



Laurence K. Flynn
Executive Secretary
George T. Smith, Jr.
Clerk

CITY OF PROVIDENCE BOARD OF CANVASSERS

December 31, 2005

Honorable David Cicilline, Mayor
Honorable John J. Lombardi, Council President
Honorable Members of the Providence City Council

% Claire Bestwick, Acting City Clerk
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Annual Report from the Providence Board of Canvassers & Registrations for the year January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

The challenges during the last calendar year have been monumental. Most have been accomplished and some are still on the drawing board.

We were faced with the introduction of new software that was installed the first week of December 2004.... all of our records were converted. Because of the methods of prior record keeping, the conversion required "scrubbing" of our records.

Proper steps have been taken to facilitate the processing of future elections with guidelines, deadlines dates and proper procedures.

In the past year the registration count (active and inactive) has been reduced to fewer than 98,000 voters. We are still actively removing voters, and will continue to do so by reviewing deaths back to 1984 and reviewing Data General (old software) for voters who have not participated and voters who have moved.

We are in the process of contacting the local colleges to enlist their cooperation in reviewing their student registrations as compared to our voter files. Also, this process is going on with the housing authority.

In addition, we have been entering proper apartment numbers, whenever possible, to allow for proper delivery of mail...every piece of mail that does not have an apartment number of unit number is returned to this office marked "undeliverable" and is placed on the inactive list. Our staff is routinely trained to enter the apartment numbers as presented. Many do not provide phone numbers for a follow up.

Records on maintaining polling places have been developed i. e. Who is in charge, numbers, alternate numbers, who is closing and opening and if additional supplies are required such as tables and chairs?

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FEB 16 2006

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THE SAME BE RECEIVED
John M. Smith CLERK

New record books have been established pertaining to the processing of provisional ballots, limited ballots and write in ballots as well as a polling official manual. Time lines are an essential part of "pulling" off an election...these will be identified so future staff will have access.

New processes in recording and storing of election affidavits have been developed as well as storing and retrieving of advertisements etc.

A new process of offering elected officials or any interested party to participate in our distribution of new voters program, etc has been in effect since January 1, 2005 and is a success. At the first of each month, the people who have purchased files receive updates. The process commences again on January 1, 2006 and is a source of revenue for the city. You will be duly notified.

We have developed guidelines on how to register voters, change addresses etc. and are using these in instructing new employees.

A Procedure Manual has been developed "a primer" on how to conduct elections with each month having specific items that need to be addressed until that final day of election and the days following.

A candidate's book has been developed which will have instructional information for candidates, dates, sign ordinances, applications for disks, etc.

In the process, are guidelines for setting up of the polling place from this office's delivery of items, use of police and the retrieval of the items from the polling places and return to this office.

A set up team (two men per team) 10 precincts per team is being recommended. Their specific duties would be to enter each location the day prior to the Election Day and set up the location as per the schematics designed by the Board of Elections. This set up team would also work on Election Day putting out "fires", for this department. **Late a.m. openings are not acceptable.**

Over 30 streets have been removed from the cities' roster...this was a process that had not been completed. The Administrator in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary of State (Director of Elections) now removes streets upon receipt of resolutions from the City Council.

A new function established by CVRS (Central Voter Registry System) is the exact time DMV registrations received by this office. Since its inception we have processed over 1724 voters.

We also have been faced with mandates required by the new CVRS which require that all 100,000 + records be prepared for a scanning process. Unfortunately, most records did not reflect the current registered voting list (both Inactive and Active) therefore, we have been re alphabetizing the records to mirror the voting list. Staff is being instructed on housekeeping procedures during this process.

A duplicate list will be provided, by Office of the Secretary of State, (all voters registered in the state and this city) and this must be completed by the NCOA (National Change of Address Process) with a target date of January 2006.

In January 2006 the Secretary of State (Director of Elections) will be sending another mailing to every registered voter in the state of Rhode Island...this will catch anyone who has not responded

to the earlier mailing. This January 2006 mailing will have all the information the voter requires, name, address, precinct and voting address.

