



# City of Cambridge

## Executive Department

**YI-AN HUANG**  
City Manager

CMA 2026-185  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
June 22, 2026

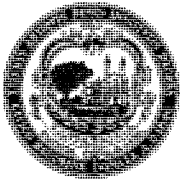
To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see attached a memo and supporting documents regarding a request from Tanya Ford, Director of Elections, for Council approval of electronic poll pads on election day.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang  
City Manager





# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

689 Massachusetts Ave Ste 1, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-3302 ▪ Telephone 617-349-4361 ▪ TTY: 617-492-0235  
Fax: 617-349-4366 ▪ Email: Elections2@cambridgema.gov ▪ Website: www.cambridgema.gov/election

### COMMISSIONERS

Ethridge A. King, Jr.  
Larry W. Ward  
Charles J. Marquardt  
Sara I. Rivera

### DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS

Tanya L. Ford

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lesley A. Waxman

To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager

From: Tanya L. Ford, Director of Elections

Date: June 15, 2026

Re: REQUEST TO APPROVE THE USE OF ELECTRONIC POLL PADS ON ELECTION DAY

In accordance with MGL Chapter 54, Section 33I, the Cambridge Election Commission requests formal approval from the City Council for the use of the official electronic poll book system on election day. The poll pads will be used to facilitate voter check-in and verification. Since 2016, the Election Commission has been using electronic poll pads at in-person early voting locations.

The poll book was federally certified through the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC). EAC determined that it meets the necessary standards for accuracy, reliability, and voter privacy. EAC completed a thorough review of the system's compliance with applicable election laws, security protocols, and operational requirements. The poll books are now used in hundreds of municipalities in Massachusetts.

Election workers will be trained in accordance with the approved procedures, and all devices will be tested, secured, and maintained under the supervision of the Election Commission. The voting process for voters remains the same. Voters will check in with a poll worker, receive a paper ballot, mark their vote, and cast it as usual.

The use of poll books helps to accelerate the check-in process. The use of the poll books allows the poll workers to look the voter up in one of two ways:

- By manually entering the first few letters of the voter's first and last name; or
- By scanning the bar code on the back of the voter's driver's license (**which speeds the process further and is completely voluntary**).

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not require that a voter present a license to check in. However, presenting a license allows for quicker check-in. The poll book matches the name and birth date of the person on the voter list with the name and birth date it reads from the bar code on the back of the license. No information from the scanned license is retained by the poll books.

The check-in process will be done by name and not by address as it has been done in the past. Therefore, any voter can go to any check-in person at their assigned polling place, give their name and address and

the process will be much faster and easier. A poll worker can also view whether the voter is in the wrong ward, precinct, and polling location. They will allow poll workers to easily redirect voters to their correct polling place. The poll books at every polling location in the city will immediately sync to one another, which eliminates any chance of checking in more than once and allows for real-time voter history. The poll books will also notify the poll worker if the voter already voted by absentee or during early voting.

The Election Commission will continue to provide all polling locations with a paper voting list for additional assistance.



# City of Cambridge

Agenda Item Number 1  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
June 22, 2026

ORDERED: That the City Council votes to approve the use of electronic poll pads on election day pursuant to G.L. c.54, s.33I.