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4 *** AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION ***

5 Philadelphia City Commissioner's Sunshine Meeting

6 October 8, 2025

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23 Transcribed

24 By: Everlyne Mwaisaka

25 Job No.: 1009778

1 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Good morning. I call to
2 order the meeting of the Philadelphia City
3 Commissioners Board of Elections for
4 Wednesday, October 8th, 2025. This meeting is
5 in compliance with the Pennsylvania Sunshine
6 Act. The Philadelphia City Commissioners are
7 a three-member, bipartisan board of elected
8 officials in charge of elections and voter
9 registration for the City of Philadelphia.

10 Each Commissioner is elected to serve a
11 four-year term that coincides with the
12 municipal election cycle for Mayor and City
13 Council. The Commissioners set and enforce
14 departmental policies to administer voter
15 registration and conduct elections in
16 accordance with federal and state voter
17 registration and election laws.

18 City Commissioners were created by the
19 Pennsylvania Assembly in 1711 with a focus on
20 taxation and held various regulatory powers
21 throughout the centuries. The Commissioners
22 started maintaining voter lists in 1799 and
23 took on more election-related responsibility,
24 but didn't emerge into it's current form until
25 the adoption of the Philadelphia Home Rule

1 Charter in 1951.

2 We will start off with public comments.
3 Before beginning their comments, commenters
4 shall state where they live, or if they are
5 not a resident of Philadelphia, and that they
6 are Philadelphia taxpayer. Public comment is
7 not an opportunity for dialogue or Q&A. It is
8 public comment, a chance for you to tell us
9 what you think.

10 Each speaker will have two minutes to
11 speak. However, I may extend the time at my
12 discretion. Public comment must concern
13 matters on today's meeting agenda. Finally,
14 it is my responsibility to preserve the order
15 and decorum of the meetings. As such,
16 profane, slanderous, discriminatory, or
17 personal attacks will not be tolerated.

18 If you wish to make a public objection to
19 a perceived Sunshine Act violation, please
20 raise your hand and I will recognize you.
21 Outbursts will not be tolerated. Anyone
22 wishing to offer public comment, please step
23 forward. Hearing none. We will now move to a
24 report from the Secretary for email public
25 comments. But before we begin that portion,

1 Commissioner Bluestein is not here, so his
2 deputy, Eric Kapenstein, is here in his
3 presence. And I was told that Commissioner
4 Bluestein is on the telephone. Is that
5 correct?

6 MR. KAPENSTEIN: That's correct.

7 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I'm here.

8 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay. Secretary. Okay,
9 so Commissioner Bluestein, are there any email
10 public comments?

11 MR. KAPENSTEIN: I'll speak for that.
12 There were no email public comments by 9:45
13 a.m.

14 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay. Thank you. And
15 in this vote -- in this function, the Deputy
16 Eric will be the one calling the roll for the
17 votes. We will now proceed to old business.
18 First, we have a report from our Directors of
19 Elections, Operations and Administration, Mr.
20 Joseph Lynch and Mr. Mark Johnson. Joe, we'll
21 start up with you. Okay.

22 MR. LYNCH: Morning, Commissioners. This
23 is our public meeting update for October 8th,
24 2025, at the Election Warehouse the Voting
25 Machine Services Unit is making sure that all

1 machines that have undergone repairs during
2 the final test are thoroughly tested. They're
3 also starting to close and seal the back
4 doors.

5 The Poll Book Unit is working to ensure
6 that the electronic poll books are fully
7 prepared and operational for Election Day.
8 The Election Materials Unit has been working
9 to ensure that the supplies needed for our
10 poll workers are ordered, organized, and ready
11 for packing.

12 As of the current election cycle, we have
13 processed 106,338 voter registration
14 applications. Of those, 4,800 are paper
15 applications and 101,538 are electronic
16 applications. Delaware and Spring Garden is
17 currently reviewing all applications,
18 correcting errors as needed. Delaware and
19 Spring Garden also sent out 58,136 ID cards.

