CITY OF SOMERVILLE

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom.

DATE: October 13, 2026 | 5:00 p.m.

Attendance

Name	Title	Attendance
Eleanor Barish	Member	Present
James Leo Beddard	Member	Absent
Crystal Huff	Member	Present
Jon Link	Member	Present
Michelle Lippens	Member	Absent
Jack Perenick	Member	Present
Barry Rafkind	Member	Present
Nicholas Salerno	Member	Present
Chris Oates	Member	Present

City staff present: Megan Arruda (Elections), Maria Pierotti (Elections), and Sheila Forristall (Elections).

Meeting called to order: 5:02 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 5:20 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Assistant Election Commissioner Megan Arruda confirmed that a quorum was present and called the first meeting of the Ranked-Choice Voting Committee to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Introduction and Committee Membership

The Committee consists of nine members appointed as follows:

- One member serving as Chair of the Board of Election Commissioners: Nicholas Salerno.
- One member serving as City Council President or designee: Jon Link.
- One member serving as Chair of the School Committee or designee: Michelle Lippens.
- Two Somerville residents appointed by the City Council: James Leo Beddard and Crystal Huff.
- Two Somerville residents appointed by the School Committee: Eleanor Barish and Jack Perenick.
- Two Somerville residents appointed by the Mayor: Barry Rafkind and one vacant position.

3. Review of Charter and Committee Charge

The Committee reviewed its purpose. The goal is to implement ranked-choice voting in order to more accurately reflect the will of voters, increase the number and diversity of candidates, lower barriers to candidate participation, and increase election transparency.

The Committee's report should address the following:

- The elected offices to be selected using this voting method;
- A timeframe and strategy for implementation;

- Infrastructure and equipment requirements;
- A cost analysis;
- A comparative analysis of other voting methods;
- An analysis of potential equity concerns; and
- A community education plan.

The Committee reviewed the definition of ranked-choice voting: a voting method in which voters rank candidates in order of preference.

4. Election of Committee Officers

4.1 Chair

Megan Arruda opened the floor for nominations for Chair. Jack Perenick nominated Chris Oates, who accepted the nomination. With no further nominations, nominations were closed.

The Committee voted unanimously to elect Chris Oates as Chair of the Ranked-Choice Voting Committee.

4.2 Vice Chair

Megan Arruda opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Jack Perenick nominated himself and accepted the nomination. Jon Link nominated Crystal Huff, who declined. With no further nominations, nominations were closed.

The Committee voted unanimously to elect Jack Perenick as Vice Chair of the Ranked-Choice Voting Committee.

4.3 Secretary

Megan Arruda opened the floor for nominations for Secretary. Jack Perenick nominated Barry Rafkind, who accepted the nomination. With no further nominations, nominations were closed.

The Committee voted unanimously to elect Barry Rafkind as Secretary of the Ranked-Choice Voting Committee.

5. Goals, Timeline, Resources, and Meeting Schedule

The Committee discussed its goals, timeline, potential resources, and meeting schedule.

- Meetings are expected to take place on Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m. The frequency of meetings will be determined by the newly elected Chair, Chris Oates.
- The Committee is required to issue recommendations to the City Council within 12 months of the appointment of all members. One mayoral-appointed position remains vacant.
- The City Council is required to act on the recommendations within 90 days of receipt.

6. Research and Follow-Up

The Committee discussed the following research and follow-up items:

- Members were encouraged to review resources from RankedChoiceVoting.org and Voter Choice Massachusetts before the next meeting to become more familiar with ranked-choice voting.
- Jack Perenick noted that the Mayor had indicated there may be funding available for assistance from the Collins Center to research ranked-choice voting and provide guidance.
- Chris Oates will follow up on the potential Collins Center funding and prepare a document outlining what other cities and towns have done regarding ranked-choice voting.
- Jack Perenick asked the Elections Department to prepare a presentation explaining what the City's current voting equipment can accommodate with respect to ranked-choice voting.
- Barry Rafkind expressed interest in exploring the tabulation methods currently under consideration.

7. Resident Comments and Concerns

No resident comments or concerns were recorded in the meeting notes.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. A recording of these proceedings is available online through Agendas, Minutes, & More.