



Operations Committee - Board of Representatives

Virgil de la Cruz, Chair

Carmine Tomas, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, January 22, 2024
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Operations Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair de la Cruz, Vice Chair Tomas, and Committee Member Reps. Boeger, Graham, Sherwood, Stella, Dakary Watkins, and David Watkins. Rep. Ley was absent. Also in attendance were Reps. Adams, Fedeli, Matheny, Morson, and Summerville; Lyda Ruijter, Town Clerk; and Lucy Correlli and Ron Malloy, Registrars of Voters.

Chair de la Cruz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Invitee(s) or Designee(s)
1. O31.044	REVIEW; Early Voting Process; Infrastructure Requirements and Implementation Including Locations, Security, Storage and the Role of the BOR. 01/03/24 – Submitted by Rep. Sherwood	Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0

Rep. Sherwood stated that she put this item on the agenda because the State, beginning with the April primaries, newly mandated early voting so that members of the Board are better prepared to answer constituent's questions,

Ms. Correlli described the process to be followed to Committee members. Items mentioned included the following:

- Early voting for the presidential preference primary will begin on March 26 and continue on the 27th, 28th and 30th. There will be no voting on Good Friday or Easter Sunday. The primary will be on April 2 with polling in the 24 districts.
- The Registrar of Voters is currently in the process of securing an electronic poll box. The Registrar will be taking software that has been used before in the 24 districts for a year. They are only taking it for a year until the State decides what electronics and implementation will be used.
- The Registrar will sign a contract for the poll books but will only be taking the software and will use the City computers in order to save money and do it right, which will be updated to implement the state system
- The Government Center will be used for the early voting, as there will only be one place to vote, since only Democrats and Republicans will be able to vote in the primaries; the 27,000 unaffiliated voters will not be able to vote.
- In Springfield, Massachusetts, which has 115,000 registered voters, as compared to Stamford's 73,000 registered voters, they used only one voting location for the Presidential election; Stamford is planning to have a second location for the

Presidential election in North Stamford

- Massachusetts saw a 30% increase in voter turnout due to early voting in the second election
- In speaking with other locations which have had early voting, they handle about 20-22,000 voters with only one location
- According to the SOTS, there will not be new tabulators for either the August primary or the November election; this is more of an issue than where people are going to vote
- The Registrars of Voters run the elections. The Town Clerk does the absentee ballots and stores the banker boxes
- The Registrar will be paying for training for staff and themselves.
- They have purchased bankers boxes to use as there is no tabulating in early voting
- There will be a police officer every day
- The hours will be from 10 am to 6 pm.
- The only difference from the regular voting at the polls is that no tabulator is needed
- Each vote will be sealed and then the name and ID number will be printed on the ballot, just as the Town Clerk does with absentee ballots. The computer will print out 2 items, one to go on the ballot and one to go into the books
- At 6:00, when everything is secured, with the police officer, the votes will be secured in the banker boxes and given to the Town Clerk to store in a fire-proof location
- Since this has not been done before, she is not sure what this will cost

- The Fourth Floor Cafeteria of the Government Center will be used for the Presidential Preference Primary. The cafeteria will be closed from March 26th through April 2
- There will also be a primary in August and a presidential election in November; early voting for the November election is 14 days in advance
- Just as with the polling places, if someone needs to do curbside voting, there will be a phone number to call and someone will come down

Ms. Ruijter described the process to be followed to Committee members. Items mentioned included the following:

- Early voting adds requirements to the infrastructure and the need for additional resources of the Town Clerk's office.
- In 2020 the Town Clerk was given additional space for the absentee ballots in the 2020 election; they no longer have this space
- The storage space they currently have is too small and not secure if people are working there
- Early voting will add a need for additional space in addition to the space for the absentee ballots
- Additional space on the 3rd floor was provided during COVID for absentee ballots; this space is no longer available; this space was not fireproof
- They are anticipating 15 -20,000 absentee ballots; they are dependent on the mailroom to send/receive absentee
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- The Registrars are responsible for the voting infrastructure and they report to the Secretary of the State; the State statute says that one location is sufficient, but that a second location may be used for the presidential election
- Every municipality received a \$10,500 State grant for early voting, because municipalities had not budgeted for early voting
- Nobody needs to access the early voting ballots until election night