20 As of Tuesday, the County Board of
21 Elections has approved 85,630 vote-by-mail and
22 absentee applications, which is 3,772 more
23 than last week's totals. Of those, 48,198 are
24 paper applications and 37,432 are electronic
25 applications. This includes military and

1 civilian overseas voters. We currently have a
2 total of 3,050 applications waiting to be
3 processed. Of those, 2,642 are paper
4 applications and 408 are electronic
5 applications.

6 A total of 85,555 ballots have been sent
7 out. So far we received 8,749 valid ballots
8 through the USPS and 1,543 through the drop
9 boxes, for a total of 10,292 valid ballots.
10 This total does not include UOCAVA ballots.
11 Voters who would like to vote by mail for the
12 November 4th municipal election can apply for
13 a mail-in or absentee ballot at
14 vote.phila.gov. The deadline to apply is
15 Tuesday, October 28th, 5:00 p.m., City Hall,
16 Room -- okay, so we're trying to get City Hall
17 open for this weekend to start having people
18 from the public go do mail-in ballots starting
19 this weekend through the election. We're
20 still working on getting word from City Hall
21 whether or not they could open it up. I'm
22 sure that'll happen.

23 ID verification letters have gone out to
24 voters that either did not include the
25 required proof of identification on their

1 absentee/mail-in ballot applications, or whose
2 proof of identification could not be verified
3 by the County Board of Elections office.
4 Voters who have received this letter may
5 submit their proof of ID to the County Board
6 of Elections via email at
7 phillyelections@phila.gov, fax, U.S. mail,
8 telephone, or in person. Voters have until
9 midnight on November 10th to ensure their
10 proof of identification for any municipal
11 elections.

12 The Board Workers Unit is holding it's
13 fall training seminars with 1,839 participants
14 already in attendance. The schedule is posted
15 on our website. Online training is, is now
16 available on our website. So far, we have
17 confirmed 6,283 poll workers.

18 Weekly reminders are being sent to poll
19 workers who have not yet confirmed their
20 attendance. Confirmation calls for all wards
21 began on September 22nd, 2025. We hosted
22 Pizza with the Polls events in each council
23 district at, at the SEOs. The last event at
24 Satellite Office 10 will be held tomorrow.
25 RSVP is required to attend, which can be done

1 on our website.

2 Speaking of Satellite Offices, they are
3 open to the public with staff available from
4 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday,
5 and 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday and
6 Sunday. We will also be open on Columbus Day
7 during the weekday hours. Locations are
8 listed on our website at vote.phila.gov. Drop
9 boxes throughout the city are open for voters
10 to drop off their ballots.

11 We reported last week that our drop box
12 at Satellite Office 5 was struck by a vehicle
13 and has now been reinstalled and is open
14 again. The drop box in Eastern State
15 Penitentiary was reported yesterday that it
16 was temporarily closed due to maintenance
17 issues. I just received a text from our IT,
18 IT department that it is up and running, the
19 camera and it is recording. As soon as I'm
20 done with this meeting, I'll, I'll make sure
21 that the website is updated to reflecting
22 that. That's all I have, Commissioners.

23 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Thank you, Joe. Thank
24 you, Vice Chair Dealey. Do you have any
25 questions?

1 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Yes, Chairman. Thank
2 you. Joe, I was listening -- first of all,
3 I'm thrilled that the satellite election
4 offices are open this weekend. I was
5 listening to the radio show, the Chairman's
6 radio show on Saturday, and it was announced
7 by both the Executive Director and the Deputy
8 that the satellite offices would be open this
9 weekend. I was just wondering why we'd have
10 to hear about the satellite offices being open
11 on the radio show.

12 MR. LYNCH: Well, I apologize. I spoke
13 to -- I spoke to the Chairman about it myself.
14 I should have -- should have let you guys
15 know. But I did bring it up at the deputies'
16 meeting yesterday, I brought it up at the
17 deputies' meeting yesterday that we were going
18 to do it. My apologies.

19 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: But the radio show
20 was Saturday.

21 MR. LYNCH: I, I don't -- yeah.

22 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Thank you.

23 MR. LYNCH: All good. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Secretary Bluestein, or
25 Eric, did you have any questions?

1 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I have no
2 questions. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN SABIR: I just have one
4 question. So the office hours is from 9:00
5 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., I thought it was like 10:00
6 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. last year or something.

