

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Referral by the Registrar of Voters, Griswold

File No. 2025-006

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This referral was brought pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b. Cynthia Martin (“Martin”) Republican Registrar of Voters (“ROV”) for the Town of Griswold alleges in her complaint that the Respondents, Jennifer Gauthier (“Gauthier”) the Democratic ROV for Griswold, and Karen Langlois (“Langlois”), Jewett City (Griswold) borough clerk, failed to provide proper notice to ROV Martin of a ballot position lottery. The referral also alleges that the Respondents improperly received and stored ballots prior to an election. After an investigation of the complaint, the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

Complaint

1. On or about March 21, 2025, the Commission received the above-captioned complaint and on April 2, 2025, the Commission voted it necessary to investigate the complaint.

Relevant Legal Authority

2. This matter is governed by Connecticut General Statutes §9-253 which provides in pertinent part:

When a major or minor party is entitled to nominate two or more candidates for a particular office, the order of the names of its candidates for such office appearing on the voting machine ballot label shall be determined by the registrars of voters by lot in a ceremony which shall be open to the public, except as hereinafter provided...The *registrars of voters shall provide at least five days' public notice* for each ceremony held under this section. [*Emphasis added*].

Facts Found After Investigation

3. An investigation found that on February 20, 2025, a meeting was held in the town of Griswold in preparation for an upcoming borough election for Jewett City. The purpose of the meeting was to have the old borough clerk aid the transition of the new borough clerk and to discuss a timeline pertaining to the upcoming May 5, 2025 borough election.

4. Among the meeting attendees were the former and present borough clerks, as well as

multiple ROV officials from both parties, including the Deputy and Assistant Republican ROVs. Republican ROV Martin was unable to attend due to a family emergency.

5. During the meeting it was determined that it was necessary to select a date to hold a ballot position lottery pursuant to General Statutes §9-253. Using the May 5th election date, March 6th was proposed as the lottery date.

6. Evidence shows that during this meeting, Respondent Gauthier conferred with the Selectman's secretary, whose office was directly across from where this meeting was being held, to assess availability of the "main meeting room" for a March 6th lottery. This date was confirmed and is reflected as such in the notes of the meeting that were taken by Respondent Gauthier.

7. There is conflicting evidence whether these meeting notes were received by ROV Martin. An email was sent by Respondent Gauthier on February 23, 2025 to ROV Martin referencing attached meeting notes, but there is no conclusive evidence that the notes were attached or received. Similarly, there is a lack of evidence that ROV Martin ever advised Respondent Gauthier, prior to the lottery being held, that she had not received the notes.

8. Upon investigation it was found; however, that at some point following the February 20th Meeting, Deputy Republican ROV Kelsey Picco advised ROV Martin of the March 6th lottery date.

9. On or about February 27, 2025, Respondent Gauthier created flyers regarding the March 6, 2025 lottery date. These flyers were posted at the Town Hall, at the ROV office, at the municipal center bulletin board, and a copy was emailed to both town committee chairs.

10. Upon investigation it was determined that on or about March 13, 2025, ballots to be used for the May 5th election were delivered to the town clerk. These ballots were picked up by Respondent Langlois who with the Deputy Democratic ROV, placed the ballots into the safe at the ROV office. The safe was inside a locked storage closet.¹

Analysis & Conclusions of Law

11. Pursuant to General Statutes §9-253, the ROVs shall provide at least five days' public notice of the ballot position lottery. Respondent Gauthier satisfied this requirement by posting flyers related to the lottery at various places in town.² Further, there is no evidence or allegation

¹ Keys for the locked storage room are possessed only by the Selectman, the Democratic ROV and the Republican ROV. Because Respondent Gauthier was a candidate, her key was possessed by the Deputy Democratic ROV. The access code to the safe itself is known only by the ROVs and their deputies.

² The public notice requirement under §9-253 does not mandate publishing legal notice in newspapers and/or on the town website as is required under other Title 9 statutes, e.g., General Statutes §9-226, legal notice for municipal elections.

that the lottery was not open to the public.

12. While Republican ROV Martin alleges that she was unaware of the lottery date until after it occurred, as she had been dealing with a family emergency, the evidence suggests that her deputy and assistant registrars were aware of the lottery date and that efforts were made to inform ROV Martin of the same.

13. The Commission further finds that Respondent Langlois' acceptance and storage of the ballots prior to the election was not in violation of any Title 9, General Statutes or Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.³

14. The Commission finds that based on its investigation of this referral, the Respondents have not violated any election law.

15. The Commission therefore, under the narrow and specific circumstances detailed herein, dismisses this matter as the allegations were not supported by the facts or the law after investigation.

ORDER

The following Order is recommended on the basis of the aforementioned findings:

That the Commission dismisses this matter.

Adopted this 12th day of September, 2025 at Hartford, Connecticut.



Stephen T. Penny, Chairman

³ Storing ballots in a locked location, access of which is exclusively controlled by the ROVs substantially complies with Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies §9-242a-8.