



City of Woburn, Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

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WILLIAM C. CAMPBELL
City Clerk

August 2, 2012

To: Ad Hoc Polling Place Review Committee

From: William C. Campbell, City Clerk

Re: Survey of area consolidated voting locations

Pursuant to the request of the Ad Hoc Polling Place Review Committee, I surveyed the Town Clerks of Reading, Stoneham and Burlington regarding the operation of their consolidated polling locations. The following are the results of those interviews.

Reading

I spoke to Reading Town Clerk Laura Gemme regarding their consolidated voting at the Field House at Reading High School which is located north of the center of town. Reading has eight precincts, approximately 17,000 voters and is approximately 10 square miles in area. The building is served by three entrances with parking areas near each of the entrances. Depending upon turnout there are at times issues with parking and if the school is closed on election day there is no issue with parking. Poll workers park at off-site satellite parking lots and are transported to the school by the town's elder services bus. No special transportation is provided by the town for voters, although sometimes candidates will offer rides to the polls. There is one police officer assigned to two precincts with a total of four police officers on site. Police officers may be assigned to direct traffic outside, particularly during large turnout elections such as presidential election days. For the election in November 2012, there may be three police officers assigned inside and additional officers outside directing traffic. Department of Public Works staff set up the polling place. The precincts are sectioned off by crowd control ropes and the voting booths lined up in rows. The Town Clerk remains at the Field House all day, a member of the town clerk staff remains at Town Hall, and a member of the town clerk staff shuttles between Town Hall and the Field House during the day. There is no access to the Central Voter Registry at the Field House as it is located in Town Hall. A telephone is set up to call between the Town Hall and Field House. Walkie-talkies are also used in the field house so that poll officials can make inquiry to the Town Clerk without leaving their polling location. A food area is set up for the poll workers with breakfast, lunch and dinner available to the poll workers during their shifts. The polls have been consolidated at the Field House for at least sixteen years. It is much easier to

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have the election consolidated to one location. The Town Clerk is available on site all day to assist Wardens with issues. Voters like the consolidated location as if they are in the wrong precinct they do not have to get into their car and go to another location but just move to a different location in the Field House. A table is set up near the doors and if a voter is unsure of their precinct, they are directed by staff to the correct location. Poll workers have the support and technical assistance of the Town Clerk available all day and have neighboring poll workers when assistance is needed. If a new Warden has been assigned, experienced peers are available to serve as mentors when issues arise.

Stoneham

I spoke to Stoneham Town Clerk Maria Sagarino regarding their consolidated voting at the Stoneham Town Hall which is located near the center of town. Stoneham has seven precincts, approximately 14,500 voters and is approximately 6.6 square miles in area. The precincts are set up in lines separated by the rows of voting booths. The senior center runs a bus to the polls. The Town Clerk's office is located in Town Hall where Central Voter Registry access is located down the hall from the polling place. Voters with registration issues are escorted by the Warden to the Town Clerks office to address the concern and return to the polling place to vote, such as Inactive voters requiring an affidavit of current continuous residence. Parking is available in parking lots located around the Town Hall. At times there is not parking immediately available directly in front of town hall. The construction of the town common added some parking spaces. Vehicle parking turns over often with voters generally entering and exiting the polling place quickly. Poll workers park in the town hall parking lot which takes up some space, although they are asked to park in the farthest parking spaces. This is an ideal arrangement with no genuine negative concern. The polls have been consolidated at Town Hall for at least fourteen years. The Town Clerk, Warden and other poll workers are all located in one place. The Town Clerk is on site to address registration problems. This is an easy process for voters and election officials. They receive no complaints from voters who reside on the outer limits of the town. This is convenient for voters. Parking would be the only issue, particularly during presidential elections. However, parking issues have not been an overriding concern. This is the most perfect arrangement.

Burlington

I spoke to Administrative Assistant Linda McNeil in the office of Burlington Town Clerk Amy Warfield, who was away from the office this week, regarding their consolidated voting at the Burlington High School gymnasium which is located close to the center of town. Burlington has eight precincts, approximately 15,000 voters and is approximately 11.8 square miles in area. The precincts are set up in lines separated by the rows of voting booths. Handicapped and elderly drivers are allowed to enter at the rear of the building from a separate parking area. A checkpoint

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allows handicapped and elderly voters to access the parking lot and other voters use another parking lot with a longer walk to the building. Nursing homes use the B-Line buses to pick up residents and bring them to the polls in loops running every 1 to 1½ hours. The candidates provide transportation, but the town does not provide transportation otherwise. This location has been used for as long as she can remember. The Town Clerk goes back and forth between Town Hall and the Burlington High School gymnasium during the day. A staff member remains in Town Hall and another staff member remains in the gymnasium the entire day. Access to the Central Voter Registry is only at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

William C. Campbell, City Clerk