7 MR. LYNCH: It's going to be 9:00 a.m. to
8 3:00 p.m. because our staff -- it's, it's a
9 weekend. Our staff's not going to stay there
10 all weekend. We have problems getting staff
11 out there as it is.

12 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay.

13 MR. LYNCH: We just did 9:00 a.m. to 3:00
14 p.m. for the -- for the staff.

15 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Just for my
16 recollection, it was like 10:00 a.m. to 4:00
17 p.m., something like that before.

18 MR. LYNCH: Yes. it was 9:00 to 3:00.

19 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay. 9:00 to 3:00.
20 Okay. And we're going to be open on Columbus
21 Day, right?

22 MR. LYNCH: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay, cool.

24 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Mr. Chair --

25 MR. LYNCH: Columbus, Columbus day will

1 be just like regular weekday hours.

2 CHAIRMAN SABIR: So Columbus Day is going
3 to be open from 9:00 to 5:00?

4 MR. LYNCH: Open from 9:00 to 5:00. Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay. Go ahead, Vice
6 Chair.

7 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Thank you, Chairman.
8 I would just like to say that I think that the
9 hours for the satellite office should remain
10 consistent election to election.

11 MR. LYNCH: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN SABIR: So is there any kind of
13 way we can?

14 MR. LYNCH: So you want to change them?

15 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Not exactly --

16 MR. LYNCH: Let me know what hours you
17 want me to change.

18 CHAIRMAN SABIR: No, no, no.

19 MR. LYNCH: That's here.

20 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Hold on.

21 MR. LYNCH: Or forever hold your peace.

22 CHAIRMAN SABIR: No, I would just ask it
23 -- is there any way that we can, or is it
24 like?

25 MR. LYNCH: I'll try -- I'll try to -

1 CHAIRMAN SABIR: I know we got Vanessa
2 right here. I mean, is it -- is it a staff
3 thing? We really got to be at 9:00 to 3:00.
4 I just was curious, that's all.

5 MR. LYNCH: Well, our staff -- Vanessa
6 can talk on that, but our staff probably
7 doesn't want to work a full, you know, 10-hour
8 day to the public. Well, we'll talk about it.
9 We'll talk about it.

10 MS. CARACOZA: I just want to apologize.
11 Excuse me. That I --

12 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Hold on. Come on, real
13 quick. Come on.

14 MR. LYNCH: State your name, Vanessa.

15 MS. CARACOZA: Yeah. Vanessa Caracoza,
16 Deputy Executive Director. I do want to
17 apologize for prematurely sharing that we will
18 be open on weekends. And I did share 10:00 to
19 4:00, because historically we were open 10:00
20 to 4:00 on weekends. And I think we can
21 definitely go back right now and figure out if
22 there's a way that we could just do 10:00 to
23 4:00 for consistent purposes, if you all are
24 okay with it.

25 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay. So we can -- I

1 just was -- I just was curious. It was just a
2 regular question, it wasn't it --

3 MR. LYNCH: Yeah.

4 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Yeah.

5 CHAIRMAN SABIR: -- right or wrong. I
6 was just curious, you know, what we could have
7 done it. We couldn't do it. That's just it.

8 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay. So we're going to
10 be at 9:00 to 3:00 this weekend, definitely?

11 MR. LYNCH: Yeah, we'll do -- we'll do
12 10:00 to 4:00.

13 MS. CARACOZA: We can change it. 10:00
14 to 4:00.

15 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Vice Chair Dealey,
16 that's on -- that's all right with you?

17 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: 10:00 to 4:00 remains
18 consistent. Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Okay. All right. So
20 we'll do 10:00 to 4:00. Okay. So we make
21 sure that we get the notice out to do 10:00 to
22 4:00. Okay. All right. Thank you. You up,
23 Mark?

24 MR. JOHNSON: Good morning,
25 Commissioners.

1 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Good morning.

2 MR. JOHNSON: I want to begin by thanking
3 you for the opportunity to serve in this role
4 as Director of Election Administration. While
5 I have not yet fully transitioned into this
6 position full-time, I truly appreciate the
7 chance to provide this morning's
8 administrative briefing. This being my first
9 briefing, and the fact that I just got over --
10 I don't know what's going on in it as far as
11 this -- I ask you to show me a little grace if
12 I step into these responsibilities. So.

