

Ad Hoc Polling Place Review Committee
August 14, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.
Engineering Conference Room
Woburn City Hall
Woburn, Massachusetts

Attending: City Council President Paul Denaro, Woburn Mayor Scott Galvin, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor Marie Lingblom, Woburn Handicapped and Disabled Citizens Commissioner Jennifer Murray, Republican City Committee Member Daniel MacGilvray, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Joseph Elia, Democratic City Committee Member Joseph Demers, Unenrolled Voter Shaheen Mozaffar, Ph.D., and City Clerk William Campbell.

William Campbell began the meeting by asking for a motion to adopt the minutes from the August 7, 2012 meeting. The minutes were adopted, all in favor. William Campbell presented to the committee an proposed communication to be sent to Mayor Galvin, City Council President Paul Denaro, and all the Aldermen in the City of Woburn, regarding the progress that the committee has accomplished thus far. In addition, William Campbell handed each of the committee members an Excel spread sheet listing surrounding cities and towns and their voting consolidation methods. The spreadsheet includes information such as the number of precincts the city/town has and the total population of the city/town. President Denaro made a motion to include these aforementioned documents in the permanent record. The motion was passed, all in favor.

Mayor Galvin thanked the committee for its dedication and hard work. He stated that the High School would be the most favorable location, but acknowledged that there are numerous conflicting issues regarding student inconvenience. He would prefer to use the Joyce Middle School as one consolidated location because it is large enough in size and it is a convenient distance from all areas of the city. However, he stated that the Joyce Middle School and the Senior Center were good options if more than one voting location was necessary. Jennifer Murray stated that the views of Mayor Galvin regarding the most preferable voting locations reflect the views of the committee.

William Campbell showed the committee satellite images of the polling locations in surrounding cities and towns. In Reading, elections are held at the field house at the High School. William Campbell noted that the Joyce Middle School has more parking than Reading High School. Assistant Superintendent of Schools Joseph Elia noted that most of Reading's street parking is restricted. William Campbell stated school remains in session during elections in Reading. In the Town of Franklin, elections are also held at the High School field house. William Campbell stated that parking is adjacent to the field house and the school generally closes for Presidential Elections. Dr. Mozaffar stated that the Town of Franklin's population is similar to the City of Woburn's, and that the Town of Franklin has approximately 1,000 fewer voters per precinct than the City of Woburn does. William Campbell stated that the Town of North Andover votes at the High School, which has ample parking. Assistant Superintendent Joseph Elia stated that he did not

know if North Andover has street-parking restrictions around its High School like Woburn does. William Campbell stated that elections are held at Town Hall in Stoneham, which has parking across the street, which becomes a one-way on election days, and three lots behind Town Hall. He stated that despite limited parking, Stoneham does not receive voting complaints, which President Denaro stated was because the election situation has always been the way that it currently is. William Campbell stated that in the Town of Easton, elections were consolidated to the High School from three locations in 2010, and the consolidation was smooth and successful. He mentioned that there is ample parking at the High School in Easton. William Campbell stated that parking at the Joyce Middle School is comparable to election parking in surrounding towns. Joseph Demers suggested that voters can also park on Locust Street and he mentioned that he has seen people park on Willow Street during various school programs. Assistant Superintendent of Schools Joseph Elia stated that once school ends, voters could also park in the lower staff parking lot. President Denaro suggested that Locust Street could temporarily be made into a one-way street during Presidential Elections and that additional handicapped spots could be temporarily added for elections. Assistant Superintendent of Schools Joseph Elia stated that the committee was on the right track and that there is more parking at the Joyce Middle School than there is at election venues in surrounding towns. He stated that Woburn residents would get used to voting at the Joyce Middle School. He mentioned that when there was a special election held at the High School, many residents protested the location, but as they were leaving the High School, voters said that the location worked well.

President Denaro stated that if Locust Street was made into a one-way street, poll workers could park on Locust Street to allow voters to park in the parking lots near the school. Joseph Demers suggested that poll workers could park in the parking lot near the tennis courts. Lastly, William Campbell suggested that the poll workers could park in one designated location and then be bussed to the polling place.

William Campbell stated that he is in favor of using the Joyce Middle School as a consolidated polling location. Dr. Mozaffar asked if the committee should reprioritize so that the Joyce Middle School is the primary location. Joseph Demers stated that the Joyce Middle School best fits all the requirements for a polling location, and Marie Lingblom and Jennifer Murray agreed. William Campbell stated the he initially thought the High School was the best location and he is grateful that the School Department was able to help identify the problems with hosting elections at the High School. President Denaro stated that the Joyce Middle School is able to offer security for young students because the gym is separated from the main building. Assistant Superintendent of Schools stated that the one door joining the school and the gym is locked.

