

Good afternoon Jeanette,

I just learned that a provision has been added to the miscellaneous election bill that says:

“Towns that do not vote at their Town Office will be responsible to go back to their offices at 7 pm on the day of the election to collect any ballots that may have been dropped off.”

As you know, most of the time we hold our elections in the Municipal Building, so this is not an issue for us. However, there are times – like this past November – when we are off site. In that situation, we post a large sign on the door letting people know that if they are dropping their ballots off, they need to be brought to the voting location if it is after 4pm. Otherwise, election officials come by just after 4 and pick up any ballots that were dropped off or put in the mail.

It would be extremely difficult to free up election workers to come back at 7pm to collect ballots. All of our elections workers have a role – and generally after people get out of work tends to be the busiest time for voting. If this provision were adopted, we would need them at the office exactly at 7pm (or a few minutes earlier) to insure that ballots are not being dropped off after polls close. And then our counters would have to wait until they get back and their ballots are processed before they could start counting.

We feel that sending someone back to the office at 4pm to collect the ballots, and communicating through a clear sign the location that ballots should be brought after 4pm should be sufficient. I strongly encourage you to speak out against sending election workers back to the office to collect ballots at 7pm.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this.

Thank you,

*Hilary Francis*

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