13 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Look, Mark, just take
14 your time. It's all right, man. Take your
15 time. We got you.

16 MR. JOHNSON: All right. So with the
17 primary behind us and the satellite office
18 fully in operation, our administrative units
19 remain focused and aligned on the work ahead
20 of us as we prepare for the upcoming General
21 Election.

22 From a budget and procurement standpoint,
23 the team continues its routine processing of
24 invoices and purchase orders, addressing
25 issues as they arise. We are working closely

1 with procurement to resolve any outstanding
2 items, including timely support for election
3 operations.

4 This past week, the unit completed the
5 target budget submissions to Finance,
6 continued work on major contract renewals, and
7 began preparing manual encumbrance for the CMS
8 contract in anticipation of November's
9 election. The team is also reconciling petty
10 cash overages, and shortages from fiscal years
11 2021 through 2025.

12 Looking forward, we're closely monitoring
13 overtime and SUR staffing costs to ensure
14 funds are directed toward only essential
15 needs, while also pushing for additional
16 appropriations to close the FY-26 budget gap.

17 From a communications standpoint, the
18 unit focused heavily on advertising and public
19 education for the 2020 general election.
20 Working with consultants, the team created new
21 static graphics, animated videos, and PSA
22 scripts, including recordings with Chairman
23 Sabir and Commissioner Bluestein, while
24 coordination continues with Vice Chair
25 Dealey's office, social media content

1 highlights key ballots, ballot guidance, and
2 Dropbox changes, while the Election Day Guide
3 and 311 FAQs were updated.

4 Additional work included updating the
5 flaw ballot voter export list for public
6 notice, expanding translated material for
7 language access, print production for the Poll
8 Worker Guide, updating website content, and
9 preparing logistics for white-box materials.
10 The team also assisted with procurement of
11 staff jackets and support for 8th District
12 PISA with poll workers event.

13 From our engagement unit, our staff has
14 been very active across the city. Recent
15 efforts included table events at Independence
16 Library, Whitman Library, and the Philadelphia
17 Fire Department, as well as voter resources
18 distribution at the BOK Building downtown.

19 The team confirmed a voter education
20 event and voting machine demonstration at
21 SilverCare Adult Care and partnered on
22 translation support for English learners who
23 recently immigrated to Philadelphia.

24 Engagement staff also connected with
25 diverse communities at the Mid-Autumn Festival

1 in Chinatown and Northeast Philadelphia,
2 distributing key election dates and providing
3 demonstrations in Chinese to highlight
4 language accessibility on our voting machines.

5 Upcoming events include an online
6 election information session with Beyond
7 Literacy Outreach at Congregation Rudolph
8 Shalom and Parkway Central Library, and
9 additional sessions at senior centers in
10 Chinatown and Northeast Philadelphia.

11 From human resources, the team is
12 managing ongoing trends, transactions,
13 orientations, and staffing for the satellite
14 offices. They also worked on discipline data,
15 exit surveys, promotions, and union-related
16 matters. As of October 2nd, our workforce
17 total is 194 employees, including 31 exempts,
18 163 civil, civil service staff, 16 temporary
19 employees. This breakdown includes 52 clerks-
20 1s, 32 Clerk-2s, 20 Clerk-3s, 8 trade helpers,
21 and 8 voting machine mechanics.

22 Our information technology unit is
23 focused on final preparations for the general
24 election, including election night, police
25 routes, and polling place optimization

1 analysis. The team continues to support
2 setups of satellite office systems while
3 maintaining voter-facing tools, surveys, and
4 notices across our platforms.

5 And from a security standpoint, we have
6 our -- I guess our second security
7 stakeholders meeting, which is tomorrow. If
8 anyone wants to attend, I can send them the
9 link. And we continue coordination with the
10 Philadelphia Police Department, OEM, and our
11 contract security partners. Preparations
12 include tabletop exercises, we'll be doing
13 panic-alarm testing and readiness checks at
14 all our facilities. Our focus remains on
15 safeguarding staff, voters, and critical
16 election infrastructure.

