



BURLINGTON BOARD FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS
1ST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL, 149 CHURCH STREET, BURLINGTON,
VT 05401 OR REMOTELY VIA ZOOM
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 7, 2025

1. Call Meeting to Order

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Meeting called to order by Vice-Chair Michelle Lefkowitz at 6:00pm.

Members Present: Janet Stambolian, Karen Rowell, Michelle Lefkowitz, Annie Schneider, Grace Grundhauser, Kevin Lewis, Lauren Ebersol, Adam Franz, Colleen Montgomery, Jeanne Keller, Lesley Gendron, and Youth Member Will Cunningham

Members Absent: Alison Harte

Others Present: Sarah Montgomery, Assistant City Clerk

2. Agenda

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2.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda

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Agenda approved unanimously.

3. Announcements

3. Announcements

There were no announcements.

4. Meeting Length

4. Meeting Length

4.1. Set Meeting Length

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The meeting length was set to one hour.

5. Adopt Minutes

5. Adopt Minutes

Subject

File Attachments

1. 9/2/25 BRV Minutes

9/2/25 BRV Minutes.pdf

5.1. Motion to adopt previous meeting's minutes

Karen Rowell made a motion to adopt the minutes. Seconded by Adam Franz. Approved unanimously.

6. Public Forum

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No members of the public were present.

7. Clerk's Report

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Sarah Montgomery reported that there are currently 29,231 registered voters in Burlington. Out of this total, 5,100 are currently challenged. In September: 180 voters registered to vote, 52 voters were removed from the checklist, and 101 voters were transferred from Burlington to other Vermont towns.

Sarah reported that the final district boundary audit was submitted to the state. Based on feedback from the board, additional information about participation of the affected voters was added to the report, better showing the impact of the incorrect assignments.

8. Approval of Voter Challenges

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Annie Schneider made a motion to approve the proposed voter challenges. Seconded by Jeanne Keller. Approved unanimously.

9. Board Member Expectations

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Subject

File Attachments

1. BRV Rules and Procedures - DRAFT

BRV Rules and Procedures - DRAFT.docx

9.1. Rules and Procedures for the Board for the Registration of Voters

Grace Grundhauser explained that this document has been in draft format for many years. The board is now discussing and updating it, specifically in regard to board member participation expectations. Grace suggested that the board approve it and keep track of the approved revision dates on the document. Grace Grundhauser asked Sarah Montgomery if this document should be approved by the attorney's office. Sarah Montgomery agreed that it could.

Jeanne Keller asked if there should be more specific language about election day attendance — making it more explicit what the expectations are for attending elections. Will Cunningham agreed that there should be some more defined structure. Lauren Ebersol agreed, and suggested it be framed similarly to the meeting attendance requirements. Janet Stambolian asked what the context for making these changes to the attendance expectations is. Grace Grundhauser said that the rules and procedures didn't previously make it clear that election day attendance was necessary, but when she looked at statute, she realized that BRV members are required to be at the polling places because they have authority to determine election day voter registration eligibility. She also noted that there are more members than polling places, so in theory, not everyone will always need to work on election day, which is why she drafted language indicating members should be available. Adam Franz asked what the previous expectations had been. Lauren Ebersol proposed adding a sentence that says "inability to be available on election day is subject to review." Karen Rowell suggested increasing the allowance to 3 missed elections before reviewing, since there will inevitably be valid reasons for members to be unavailable for a single election. Members asked if, when thinking about the threshold of 3 missed elections, the missed elections should be consecutive or total. Karen Rowell suggested consecutive. Other members noted that a member could go a really long time without attending an election if the threshold was 3 consecutive elections missed.

Jeanne Keller noted that in her original proposal, she wanted the process to be more objective, so it would be an automated process, rather than a member needing to initiate it. Grace Grundhauser noted that she added into the draft a semi-automatic trigger that would allow members to anonymously add an agenda item to a meeting if a member had missed enough meetings/elections. Colleen Montgomery said she does not like

the idea of 3 consecutive elections because members could miss elections frequently, but never meet the threshold for board discussion. She added that the proposed semi-automatic trigger still puts the onus on the individual board members to report the absences and add the discussion item to an agenda. Kevin Lewis agreed that he understood that the purpose of the policy would be to automatically add the item to the agenda, so an individual member would not be required to take action — he would support the processes being fully automatic to add the discussion to an agenda, even if it would sometimes end up being a formality and the absences excused by the board.

