

RULES for COUNTING BALLOTS

under Proportional Representation

City of Cambridge



ELECTION - 1941

RULES FOR COUNTING

Ballots cast for the election of members of the Council and School Committee shall be counted and the results determined by the election authorities, according to the following rules:

USE FIGURE "1"; NOT "X"

A On all ballots a cross without other mark shall be considered equivalent to the figure 1. So far as may be consistent with the general election laws, every ballot from which the 1st choice of the voters can be clearly ascertained shall be considered valid.

BALLOTS SORTED—FIRST CHOICE COUNTED—INVALID BALLOTS

B The ballots shall first be sorted and counted according to the first choices of the voters. The ballots from each precinct cast for each candidate as first choice shall be put up in a separate package, which shall be properly marked on the outside to show the number of ballots therein, the precinct from which they were received and the name of the candidate for whom they were cast. The ballots declared invalid shall also be put up in a separate package, properly marked on the outside.

INVALID BALLOTS—ALL BALLOTS HELD THIRTY DAYS

C The central counting board shall first determine which ballots are invalid. A ballot shall be set aside as invalid if it does not show clearly which candidate the voter prefers to all others, or if it contains words or marks apparently intended to identify the voter. All ballots, including those found invalid by the central counting board, shall be set aside and preserved until thirty days after the count is finished, and thereafter, upon request of any candidate, until controversy arising thereon shall have been terminated.

METHOD OF FURTHER COUNT OF CHOICES AND SORTING

D The central counting board shall thereupon place together all the precinct packages of first choice ballots cast for each candidate and shall then, in the case of each candidate, number the said first choice ballots, as they come, consecutively (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). All ballots received by each candidate during the entire course of the counts, shall be consecutively numbered, so that the last number at all times shall correspond to the total vote of the candidate.

SUFFICIENT TO ELECT—HOW DETERMINED

E The whole number of valid ballots cast shall then be divided by a number greater by one than the number of seats to be filled. The next whole number larger than the resulting quotient is the quota or constituency that suffices to elect a member.

WHEN DECLARED ELECTED

F All candidates the number of whose ballots on the first count equals or exceeds the quota shall then be declared elected.

SURPLUS VOTES

G All votes obtained by any candidate in excess of the quota shall be termed his surplus.

TRANSFER OF SURPLUS VOTES

H Any surpluses there may be shall next be transferred, the largest surplus first, then the next largest, and so on, according to the following rules:

TRANSFER OF SURPLUS—CONTINUED

I In the transfer of the surplus, transferable ballots up to the number of votes in the surplus shall be transferred to the continuing candidate marked on them as to the next choice, in accordance with rule (M). The omission of any consecutive figure in the designation of choices shall not invalidate the ballot as to subsequent choices; the choices shall be taken in the order of the figures used. The particular ballots to be taken for transfer as the surplus of a candidate shall be obtained according to the following rule:

The ballot marked by the central counting board with the figure corresponding to the integer nearest that fraction of which the numerator is the total vote of the candidate, and the denominator the surplus of said candidate, as, for example, 5 or 6, shall be first taken if transferable. Then each next higher multiple of said figure such as 10, 15, 20, etc., or 12, 18, 24, etc., until the entire surplus is taken. If the multiples do not produce sufficient transferable ballots, the ballots with the figures next succeeding the multiples shall be taken, as 6, 11, 16, etc., or 7, 13, 19, etc., as the case may be. This shall be done until the entire surplus is taken. Any ballot so selected that is not a "transferable ballot" shall be left to the credit of the candidate whose surplus is being transferred.

"TRANSFERABLE BALLOTS" and "CONTINUING CANDIDATES"

J "Transferable ballots" means ballots from which the next choice of the voter for some continuing candidate can be clearly ascertained. A "continuing candidate" is a candidate as yet neither elected nor defeated.

TABULATION OF VOTES

K The votes standing to the credit of each candidate shall be added and a tabulation of results made whenever a comparison of the votes of the several candidates is necessary to determine the next step in the procedure.

CANDIDATES DEFEATED—TRANSFER OF BALLOTS

L After the transfer of all surpluses (or after the first count if no candidate received a surplus) every candidate who has no votes to his credit shall be declared defeated. Thereupon the candidate lowest on the poll as it stands shall be declared defeated and all his transferable ballots transferred to continuing candidates, each ballot being transferred to the credit of that continuing candidate next preferred by the voter in accordance with rule (M). Thereupon the candidate then lowest shall be declared defeated and all his transferable ballots transferred in the same way. Thus the lowest candidate shall be declared defeated one after another and their transferable ballots transferred to continuing candidates.

WHEN QUOTA ARRIVED AT

RULE "M"

Whenever in the transfer of a surplus or of the ballots of a defeated candidate the vote of any candidate becomes equal to the quota he shall immediately be declared elected and no further transfer to him shall be made.

WHEN COUNCIL SEATS FILLED, BALANCE OF CANDIDATES DECLARED DEFEATED

N When candidates to the number of seats to be filled have received a quota and have therefore been declared elected, all other candidates shall be declared defeated and the election shall be at an end; or when the number of continuing candidates is reduced to the number of seats still to be filled, those candidates shall be declared elected whether they have received the full quota or not, and the election shall be at an end; but in such event, the ballots of the candidate last declared defeated shall be distributed among the candidates last declared elected up to the amount of their quotas, according to the rules herein set forth.

DECIDING DEFEAT IN CASE OF TIE VOTE

O If, when a candidate is to be declared defeated, two or more candidates at the bottom of the poll have the same number of votes, that one of the tied candidates shall first be declared defeated who was credited with the fewest votes at the end of the count next preceding, and any further tie shall be decided on the same principle. Any tie not otherwise provided for shall be decided by lot.

RECOUNT—HOW HANDLED

P Any re-count of the ballots shall be made by the central election authorities in accordance with this section except that the reference to voting precincts may be disregarded. In any recount every ballot shall be made to take the same course it took in the original counting, unless there is discovered a mistake that required its taking a different course. In such case any required changes shall be made in the same course taken by the ballot. These principles shall apply also to the correction of any error that may be discovered during the original counting.

WITNESSING COUNT

Q The candidates or their agents, and representatives of the press, shall be afforded every facility for being present and witnessing these operations; also the public, so far as may be consistent with good order and with convenience in counting and transferring of the ballots.

R It is the intention of the Election Commission that the foregoing rules shall be substituted for the rules contained in 54A, Sections 9 to 16 inclusive of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and that all other provisions of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with respect to election is hereby specifically adopted.

Adopted Sept. 30, 1941,

C. BRENDAN NOONAN, Chairman

HARRY A. PENNIMAN, Secretary

WM. R. McMENIMEN,

N. RUSSELL CAZMAY,

Cambridge Election Commission.