

## BOARD of REGISTRARS MEETING MINUTES for Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting

February 13 @ 8:35 am – 9:00 pm Nahant Town Hall Main Hall

### AGENDA:

Roll Call: Sis Oliver: Present; Lori Ballantine: Present; Diane Dunfee: Present

Diane Dunfee wanted to take a brief moment to remember John Benson who passed away on January 8<sup>th</sup>. John was a tremendous asset and friend to the Board of Registrars. Always available to help and a great gentleman. Sis and Lori also commented on John and his friendly demeanor and willingness to help.

**EV voting hours for Pres. Primary on 3/5/2023-** Discussed reducing the Early voting hours as recommended by the state. If the Town has less than 5,000 voters, BOR is allowed to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to reduce the required EV hours from all business hours and weekend hours to not less than 25 % of business hours.

Motion to by Sis Oliver to reduce the required Early Voting hrs to the following:

Sat. February 24, 2024: 9 am – 1pm

Mon., February 26, 2024: 9 am – 1 pm

Tuesday February 27, 2024: 9am – 1 pm

Wed., Feb. 28, 2024; 9 am - 1 pm

Thurs., Feb. 29, 2024: 9 am – 1 pm

Friday Mar. 1, 2024, 9 am – 12 noon.

**Lori Ballantine seconded**

**Unanimous vote to approve.** Diane will submit to the Board of Selectman for their vote.

**EV hours for Annual Town Elections** - Diane reviewed State Regulations for Early Voting and Vote by Mail for Annual Town/Municipal Elections.

Early Voting is NOT required. Board of Registrars with Vote to Approve from Board of Selectmen may “Opt- In” to do Early Voting.

Vote by Mail is required for Town/ Municipal Elections. Board of Registrars with vote of approval by the Board of Selectmen.

Diane Recommended that we follow the State guidelines for our annual Town Election this year because VOTE by MAIL postcards have been sent out from the State with a box to check for all Elections. Voters would assume this would include local elections. The Town would have to do a mailing either way. If we do the mailing then there really is no need to be open for Early Voting. There is still Absentee voting if the voter is not going to be in Town on Election Day and the last three (3) town election have only brought out approximately 300 voters.

**Lori made a motion** to approve Vote-by- Mail and not provide Early voting for Nahant’s Annual Town Election on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2024. **Sis seconded**

**Unanimous vote to approve.** Diane will submit to the Board of Selectman for their vote.

**Vote on day and time to test voting machine** – Voting Machine must be tested at least 5 days prior to the Election.

Lori motioned to schedule the testing of the Voting Tabulators for Friday February 23, 2024.

**Unanimous vote to approve**

**Discuss and vote on whether to do Early Opening or Advanced Processing of ballots for Pres.**

**Primary** – The State now allows either “Early Opening” or “Advanced Processing” of any Mail in or Early Voted ballots prior to Election Day. Both Options must be posted and Open to the Public.

Early Opening allows the Election Workers to remove the Ballots from their Affidavit Envelopes and mark them off of the check-in list. They are then sealed and are processed on Election Day. Advanced Processing allows the Election Workers to Remove the Mail in and Early voted Affidavit Envelopes check in the ballots and process them through the Tabulator. The ballots would then be removed from the tabulator without printing the unofficial results and separated by party, and tallied. The Unofficial Ticket tape would be run after 8 pm on election day and added to the Election Day count. Again, either process would be transparent and open to the public.

The reason for either of these processes is to assist in being able to process and count all ballots in a timely manner on Election Day.

Diane and the Town Warden Carol Nelson would like to try the process of “Advanced Processing” to see if this makes sense for major Elections like, the upcoming State Election in November. If they find that there are too many Mail-in and Early Voting Ballots they would like to be able to make the decision to change to “Early Opening” of the Ballots.

Sis commented it makes sense to try it on the primary election to see what works best for the Election Officials and workers. Lori agreed. Diane recommended we do this on March 1, 2024.

Sis motioned to allow the Election Officials to either do “Advanced Processing” or “Early Opening” of the Ballots received by February 29<sup>th</sup> for the March 5<sup>th</sup> Presidential Primary on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024  
Lori seconded the motion

**Unanimous vote to approve**

**Discuss any new candidates for Board of Registrars** – With the passing of John Benson there is a vacancy in the Board of Registrars. There was discussion of what options and responsibilities the board has as to replacing John. Diane said the Law states that because John’s was a registered Democrat his vacancy must be replaced by a Democrat. The Board of Selectmen or Town Administrator must send out a letter to the Nahant Town Democratic Committee Chair, Jim Walsh, letting him know of the vacancy. They have 45 days to submit names for a replacement candidate. If there are none then the Board of Selectman can appoint a registered Democrat Nahant voter to fill the vacancy. If the Board of Registrars needs assistance between the time of the vacancy and the appointment of a New Board of Registrar, the board can appoint interim Board of Registrars. Sis, Lori and Diane agreed that there was no need for an Interim candidate right now. Diane was to let Tony Barletta to start the process with a letter to Jim Walsh the Chair of Nahant’s Democratic Town Committee

**Discussion of certifying all Nomination Papers for 2024 –**

Lori motioned to Vote to authorize the Town Clerk to Certify and Stamp all nomination papers and make election decisions on behalf of the Board of Registrars for 2024. Seconded by Sis

**Unanimous vote to approve.**

Diane motioned to Adjourn – seconded by Sis.

**Unanimous vote to adjourn.**

**Lori motioned to approve the meeting minutes taken by Diane. Seconded by Sis**

**Unanimous vote to Approve.**

Respectfully submitted to Town Clerk as approved at February 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Registrar Meeting  
By Committee members\_\_\_\_\_  
Minutes recorded by Diane Dunfee\_\_\_\_\_.