Michelle Lefkowitz added that all members should be able to work the elections — even if that meant doubling-up at a polling place. Other members noted that members could also do shorter shifts to allow everyone the opportunity to work. Lesley Gendron said that one election might be too harsh — she recommended two missed elections might be the right number. Lauren Ebersol asked if Grace purposely removed the language about "excused absences" from the draft procedure. Grace Grundhauser said she removed it intentionally to make the policy simpler and more concise. Adam Franz said he thinks any absence should be communicated, so he feels comfortable saying any unexcused absence would be discussed. Will Cunningham said that people's lives are too subjective and circumstantial to define absences as excused or unexcused - he thinks it should be two consecutive missed elections, with an automatic trigger to discuss at the next meeting. Janet Stambolian added that if people aren't showing up to do the work that they have agreed to do, it warrants a discussion.

Annie Schneider made a motion to change the language to: If you miss 2 consecutive elections, there will be an automatic trigger to discuss at the next meeting, with the board discussing whether the absences are excused during the meeting. Adam Franz made a friendly amendment to edit the language to miss two elections in a two-year period. Annie Schneider accepted the amendment.

Grace Grundhauser said that election attendance would be tracked in the minutes of the meeting following the election. She asked if this would be triggered if a member was not needed for a certain election. Lesley Gendon stated that everyone should have the opportunity to work at every election. Kevin Lewis suggested that any excused absence (like having a baby) could be recorded in the minutes prior to the meeting. Grace Grundhauser said she feels that might muddy things. Grace Grundhauser wanted to clarify if the board agrees that everyone will be expected to work every election.

Annie Schneider made a motion to call the question. Seconded by Adam Franz. Question called. Question: Include in the expectations an automatic trigger to add an agenda item for board discussion if a member misses 2 elections within a 2-year period.

In Favor: Adam Franz, Lauren Ebersol, Karen Rowell, Grace Grundhauser, Annie Schneider, Jeanne Keller, Colleen Montgomery, Kevin Lewis, Lesley Gendron, Janet Stambolian
Opposed: Michelle Lefkowitz

Motion passed.

Jeanne Keller made a motion that the review process for non-participation be modified in accordance with the discussion and be brought back to the board next month for further review. Seconded by Colleen Montgomery. Passed unanimously.

Grace Grundhauser will amend the draft document per the discussion and present at the next meeting.

10. New Business

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Karen Rowell said there will be action requested of the City Council about the recent BRV member appointment decision, because she feels she should not be the only Republican on the board. She stated that

the City Council should have appointed the conservative applicant who applied. She stated that there should be 3 Republicans on the board, and it is not fair that the conservative applicant was not appointed by City Council. She noted that 37% of the voters in Burlington voted for President Trump, and they should be represented by the board. She stated that she is suing the city for non-citizen voting, and that she felt attacked by the board after a resolution regarding that was adopted. She stated that she is in support of legal immigration. She shared that it is difficult speaking about issues with the board, when everyone else has opposing political views.

Will Cunningham said that he thinks that it is a good idea to add Republicans to the board — he asked how that would happen logistically.

Annie Schneider noted that she is hearing the hurt and anger from Karen Rowell. Annie noted that it seems that City Council followed the procedures correctly because the applicant was not listed as a Republican. Grace Grundhauser said that she heard Annie saying that the letter of the law was followed, but also heard Karen saying that the spirit of the law was not followed.

Jeanne Keller noted that the quality of the applicant should also be considered — she does not believe that the City Council deserves the criticism being directed at them.

Grace Grundhauser noted that conversations within the board are welcome, but discouraged back and fourths between individual members.

Will Cunningham agreed that political representation is important, and he noted that the rule about political party requirements is to avoid subjective decisions by the appointing board. He asked what action was being asked of the board. Karen Rowell said that the request for action is being brought to City Council, not to the BRV.

Annie Schneider said that despite political differences, she appreciates working with Karen Rowell on this board. Grace Grundhauser echoed the sentiment. Karen Rowell said it takes courage to speak up in this group, and it can be intimidating.

Colleen Montgomery made a motion to extend the meeting by 5 minutes. Seconded by Janet Stambolian. Motion passed.

Janet Stambolian asked why Jeff Comstock ran as an Independent. Karen Rowell answered that it is because being a Republican in Burlington is toxic. She noted that Jeff Comstock was a ward clerk and is well qualified.

Colleen Montgomery asked about rules for party representation on the board. Grace Grundhauser explained that if there is an applicant from an underrepresented major party, City Council should appoint that member.

11. Adjournment

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11.1. Motion to Adjourn

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Annie Schneider made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Lauren Ebersol. Passed unanimously.