

## Elections Annual Report

Fiscal year 2024/2025 ushered in many changes, those most visible to our voters were early voting, new electronic tabulators (voting machines), and new voting booths. One thing that did not change is our commitment to safe, secure, and non-partisan elections.

Early voting was by far the biggest challenge from a cost and logistics perspective. Our state legislature mandated a total of 7 days of early voting for the August primaries and 14 day for the November presidential election. Allowing for setup and takedown time, there were 17 10-hour days and 14-hour days to be staffed with the required 7 people. Fortunately, our poll workers rose to the challenge as did the voters who did their best with the cramped location in the Registrars' office. The approximately \$1,200 per day cost of early voting was born primarily by Town taxpayers, with small state grants covering just a portion of this expense. Taxpayers did like having the option not to vote at the polls for the presidential election, with about one-half voting absentee or early.

It was a relief when the new tabulators arrived in April 2025. We could no longer get spare parts for the old tabulators, and two of our six failed and were beyond repair. We used the new tabulators for the first time in the 2025 budget referenda. They are secure (no internet connection), faster for the registrars to set up and test, and much more friendly for the voter who uses them. The state purchased these machines for each town so there was no direct cost to taxpayers for their purchase. However, the cost of maintaining these devices and programming for each election is higher than for the previous tabulators.

Why the new voting booths? After two decades of service, the old ones were getting dirty and beginning to fall apart. Additionally, we did not have room for them in the limited storage available to us in the Temporary Municipal Building. The new booths are clean, easier to set up and configure, and fit in a smaller storage space.

Many of our activities go unseen by the public yet directly support the electoral process. For example, we:

1. Conduct an annual canvass of voters to ensure that only those legally entitled to vote remain on the rolls.
2. Audit voter registration cards to ensure that they are properly filed and reflect each voter's status.
3. Receive and act on voter registration updates from the Department of Motor Vehicles, Secretary of State, Town Clerk, and other officials.
4. Coordinate voter education and registration with the high school.
5. Attend conferences and classes to maintain our continuing education requirements.
6. Take classes to learn about new legislation and equipment such as our tabulators.

Next year will bring more changes such as our new web-based voter registration system and legislative enhancements to absentee voting. We will also strive to better communicate election updates in coordination with the selectmen.

Sincerely,

Ross Lally, Republican Registrar

Sandra Pierog, Democratic Registrar

Bernice Dixon, Republican Deputy Registrar

Mary Terhune, Democratic Deputy Registrar