The last three items are what has necessitated the overtime that is currently in place.

During this period, we have added nearly 2819 voters to the rolls, removed over 600+ duplicate voters in the city, (with possibly many more) remove daily deaths, moved out of the city and have addressed the desertification of the Green Party.

This office is currently working with Kim Brace of Election Data Services and the Office of the Secretary of State (Director of Elections) in correcting some of the errors that were not addressed in the street assignments in 2004. Also, we are currently meeting with cities such as Cranston and North Providence in determining where certain voter and properties belong on tax rolls. Changes have necessitated new maps.

Change is always hard to accept; however, in this office a positive attitude seems to be developing.

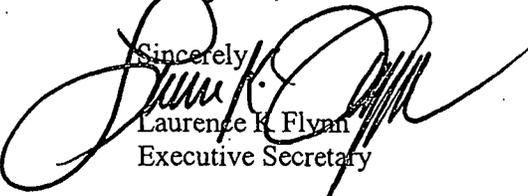
Currently, we are experiencing assistance from very qualified temporary employees and by the end of the month of January 2006 should be experiencing the filing of a Clerk IV Bi-lingual employee, which I respectfully remark is long overdue.

This is no longer your grandmother's Board of Canvassers & Registrations but it is an office that has made many advances through a lot of hard work by many people and an office where information is shared and accessible.

None of this would have been possible without the cooperation of the city in the area of overtime, temporary employees and the willingness to listen and understand the circumstances we were working under.

If you should have any questions concerning the contents of this report, please feel free to contact me anytime,

Sincerely,



Laurence R. Flynn
Executive Secretary

Cc: George T Smith, Jr, Clerk

JOHN E. MARTINELLI
JUDGE



PAUL V. JABOUR
CLERK

SUSAN L. NIKOLIAN
DEPUTY CLERK

**PROBATE COURT OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE
RHODE ISLAND**

January 23, 2006

To The Honorable David N. Cicilline, Mayor and
The Honorable Council of the City of Providence

Re: Annual Report of the Operation of the City of Providence Probate Court for the fiscal year commencing **July 1, 2004** through **June 30, 2005**.

Submitted herein for your information is a statistical and administrative overview of the operations of the Probate Court for the above referenced period.

Receipts for this fiscal period were **\$206,341.75**, which is a slight increase from last year.

The Court staff received **445** new filings for decedent estates during the fiscal year, composed of the following:

- **205** resident wills and **3** foreign wills (out of state jurisdiction)
- **73** administrations (no will)
- **1** receivership (missing individual)
- **27** Voluntary Informal Executors- small estates (with a will) and
- **69** Voluntary Informal Administrations- small estates (no will);¹
- **55** wills were filed alleging no assets upon which the will operates upon;
- **12** wills filed by attorneys alleging the testator "deceased" (no further action, filed in compliance with Rhode Island General Laws)

In addition, **5** custodianships were filed contemporaneously with either a will or administration petition.

¹ Although formal hearings are not required for these cases, Court staff is required to review, collect filing fees and maintain a record of these estates; the Judge must review each of these. This process allows families to distribute decedent estates of \$15,000.00 or less in value without a formal Probate proceeding.

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John M. Stebbins CLERK

Guardianships, both adult and minor, continue to generate consistent court activity, with the statutory clerical responsibilities associated therein. The actual number of new guardianships and/or temporary guardianships granted by the Court for the fiscal year was **112**. These all required hearings; many of these were contested. A number of Guardianship cases are brought under the State Good Samaritan statute, and filing fees are waived for these types of cases.

Presently, the Court docket has approximately **547** active adult and minor guardianships, an area of the Court's jurisdiction that seems to grow with the maturation of the city population and the need for guardians for minors, other than the natural parents, continues to evolve, due to the ever-changing demographics of the city.

