



BOARD for REGISTRATION of VOTERS

City of Burlington

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AGENDA
FOR MONTHLY MEETING OF
THE BOARD FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS
Tuesday, May 2, 2023; 6 pm

In Person – Community Room at the Police Department

Or access the meeting remotely via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91516384896?pwd=aDIYSEtyN0J1ekROdDV3QWdPaDcyQT09>

Meeting ID: 915 1638 4896

Passcode: 122568

1. Agenda
2. Set Meeting Length
3. Minutes
4. Public Comments
5. Clerk's Report
6. Approval of Applications
7. Approval of Biennial Purge
8. Application Signing Schedule
9. Board Report to City Council
10. New Business

*****Please let Tenzin or Grace know if you will not be attending the meeting*****

BOARD FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

MEET: Time 6:00p 5/02/2023

Where: Community Room at the Police Department and remotely via Zoom

Present: Grace Grundhauser, Elisabeth Mickenberg, Helen Rock, Kate Baldwin, Alison Harte, Michelle Lefkowitz, Karen Rowell, Lauren Ebersol, Mike McGarghan

Absent: Annie Schneider, Larry Granillo, Thea Knight

Also Present: Sarah Montgomery, Assistant City Clerk

Meeting called to order by Chair Grace Grundhauser at 6:02pm

Grace Grundhauser added an item before the approval of agenda to introduce newest board member:
Approved unanimously.

Lauren Ebersol introduced herself as the newest member, she has lived in Burlington for the past year and has been involved in election work for 2-3 years. She is passionate about promoting democracy and making sure everyone has equal access to voting, which is why she was very interested in joining the BRV. She is working full time remotely as a product manager at Thermo Fisher Scientific. She lives with her husband and a cat named Hank. They also run a taco truck in Burlington called Casa Birria.

The rest of the board members present at the meeting introduced themselves.

Agenda: Approved unanimously.

Meeting Length: The meeting length was set for one hour.

Previous Meeting Minutes:

Kate Baldwin made the motion to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Helen Rock. The minutes were passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

No members from the public attended.

Elisabeth Mickenberg explained to Lauren Ebersol that these meetings are posted publicly and member of the public are welcome to join the meeting and make comments.

Clerk's Report:

Sarah Montgomery reported that the election bills that were voted through on town meeting day are going through legislation. They've mostly passed through the house and they're going to be going to the Senate tomorrow. Assuming passage, they will all be implemented all for March 2024. The one that affects this board the most is going to be the legal resident voting, which allows people who aren't U.S.

citizens but are Burlington residents to vote in local elections only. There is going to be training beforehand, a separate voter registration form, and non-citizens are going to be on separate checklist because they are not going to be able to be in VEMS. We are learning from Winooski and Montpelier who have done this successfully.

Grace Grundhauser asked: What will the training look like? Is it somebody from Vermont Secretary of State who will do the training?

Sarah Montgomery replied she doesn't think it will be on the state level since it's something that we're doing as a city. The training will be among the boards and also with ward clerks, and inspectors because they handle same day registration and oversee the checklist.

Michelle Lefkowitz asked: Is there going to be same day registration for all legal resident voting?

Sarah Montgomery replied: Yes, the process is going to be same but just slightly different questions on the registration form. Mostly it's going to be pretty similar.

Kate Baldwin asked: Did you have to testify before the house or anticipate in front of the Senate or is this just rubber stamping?

Sarah Montgomery answered: She did testify to the House committee about Ranked Choice Voting and the siting of Polling Places but there was somebody else from the City who testified to all legal resident voting.

Apart from the all legal resident voting, something that's also going to equally affect the board is city wide redistricting that's going through. One of the challenges is that two of the polling places, Edmund Middle School and the Library are both going to be in Ward 8 under new redistricting. Locations of polling places is something that will need to be determined for the coming election.

Grace Grundhauser asked: Whose decision will that be?

Sarah Montgomery replied: That's going to be ultimately a City Council, but they do it in conjunction with recommendations from the Clerk's office. The other Charter Change that's going through on polling places will allow a polling place to be outside of the ward if there's nothing more suitable within the ward.

Mike McGarghan asked if people show up to vote in wrong ward to vote, are they still to be redirected to their correct polling station?