- There will be police and security present every day.
- The Registrar of Voters office has studied this in planning how to run the early voting and has spoken to other states as well as cities throughout CT
- The Town Clerk's office is not required to count the ballots when they receive them under the statute, but could choose to do that
- There will be separate counting of the early ballots on the 4th floor
- The Registrar of Votes will store the unused ballots every night.
- Only 45,000 people are registered to vote in the April primary; many people will be voting in person; the April primary will be a trial run
- The cafeteria will be secured for the Registrar of Voters and the voters starting March 26th.
- The unused ballots will be locked away in a locked storage unit in the Registrar of Voters office. Only the Registrars have the keys to those storage areas. This is the same as is done at the 24 voting districts. The ballots will be kept in the locked blue boxes. At 6 p.m., after the ballots have been voted on, the ballots will go to the Town Clerk's office.
- The Town Clerk is discussing storage space with the Mayor's office and the Director of Public Safety
- Committee members expressed concerns about too many people coming in to the Government Center to vote
- IT will lock the computers down after the voting.
- The Town Clerk will be responsible for storing the executed ballots.
- The Town Clerk does use Dataguard offsite, fireproof storage and can keep absentee ballots and executed ballots there.
- as well. While the only people who will be able vote are the Democrats and Republicans in their respective primaries. The 27,000+ unaffiliated voters will not be able to vote due to there being no party privileges for them. Training for staff and the poll workers will be available.
- The Committee chair should ask the Director of Operations regarding the storage plans
- Chair de la Cruz suggested the Committee Members compile a list of concerns to present to the Registrar's and Town Clerk's office in advance of the next meeting to help them prepare.

Committee members discussed this item with the invited guests. In general the representatives expressed concerns about:

- Having only one voting location on the fourth floor cafeteria of Government Center.
- Adequacy of the cafeteria as a polling location.
- The logistics of voters having to register with security in the lobby before being cleared for the fourth floor.
- Funding requirements, given that the \$10,500 State grant was considered inadequate.
- Secured and fireproof space for storing the ballots.
- The analysis of expected voting volume.

Chair de la Cruz suggested the Committee Members compile a list of concerns to present to the Registrar's and Town Clerk's office in advance of the next meeting to help them prepare.

A motion to recommit Item No. 1 to Steering was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. de la Cruz, Tomas, Boeger, Graham, Sherwood, Stella, Dakary Watkins and David Watkins in favor).

2. [O31.017](#) REVIEW; Stamford Transfer Station Operations and Possibility of Increasing Fees for Non-Residential and Commercial Businesses using the Transfer Station. **HELD**
07/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Stella and Curtis
07/18/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 7-0-0
08/15/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 7-0-0
09/12/22 – Moved to Pending
10/17/22 –Held by Committee 8-0-0
12/29/22 –Held by Committee 9-0-0
01/23/23 – Held by Committee
03/02/23 – Recommitted to Steering by Committee 6-0-0
03/13/23 – Moved to Pending
05/15/23 – Report Made & Recommitted to Steering by Committee 7-0-0
06/12/23 – Moved to Pending
09/18/23 – Report Made and Recommitted to Steering 7-0-0
10/10/23 – Moved to Pending
3. O31.038 REVIEW; Status of plans to replace multiple gas fired HVAC units with fewer heat pumps units and installation of solar panels on the roof of the Yerwood Community Center. **HELD**
10/05/23 – Submitted by Rep. de la Cruz
10/16/23 – Report Made and Recommitted to Steering by Committee 5-0-0
11/13/23 – Moved to Pending

Chair de la Cruz adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Virgil de la Cruz, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).