Court staff is statutorily required to monitor the submission of **annual status reports** for adult guardians (for certain minor guardians as well, when ordered by the Judge), and **annual accounts** for estates of wards for which a financial guardian has been appointed. These are presently entered on an in house computer system devised with City computer personnel to insure their timely filing. The office reviewed **305** status reports, but more may have been processed, since these do not generally require formal hearings, but are still entered in the Court system. Accounts are reviewed by staff and heard by the judge during regular court sessions. Staff implements certain legal procedures when a guardian does not comply with either of these mandates, to insure compliance. Because of changes in court personal and their lack of experience in this area, this has been a most challenging endeavor.

Probate Court has jurisdiction for **adult** and **minor** name changes, provided both parents of the minor agree on the change. These require processing by Court staff, and assistance to the public in completing the forms. (Most petitioners seeking name changes are not represented by legal counsel.) Court staff, before any hearing before the judge, requests from the Police Department a statement as to whether the adult person seeking the name change has a criminal record; after court hearings, **107** name change petitions were granted. A growing number were also denied.

There were **2** Adult adoptions heard and granted by the Court in the fiscal year.

In the normal course of its operations, numerous petitions were processed and heard by the Court:

- 45 petitions for sale of real estate;
- 8 petitions to re-open previously closed estates;
- 3 appointments of "successor" fiduciaries;
- 350 Miscellaneous Petitions concerning various procedural, factual or fee matters.

297 inventories for fiduciary estates were processed. These are all reviewed for accuracy and conformity to Court orders and **R.I.G.L.** by the Court staff. Statutory fees were calculated and collected relative to Probate Court operations. Cash is not accepted (except for copy expense) and all deposits are made through the **Tax Collectors Office**, in compliance with procedures established by the City Controller's office, to insure accurate accounting of all Court funds.

Various fiduciary accounts, as required by statute or the Judge, were processed and reviewed for accuracy and detail by the Court staff; the Judge acted on **107** accounts during this past year. **Affidavit of Complete Administration** closed **194** decedent estates; these require detail scrutiny by Court staff before accepting them as complete.

9 Registry Accounts were opened during the year for absentee heirs, totaling **\$20,796.52**. Absent recovery by heir(s), these will escheat to the State of Rhode Island after one (1) year, pursuant to statute. **4** registry accounts for minors were opened this past fiscal year totaling **\$20,248.60**. The total registry account balance for the end of the fiscal year was **\$226,143.42**, comprised of absentee and minor accounts. The staff, under my supervision, reviews all bank statements and keeps track of balances of these accounts on an in house computer system.

As part of the regular and ordinary operation of the court, cases requiring statutory publication in the newspaper are assembled and transmitted to the Providence Journal weekly. Guardian ad Litem notices for adult guardianships are assigned and forwarded, by rotating list, to the next in line. Other tasks required by **R.I.G.L.** are completed timely. These include: notification of charitable beneficiaries under a will of their bequest; transmittal of State Tax certificates for each decedent estate to the Rhode Island Division of Taxation. This is in addition to attending to the orderly every day operation of the Court.

Staff is presently involved in data entry to implement the new IMAS, Probate PCS software to facilitate the probate records system from docketing to deadline. The support of the City Council and administration in the budget process is most appreciative to achieve this goal of modernization. Work is also being done on a regular basis, with the system vendor to eliminate all manual typewriting by the department.

All Court personnel including the Clerk and Judge continue to insure the compliance by attorneys/fiduciaries of Court orders in the area of bond premiums, accounts, status reports, inventories, etc. Ultimately, automation of our docket system will greatly facilitate this activity and assuredly will increase compliance with these mandates, which is the Court's ultimate goal. Presently, and even without full automation, our Court is, as always, at the forefront among probate courts in this regard. This has been accomplished despite the inexperience of two staff members who joined the court in the latter part of the fiscal year ending **June 30th, 2004**;

Probate Court continues to be committed to excellence as we move forward into the 21st century, to provide the best service and forum for city tax payers in an efficient, cost effective manner.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul V. Jabour Esq." with a flourish at the end.

Paul V. Jabour, Esq.
Clerk

PVJ/sn

FILED

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DEPT. OF CITY CLERK
PROVIDENCE, R.I.