17 As we move closer to the general
18 election, each administrative unit is laid to
19 focus on ensuring operational readiness. I
20 want to once again thank our staff and
21 partners for their dedication, and I also want
22 to thank you, Commissioners.

23 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Thank you, Mark. Vice
24 Chair Dealey, did you have any questions?

25 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Thank you, Mark. I

1 have none.

2 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Secretary Bluestein, do
3 you have any questions?

4 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Thank you. I
5 have no questions.

6 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Thank you, Mark. It
7 wasn't that hard, was it?

8 MR. JOHNSON: Not at all.

9 CHAIRMAN SABIR: All right. Thank you.
10 This completes our old business for today's
11 meeting. We will now proceed to new business.
12 We will begin by considering our first agenda
13 item, polling place changes. We'll hear from
14 our Polling Place Investigation Supervisor,
15 Charlie Stroman.

16 MR. STROMAN: Morning, Commissioners.

17 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Good morning Charlie.

18 MR. STROMAN: I have five hearings this
19 morning. The first one will be in 19th Ward.
20 The first division, moving out of the
21 Children's Playhouse to the Rivera Rec Center,
22 and that's due to a refusal.

23 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Having heard the
24 recommendation of the professional staff, I
25 move that we accept the polling place change

1 for Ward 19, Division 1. Is there a second?

2 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Deputy Eric, can you
4 call the roll, please?

5 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Vice Chair Dealey?

6 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Aye.

7 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Commissioner Bluestein?

8 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Aye.

9 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Chairman Sabir?

10 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Aye. Please proceed.

11 MR. STROMAN: Next three will be in the
12 34th Ward, the 13th Division, the 18th
13 Division, and the 19th Division. All moving
14 out of Harambee Institute to the Cassidy
15 School. It's a brand new public school which
16 works beautiful for all three divisions.

17 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Well, I'd like to thank
18 you on that one. That's, that's a big one.

19 MR. STROMAN: Yeah.

20 CHAIRMAN SABIR: And 34 -- what --
21 everybody's excited about that. Thank you on
22 that one. Having heard the recommendation of
23 the professional staff, I move that we accept
24 the polling place change for Ward 34, Division
25 13, 18, and 19. Is there a second?

1 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Deputy Eric, please call
3 the roll.

4 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Vice Chair Dealey?

5 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Aye.

6 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Commissioner Bluestein?

7 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Aye.

8 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Chairman Sabir?

9 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Aye. Please proceed.

10 MR. STROMAN: Last but not least, the
11 40th Ward, the 33rd Division, moving out of
12 the Catherine School annex back to the Pascal
13 Library, and that is back to the original
14 location. The rebuild is complete.

15 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Having heard the
16 recommendation of the professional staff, I
17 move that we accept the polling place change
18 for Ward 40, Division 33. Is there a second?
19 Second.

20 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Deputy Eric, please call
22 the roll.

23 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Vice Chair Dealey?

24 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Aye.

25 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Commissioner Bluestein?

1 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Aye.

2 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Chairman Sabir?

3 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Aye. Thank you,
4 Charlie.

5 MR. STROMAN: You're welcome.

6 CHAIRMAN SABIR: That is the last item on
7 the agenda before we adjourn. Vice Chair
8 Dealey, do you have any business to be raised
9 at this meeting?

10 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Thank you. I have
11 none.

12 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Secretary Bluestein, do
13 you have any business to be raised at this
14 meeting?

15 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I have none.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN SABIR: I have one small
18 business I definitely want to our Fighting
19 Phillies on, on the ropes. So we definitely
20 want everybody to support our Phillies and go
21 Eagles. I make a motion that we adjourn
22 today's meeting. Is there a second?

23 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Second.

24 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Deputy Eric, please call
25 the roll.

1 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Vice Chair Dealey?

2 VICE CHAIR DEALEY: Aye.

3 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Commissioner Bluestein?

4 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Aye.

5 MR. KAPENSTEIN: Chairman Sabir?

6 CHAIRMAN SABIR: Aye. Motion passes.

7 Meeting is adjourned.

8

9 (End of audio recording.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

2

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12 parties in said action, nor to their
13 respective counsel.

14

15 IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set
16 my hand this 15th day of October, 2025.

17

18



19

Everlyne Mwaisaka

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