

TIVERTON BOARD OF CANVASSERS

MINUTES MARCH 20, 2014

The Board of Canvassers of the Town of Tiverton, County and State aforesaid held a Meeting at the Tiverton Town Hall, 343 Highland Road on Thursday March 20, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Bobby J Harris-present

Vice Chair DeEtta

Moran-present

Member Paul Amaral-present

Town

Clerk-Nancy Mello-present

Alternate Jean

Veegh-absent

Alternate Charles Moran – present

Clerk Lori Roy -present

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

1. Review and Approve minutes:

- February 20, 2014**

DeEtta Moran motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Paul Amaral. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion regarding the Financial Town Referendum process with Financial Town Referendum Changes Advisory Committee members:

Jeff Caron and Nancy Driggs.

Nancy Mello began this agenda item by giving a brief understanding to the Board and audience of what was being discussed regarding the changes that would help make progress in the operations of the FTR. Ms. Mello wanted the public to understand that these Charter changes being discussed at this meeting would not effect this year's Financial Town Referendum. These discussions are only preliminary for the possibility of Charter change resolutions on the General Election in November.

Ms. Mello stated that any proposed changes to the FTR process must be submitted to the Town Council by May or June in order for them to be reviewed and approved by the Council and to allow sufficient time for the required Public Hearing before being submitted to the Secretary of State in time for November 2014 ballot placement.

The Following concerns regarding the FTR to be addressed today are:

- Changing the Day of the FTR from a Tuesday to a Saturday.**

Chairman Harris wanted to emphasize this would be beneficial the voters allowing the possibility of utilizing the High School since they would not be in session. Nancy Mello agrees that not only would this be a more centralized location and accommodates the amount of voters whether there be a large turnout (our largest of approximately 3000) or light turnout. This would also decrease many costs related to having so multiple polls open. DeEtta Moran likes the idea of a Saturday vs the Tuesday claiming it would be more convenient for the

voter.

Jeff Caron commented this could help alleviate the Runoff deadline pressure by making the FTR Saturday before the Tuesday schedule that it currently follows. Ms. Mello suggests costs of having 1 vs 3 Moderators and Clerks, along with having six supervisors vs eighteen, less hall rentals, meals, less officers and advertising could potentially save close to \$3000.

Mr. Caron agreed, it appears possible that the change to Saturday could benefit the FTR process. Vetting out the process does take time and after two years there may be slight changes needed to accommodate the voters.

Nancy Driggs from the FTR Changes Advisory Committee wanted to know what cost savings could be made if we did not follow Title 17 of the General Election Laws. Nancy Mello stated that the reason we follow Title 17 (as best we can) was to keep uniform all elections including the FTR which essentially is an election. This helps alleviate any confusion for the voters. The poll workers are also trained in election rules and to change them for the FTR would just create confusion and room for error.

DeEtta Moran brought to the table the second topic regarding the FTR

- There is no option to vote no on the proposed budgets.**

Ms. Moran stated that several electors commented they did not like the idea of coming out to vote if they did not have the option of voting

no on the proposed budgets.

Mr. Caron stated this creates complications if there are more no votes than yes. Level funding is not an option (what would you do if there is nothing voted on) and can get very messy if there is also an elector's petition on the ballot. By creating the electors petition option, this allows the voters the option to submit an alternate budget with 50 signatures to be placed on the ballot if they do not agree with the proposed recommended budget. Nancy Driggs agreed with Mr. Caron and said that one of their concerns was to make this process easy as possible by requiring only 50 signatures on an elector's petition.

Mr. Caron also wanted to make the Board of Canvassers and the general public aware there is a section on the web page <http://tivertonftr.org> regarding over 100 questions fielded during the FTR writing and review process.

- Simple Majority Vs Super Majority**

Nancy Mello brought up a discussion that was raised by State Director of Elections Bob Rapoza regarding the possibility of a runoff due to issue of super majority being problematic. Deadlines would become an issue because ballots could not be printed fast enough to get them out to the board.

Mr. Caron wanted people to understand that this is a very contentious area. If a voter were to win by a simple majority with only 21% of the votes this could create a fire storm. Board member Amaral agrees

that nobody should win with such a small amount of votes.

Mr Harris: There being no further discussions regarding the possibility of changes to the FTR we will move to the next agenda item.

3. Discussion of the May 20, 2014 FTR and the upcoming deadlines

Nancy Mello wants the BOC to know that although the Elector Petitions were to be made available for April 15th they are already available in the Town Clerks office.

Because we are currently without a maintenance foreman we will need to consider the setup of the election halls Nancy will call the DPW for some help and will have to call on our BOC to help out in the setup of the halls. We had change the last day to register to vote to April 21st because Easter Sunday is April 20th. This would allow the voter an extra day.

The Financial Town Hearing has been booked at the Middle School on May 1st. We were unable to book the High School due to a performance that would be being held that weekend. Also Steve Taylor from the Board of Elections has contacted us requesting a day to come down and inspect the polling locations and there handicap accessibility and new state requirements.

4. Board Member Items:

Nancy Mello wanted the Board to know that a letter has been emailed to her from Board of Election Executive Director Robert Kando. He emphasizes his concern that a municipal office with only a 16 hour Board of Canvass Clerk is unable to do the work it takes to cover these elections and the duties of Title 17 proficiently. He recommends that we take “immediate action to supplement the current staffing” with at least one full time person and maybe even a temporary staffing member during election season. The additional staffing request has been proposed in Fiscal Year 15 budget.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 17 at 400 p.m. at the Tiverton Town Hall.

There being no further business, Mr. Harris made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Amaral. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

**Bobby Harris Chair _____ DeEtta Moran, Vice
Chair _____**

**Paul Amaral, member _____ Jean Veegh,
Alternate _____**

A True Copy:

ATTEST: _____ **Nancy L.**

Mello Town Clerk