Sarah Montgomery replied: Yes

Elisabeth Mickenberg asked if this will affect the March town meeting day.

Sarah Montgomery answered: Yes, that's the first election that the redistricting will be in effect. She is working with City Attorney's office to see who will need to be up for re-election at the time of Town

meeting day and who are going to do the presiding officers for each ward if they're no longer living in the ward they were elected in.

Grace Grundhauser asked if these are all going to be passed through the legislation before the next June meeting.

Sarah Montgomery answered: Potentially.

Elisabeth Mickenberg added the legislature usually ends by June and she told Sarah Montgomery to let the board know if she needs any help with the transitions.

Sarah Montgomery reported: We have 35,699 registered voter, 13,230 challenged voters.

Mike McGarghan asked: How many voters have been challenged since the last report from the last meeting?

Sarah Montgomery replied we added 1,350 challenged voters because we challenged those 1,500 voters that the -board approved at the last meeting. Some voters have responded to the challenge letters either reactivating their voter registrations or requesting removal from the checklist.

Approval of Applications: Sarah Montgomery reported:

April - New Registrations 218, Transferred out of Town 87, Purged 38.

Michelle Lefkowitz made a motion to accept the numbers as presented, seconded by Karen Rowell. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Biennial Purge:

Sarah Montgomery mentioned we are required by statute after every general election to review our checklist and remove any voters that have been challenged for the past two general elections without any voting activity or response to the challenge letter.

Elisabeth Mickenberg asked: What's the total number on the purge list?

Sarah Montgomery replied: 4,594

Elisabeth Mickenberg made the motion to approve to purge 4,594 voters and seconded by Karen Rowell.

Sarah Montgomery reminded the board that the statute requirement requires for the BCA, or the BRV in our case, to look at the voter checklist every biennial summer, which is this summer. This has to be done before September 20th. This process is for the board to see if there is any reason to believe that any those voters may not to be qualified to vote anymore and we can challenge voters based on that.

Helen Rock asked if we can put the approval of biennial purge in alphabetical order by ward because this would be helpful for board to review the list next time.

Sarah Montgomery replied she can do that.

Mike McGarghan asked if the checklist is posted on the city website and if that's public record.

Sarah Montgomery replied: The checklist is not something we post online at this time. We have printed checklists posted around the city- prior to an election and anytime someone would like to request a copy, we can send it.

Helen Rock added there is information about this on the Secretary of State's website.

Mike McGarghan asked if there is reason why we are not posting checklist online. Sarah Montgomery replied that she is unsure, but can look into it.

Alison Harte asked how the board would know to challenge voters on the checklist besides them personally knowing them or someone who hasn't voted.

Sarah Montgomery agreed that it is challenging.

Grace Grundhauser mentioned she will circulate to board after this meeting the relevant language in statute. It's not individual judgement and a majority of the board needs to agree that it's sufficient information to challenge when reviewing the checklist.

Helen Rock added that in the past parents have requested their adult kids to be removed from the checklist and they were frustrated when we told them their kids have to make the request themselves. Sarah Montgomery added that it is correct that we cannot remove a voter without their written authorization, but we can challenge a voter if the parents submit a form stating their child no longer lives at their address.

Grace Grundhauser suggested we do some reading and acquaint ourselves and really feel comfortable with what the board's role is in challenging voters and talk about this again in June.

Application Signing Schedule:

The following schedule was set for approving voter registration applications at the clerk's office:

05/11(Grace Grundhauser), 05/18 (Michelle Lefkowitz, Lauren Ebersol), 05/25 (Karen Rowell), 06/01 (Alison Harte)

Board Report to City Council:

Grace Grundhauser mentioned she has prepared a preliminary draft of the board report to City Council for the annual report and asked everyone to review and give their input for edits by emailing her.

Kate Baldwin made a suggestion to shortening the report if it will be delivered verbally to City Council.

Mike McGarghan asked if he could see a copy of the 2019 board annual report to compare with this draft.

Grace Grundhauser said she will send a copy to the board.

New Business

Michelle Lefkowitz brought up that the manual committee will meet to update the BRV manual. The committee for this consists of Michelle Lefkowitz, Mike McGarghan and Grace Grundhauser.

On a motion by Karen Rowell, seconded Elisabeth Mickenberg, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Tenzin Chokden, Associate City Clerk