If the Joyce Middle School is chosen as a polling place, some physical improvements may need to be made. William Campbell asked if the parking lot was going to be resurfaced soon because there is grass growing from the pavement, and Assistant Superintendent of Schools Joseph Elia stated that the City of Woburn was still trying to find funds for the pavement resurfacing. William Campbell stated that an additional ten parking spaces may be added to the back lot. President Denaro stated that a special

review of the Joyce Middle School could be done if it is chosen as a polling location. William Campbell asked if there was an equipment closet at the Joyce Middle School to store the nine handicap voting machines that the City of Woburn owns. Assistant Superintendent of Schools said that a storage closet could be arranged at the Joyce Middle School.

Jennifer Murray asked how long it would take to secure special legislation to allow the City of Woburn to consolidate to one polling place. Joseph Demers stated that he has not found a precedent for consolidation in a city, and the process takes longer to approve without a precedent. He mentioned that the Town of Franklin is similar in population to Woburn, and it has one consolidated voting location. He mentioned that Woburn is small for a city, and William Campbell agreed. Dr. Mozaffar stated that Woburn is similar to the Town of Franklin and that if Woburn consolidated into one location, it could be a role model to other local communities who are considering consolidating voting locations. Joseph Demers stated that if legislation is approved by next summer, a clause could be added stating that the consolidation would not come into effect until summer in the year 2014. He stated that if the City Council votes on the consolidation in a 9-0 vote, the state would be more willing to pass the legislation, but if the City Council votes 5-4, the state will deliberate longer. He stated that once the legislation request reaches the committee, action must occur within three to six months. Dr. Mozaffar asked if there was enough time to organize for the election if the legislation was passed during the summer. William Campbell stated that cards will be sent to all voters to notify them of the change in polling location. Joseph Demers stated that the city could use reverse 911 to alert residents of the change. President Denaro asked William Campbell what the public hearing notification deadline is, and William Campbell said that he sends out notification ten days before the scheduled public hearing.

Marie Lingblom requested that the committee hold a public hearing to receive the public's opinion, and if the residents protest the committee's ideas, the committee can research alternative venues. William Campbell requested a motion that recommends that the Joyce Middle School be used as a consolidating polling location. The motion was passed, all in favor. President Denaro stated that he recommends that Joseph Demers present the committee's recommendation to the City Council because Joseph Demers will be presenting to case to the State Legislature. Dr. Mozaffar asked what the process was after the committee formally announces its recommendation. William Campbell stated that there would be a public hearing before the official recommendation is announced and then the City Council and the Mayor will have to approve to recommendation. After it is approved, the committee will dissolve immediately. William Campbell stated that a public hearing could attract elementary school teachers, poll workers and voters. He stated that hosting the public hearing at the Joyce Middle School would allow voters to get an accurate sense of the distance to the school from their homes. Assistant Superintendent of Schools Joseph Elia stated that the auditorium could be used for the presentation and Joseph Demers suggested that the gym be opened for public viewing. Assistant Superintendent of Schools Joseph Elia stated that Monday, September 10, 2012, or Wednesday, September 12, 2012 could work as potential public hearing dates. William Campbell stated that the public hearing could be held at 6:30 p.m. President Denaro made

a motion that the event should be held at 6:30 p.m. The motion was passed, all in favor. William Campbell suggested that Joseph Demers speak at the public hearing to in order to prepare for the presentation to the City Council. Joseph Demers stated that he will present at the public hearing in the form of a PowerPoint.

William Campbell asked if there were any adjustments to his communication to Mayor Galvin, City Council President Denaro, and all of the Aldermen. President Denaro stated that William Campbell change "Council Chambers" on his communication to "Joyce Middle School". William Campbell stated that he will gather information about the committee to post online, and Jennifer Murray offered to help.

William Campbell stated that the committee is targeting the October 2, 2012 City Council meeting to present its findings to the City Council. He stated that he would like the any necessary special legislation to be sent to Boston by December in order to meet the January 21, 2013 deadline. Joseph Demers stated that the earliest the legislation will be approved is between April and May.

William Campbell told Daniel MacGilvray about the committee's discussion from earlier in the meeting upon Daniel MacGilvray's arrival. Daniel MacGilvray stated that his preference for a voting location is the High School, but acknowledged that the Joyce Middle School will be successful because most residents know where the Joyce is located.

Before the next meeting, Joseph Demers will begin the PowerPoint regarding consolidating at the Joyce Middle School. Dr. Mozaffar will assist him by emailing him information. President Denaro urged Joseph Demers to keep the PowerPoint short and to the point.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on September 5, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Attest: _____
Megan Murphy