - DRAFT**

The Board for Registration of Voters (BRV) receives its authority from the Burlington City Charter § 43 which asks the 12 members of the BRV to (1) review and take lawful action on additions, corrections, alterations, and removals of voters to the voter checklist; (2) work at the polls on Election Day on voter registration related issues (i.e.~~, Election Day registration~~, challenge process issues, address and name changes, omission from the checklist, verification issues, etc.); (3) attend and participate in monthly and special board meetings; and (4) participate in Board sponsored voter outreach activities.[1]

Commented [LE1]: Should this be omitted since we are putting the responsibility on the Ward Clerk to staff this section?

The Board's primary responsibility is to maintain the Burlington City Voter checklist. Our usual meeting time is the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM. Meetings are held at City Hall in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room with a virtual option via Zoom. Notices of meetings are posted at City Hall, the Department of Public Works, Fletcher Free Library, and on the City of Burlington's website at https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CT/Board-for-Registration-of-Voters. Zoom links are published at the top of each agenda.

In fiscal year 2024, ### new voters were added to Burlington's voter checklist, #### voters were deleted from the checklist, and #### voters were transferred to other Vermont towns. Currently, there are ### challenged voters in Burlington.

Since our last report, Kate Baldwin and Larry Granillo left the board after their terms ~~expired~~ ended in June 2023. In FY24, Lis Mickenberg, Thea Knight, and Helen Rock left the board. Olga Bravo, Alexandre Demoly, Lesley Gendron, and [insert members appointed June 2024] ~~joined~~ were appointed as new members. BRV members reelected Grace Grundhauser ~~was reelected~~ as chair of the Board and Michelle Lefkowitz ~~was reelected~~ vice chair in FY24.

During elections, BRV members are stationed at ~~each polling place~~the polls in each ward from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM to assist voters in matters concerning voter eligibility, checklist corrections, voter challenges, and address changes. BRV members use City-provided laptops to access the statewide voter checklist and the Burlington ward and district look-up tool. During FY24, BRV members worked at the 2024 Annual City Election and Presidential Primary on March 5, 2024. The BRV recruits and trains volunteers to support BRV members at the polls by assisting with tasks not requiring BRV sign off. As of 2023, the BRV hosts training sessions at City Hall for BRV members and volunteers the week before an election as standard practice.

Through the years, the BRV has benefited from the participation of ~~BHS~~ high school youth members. In September 2023, in cooperation with CEDO's Youth on Boards Program, the BRV welcomed new youth member Will Cunningham to the Board. Youth members actively participate in meetings and have the

[1] https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CityCouncil/Member-of-the-Board-of-Registration-of-Voters

option to work at the polls on Election Day. Additional ~~Burlington High School~~high school students volunteered for the BRV ~~on Town Meeting Day 2023~~during the Annual City and Presidential Primary Election in March 2024 and the BRV hopes to recruit ~~BHS~~ high school volunteers in future elections.

The BRV continues to refine a draft version of its Election Day handbook for member and volunteer orientation and training purposes. The handbook was last updated for the ~~Town Meeting Day 2024 election~~Annual City and Presidential Primary Election in March 2024, to include new sections on Legal Resident Voting and CEDO's language resources for voters at the polls. Improving BRV forms used to track and communicate checklist revisions on election days was also a focus of the Board and revisions were completed before March.

The past few years have been a time of change for the BRV, with high turnover among its members, the effect of automatically mailed ballots on the challenge system, and charter changes passed in 2023 affecting elections in Burlington, notably All Legal Resident Voting and new ward boundaries. Improvement of processes and communication with Ward Clerks and Ward Clerk volunteers has also been a focus of the Board's work. ~~Another~~ A future change expected soon is the Vermont Secretary of State's implementation of a new election management system. The Board's focus in recent years has been significantly devoted to learning and training, but topics of ongoing BRV discussion include volunteer recruitment and coordination and voter outreach. Past activities of the Board have included voter registration ~~and education at senior centers and new U.S. citizen ceremonies~~at busy local venues such as the Farmer's Market and City Market Onion River Co-op; review of the Vermont Voter's Oath language and improving instructions on the certificate envelope for Absentee Ballots ~~envelopes~~; and discussion regarding topics such as translation services for Burlington voters.

