



FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

Nov 14 2025 2:06 pm

CITY OF FITCHBURG

BOARD OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

718 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

*Elmer Eubanks
Alice Hillman
Michael Hurley
Joanna Bilotta*

Board of Registrars Public Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Alice Hillman at 9:02 a.m. Joanna Bilotta, City Clerk, called the roll. Three members were present (Elmer Eubanks was absent). Attorney Provencher, from the City Solicitor's Office, was also in attendance.

Agenda Items:

Ms. Hillman informed the Registrars that the purpose of the meeting was to hear an objection filed by Jacquelyn Wehtje to the nomination papers submitted by Anthony Zarrella, Candidate for City Councilor at Large.

Registrar Hurley moved to have Attorney Provencher from the City Solicitor's Office preside over the hearing. Registrar Bilotta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Attorney Provencher explained that, under M.G.L. Chapter 55B, Section 7, the Board was convened to hear an objection to a Councilor at Large nomination paper. He noted that for a Councilor at Large candidate, the nomination paper address must be within the City of Fitchburg.

Statement by the Objecting Resident:

Jacquelyn Wehtje, a Fitchburg resident, requested that the City Clerk recuse herself from the Public Hearing. Ms. Wehtje presented documentation of Mr. Zarrella's nomination papers and a news article. She stated that the basis of her objection was the difference in addresses on the nomination papers when they were taken out versus when they were returned to the City Clerk's Office.

Ms. Wehtje asserted that Mr. Zarrella did not update his voter registration with the new address in a timely manner. She claimed the paperwork was invalid and alleged preferential treatment. She further noted that Mr. Zarrella had moved from what she described as a middle-class neighborhood to an upper-class neighborhood and argued that he should have to contact all signers of his nomination papers to verify his new address.

Other Testimony:

- **Beth Walsh**, Fitchburg resident, spoke in support of Mr. Zarrella, stating that he had confirmed the rules with the City Clerk, the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division, and the City Solicitor before proceeding.
- **Sally Cragin**, Fitchburg resident, spoke in favor of Mr. Zarrella, emphasizing his attention to detail.
- **Derek Cruz**, Fitchburg resident, stated that he had moved during the last municipal election and that Mr. Zarrella had followed the rules.

- **Andrew Van Hazinga**, Fitchburg resident, spoke in support of Mr. Zarrella and noted that Councilor at Large candidates can obtain signatures from voters anywhere in the city.

Response from the Candidate:

Mr. Zarrella stated that if the City Clerk would feel more comfortable recusing herself, he had no objection. He explained that he took out nomination papers in February while residing at 33 Saint Paul Street and moved to 380 Wanoosnoc Road in June. After receiving an occupancy permit in June, he updated his address with the RMV, which also updated his voter registration.

He filed his nomination papers with the City Clerk's Office in July, accompanied by an affidavit explaining his move and providing his new address, which was already reflected in the voter registration records from the RMV update. Mr. Zarrella stated that his candidacy depended on the validity of his signatures, not on his address.

Closing of Public Hearing:

Seeing no further questions, Registrar Hillman closed the Public Hearing at 9:16 a.m.

Discussion by the Registrars:

- Registrar Hurley noted that as a Councilor at Large candidate, Mr. Zarrella could obtain signatures from any voter in the city, not from a specific ward.
- Registrar Hillman agreed with Registrar Hurley.
- Registrar Bilotta stated that Mr. Zarrella's voter registration was updated to 380 Wanoosnoc Road as of July 2025 and that he had verified compliance with the City Clerk's Office, the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division, and the City Solicitor.

Registrar Hurley moved to deny the objection submitted by Ms. Wehtje. Registrar Bilotta seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 3–0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Bilotta
City Clerk / Board of Registrars