



Helene A. A. Tomlinson
City Solicitor

Greg Pappas
Director of Elections

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager 

FROM: Greg Pappas, Director of Elections

CC: Helene A. A. Tomlinson, City Solicitor
Conor Baldwin, Chief Financial Officer

DATE: February 28, 2023

**SUBJECT: MOTION RESPONSE: 2/14/2023 – C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Update
The City Council On Repairs Made To The Voting Machine For The Hearing Impaired.**

During the discussion on the motion, a reference was made to an issue which occurred at the most recent election. The machines in question are our AutoMark ballot readers for sight and hearing impaired persons. The machines were not “broken”, per-se, but rather the problem was with the feeding of the ballots through the machine. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ ballot contractor this year had size problems that effected machines in municipalities all across the Commonwealth, including ours. The issue took place at the Reilly School polling location. A husband and wife, who are sight impaired had a problem getting their ballots through an AutoMark machine. Ms. Shannon Gouveia, from the Elections Office, went to the polling location with another machine. The wife’s ballot worked on the second machine but her husband’s still would not process. Ms. Gouveia then brought the couple back to city hall along with their dog. She tried two (2) more machines. The fourth (4th) one worked. She then made sure they got a ride home. AutoMark contracts with the Commonwealth to service our machines. They will be coming to Lowell between March and July to do a maintenance check on each machine.

In addition, the Elections office is working with the Chief Financial Officer and the Manager’s Office to replace many of the voting machines. The Elections Office and the CFO have scheduled a meeting with LHS, our voting machine company, to discuss purchasing new voting machines and potential specifications. LHS let us borrow 5 machines for the November election at no cost to the City due to malfunctions with the machines, so we are already short that amount for the upcoming city election. The Council had previously appropriated \$250,000 in the 2021 capital budget which is available to use to replace several of the machines. The Elections Office will also work with the Disability Commission to ensure access for Lowell residents with disabilities to the election process and continue discussions regarding potential funding in the Disability Commission revolving fund towards additional accessibility improvements.

Please let me know if there are any questions on this matter.