Submitted by Grace Grundhauser, Chair, Board for Registration of Voters

To: **Members, Burlington City Council**
From: **Board for Registration of Voters**
Date: **July 1, 2024**
Re: **FY2024 Annual Report – FINAL DRAFT**

The Board for Registration of Voters (BRV) receives its authority from the Burlington City Charter § 43 which asks the 12 members of the BRV to (1) review and take lawful action on additions, corrections, alterations, and removals of voters to the voter checklist; (2) work at the polls on Election Day on voter registration related issues (i.e., challenge process issues, address and name changes, omission from the checklist, verification issues, etc.); (3) attend and participate in monthly and special board meetings; and (4) participate in Board sponsored voter outreach activities.[1]

The Board's primary responsibility is to maintain the Burlington City Voter checklist. Our usual meeting time is the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM. Meetings are held at City Hall in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room with a virtual option via Zoom. Notices of meetings are posted at City Hall, the Department of Public Works, Fletcher Free Library, and on the City of Burlington's website at https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CT/Board-for-Registration-of-Voters. Zoom links are published at the top of each agenda.

In fiscal year 2024, ### new voters were added to Burlington's voter checklist, #### voters were deleted from the checklist, and #### voters were transferred to other Vermont towns. Currently, there are ### challenged voters in Burlington.

Since our last report, Kate Baldwin and Larry Granillo left the board after their terms ended in June 2023. In FY24, Lis Mickenberg, Thea Knight, and Helen Rock left the board. Olga Bravo, Alexandre Demoly, Lesley Gendron, and [insert members appointed June 2024] were appointed as new members. BRV members reelected Grace Grundhauser as chair of the Board and Michelle Lefkowitz vice chair in FY24.

During elections, BRV members are stationed at the polls in each ward from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM to assist voters in matters concerning voter eligibility, checklist corrections, voter challenges, and address changes. BRV members use City-provided laptops to access the statewide voter checklist and the Burlington ward and district look-up tool. During FY24, BRV members worked at the 2024 Annual City Election and Presidential Primary on March 5, 2024. The BRV recruits and trains volunteers to support BRV members at the polls by assisting with tasks not requiring BRV sign off. As of 2023, the BRV hosts training sessions at City Hall for BRV members and volunteers the week before an election as standard practice.

Through the years, the BRV has benefited from the participation of high school youth members. In September 2023, in cooperation with CEDO's Youth on Boards Program, the BRV welcomed new youth member Will Cunningham to the Board. Youth members actively participate in meetings and have the

[1] https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CityCouncil/Member-of-the-Board-of-Registration-of-Voters

option to work at the polls on Election Day. Additional high school students volunteered for the BRV during the Annual City and Presidential Primary Election in March 2024 and the BRV hopes to recruit high school volunteers in future elections.

The BRV continues to refine a draft version of its Election Day handbook for member and volunteer orientation and training purposes. The handbook was last updated for the Annual City and Presidential Primary Election in March 2024, to include new sections on Legal Resident Voting and CEDO's language resources for voters at the polls. Improving BRV forms used to track and communicate checklist revisions on election days was also a focus of the Board and revisions were completed before March.

The past few years have been a time of change for the BRV, with high turnover among its members, the effect of automatically mailed ballots on the challenge system, and charter changes passed in 2023 affecting elections in Burlington, notably All Legal Resident Voting and new ward boundaries. Improvement of processes and communication with Ward Clerks and Ward Clerk volunteers has also been a focus of the Board's work. A future change expected soon is the Vermont Secretary of State's implementation of a new election management system. The Board's focus in recent years has been significantly devoted to learning and training, but topics of ongoing BRV discussion include volunteer recruitment and coordination and voter outreach. Past activities of the Board have included voter registration at busy local venues such as the Farmer's Market and City Market Onion River Co-op; review of the Vermont Voter's Oath language and improving instructions on the certificate envelope for Absentee Ballots; and discussion regarding topics such as translation services for Burlington voters.

Submitted by Grace Grundhauser, Chair, Board for Registration of Voters