



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

Registrar of Voters office
Town of Stratford
Stratford CT 06615

STRATFORD ROV 2023: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

JANUARY—APRIL 2023

Registrars conduct annual Canvass of town's registered voters. Using multiple sources of information, including change of addresses from US Postal Service, office sends out thousands of letters to registered voters who may have moved out of town or across town in an effort to keep records accurate and up to date. Voters are made Inactive if they fail to respond, then removed after eight years of inactivity.

Over the course of the calendar year, 8,424 additions, changes and removals were made to the records of the town's 35,000 registered voters.





Sunday Afternoon Talks



**Early Voting in CT-
What Does it Mean?**

Guest Speakers: Lou DeCilio & James Simon

Town of Stratford Registrars Lou DeCilio and James Simon host an informational forum answering all your questions about what early voting in Connecticut now means.

Sunday, March 19, 2023 2 pm Lovell Room
Free & Open to the Public!

MARCH 2023

Registrars conduct workshop for Stratford residents on "Early Voting in Connecticut: What does it mean?" Part of Stratford Library's Sunday Afternoon talks. Feedback from the 25+ participants helped guide registrars in selecting the town's Baldwin Community Center as the location for Early Voting, which begins in conjunction with the April 2, 2024 presidential primary election.

SPRING AND FALL 2023

Registrars Simon and DeCilio conduct separate workshops in each of 32 junior-year Civics classes at Stratford and Bunnell High Schools. Goal: provide a behind the scenes look at how voting and elections work in Stratford and across Connecticut, in hope of sparking interest and engagement. Workshops are an annual event in May and November (since half the students take Civics each semester); 550 Stratford high school students are reached every year.

Interested students are also trained as mock poll workers in May to help conduct the Senior Class elections, which are overseen by the Registrars using the town's professional voting equipment. Stratford Rotary pays the cost of programming the machines and printing the ballots for the student candidates.

The Registrar's office then hires 20+ high school students for paid positions at the polls on Election Day.

APRIL 2023

Registrars take leadership roles in planning twice-a year ROVAC (Registrars Of Voters Association of Connecticut) conferences in April and September. Registrar DeCilio is on the ROVAC audit committee; Registrar Simon is on the Education and Handbook committees. Major conference issues: replacing state's aging voting tabulator machines; updating state's CVRS (Connecticut Voter Registration System); getting greater state reimbursement for costs associated with Early Voting in 2024 and beyond.

MAY 2023

As part of ROV office outreach, registrars conduct special election for residents in the Oronoque Village (OV) tax district. By using town's professional vote tabulators, the time needed to compute results drops from four hours to a matter of minutes, saving OV thousands of dollars in legal costs.



JUNE 2023

The town completes its redistricting process; 1,754 of town's 35,000 are personally notified by postcard that their voting location has been changed. Revised district lines will be used for next 10 years, starting with November 2023 election.

JUNE 2023

Registrars return to Stratford and Bunnell high schools on the day that graduating seniors receive their caps and gowns. Taking advantage of the captive audience, Registrars underscore the right to vote and the importance of voting; they urge eligible students to fill out a voter registration card at the session or via an online link. At the high school, the town often gains 200+ newly registered voters each June; comparably sized towns report signing up only a dozen or two.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2023

The ROV office prepares for a September primary election by testing tabulator machines, hiring and training poll workers, and issuing petitions to any candidates who want to challenge party-endorsed candidates. Only one candidate meets the requirements to force a primary election; the primary is held Sept. 12, but only for Democratic voters, only in District 3 (Johnson House), and the only contested office is the party nomination for Town Council.

OCTOBER 2023

In preparation for November election, Registrars test the tabulators used at each polling location to count the vote; program the computer cards for tabulator machines with names of candidates and election details; hire 110 poll workers; set up polling locations at schools in each of the 10 voting districts; and prepare for Election Day Registration at Town Hall.

NOVEMBER 7, 2023

Registrars conduct General Election of candidates for Town Council, Board of Education, Land Use Boards, and Constable. Results for Town Council race in District 6 were so close that it triggered automatic recount; recount showed same 11-vote difference as election night results.

Along with other municipalities, Stratford was selected through a lottery conducted by the Secretary of State's office to have some of its election results audited. The State asked for an audit of District 1 (Lordship School) and the ballots cast for two of the offices. The recounted total was precisely the same as that counted on Election Day, and the results were reported back to the state.

ROV Budget 2023-24: Getting Ready for Early Voting

TOWN OF STRATFORD ADOPTED OPERATING BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2024

ORG	OBJ	DEPARTMENT/DESCRIPTION	FY 2020 ACTUAL	FY2021 ACTUAL	FY2022 UNAUDITED	FY2023 BUDGET	FY2024 COUNCIL ADOPTED	PERCENT CHANGE
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS								
01106	6003	Payroll - Regular	217,354	181,911	181,018	178,681	189,195	
01106	6102	Printing & Stationery	206	566	164	700	700	
01106	6302	Equipment Service	5,600	5,600	6,300	6,300	7,500	
01106	6343	Education/Travel Expense	1,281	2,215	2,582	3,100	3,100	
01106	6463	Deputy Registrars	800	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	
01106	6464	Canvassers	488	926	788	1,000	1,000	
01106	6465	Election	49,163	64,413	52,117	56,500	55,000	
01106	6526	Primaries/Specials	2,455	31,558	7,301	34,000	20,000	
01106	6599	Election Material Equipment	1,331	2,249	1,266	2,250	2,250	
01106	6606	EARLY VOTING	-	-	-	-	10,000	
			278,678	290,438	251,536	283,531	289,745	2.19%
HEADCOUNT			4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	

MAJOR DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Registrars of Voters are responsible for the administration of all local, state and national elections, registration of eligible voters, and conducting primaries and referendums. Our mission is to ensure the accuracy and integrity of all results by providing professional and efficient services in an impartial manner and to encourage all eligible citizens to exercise their right to vote.
- Cyber resiliency and security of our Elections continues to be a top priority. Our office continues to attend courses to address the constant threats.
- Equipment Services: We were notified of an increase to our Optical Scanning Machine Maintenance Contract through LHS Associates.
- Election Account: FY2023 was a Gubernatorial Election Year compared to FY2024, which will be a Local Election Year. Turnout historically decreases due to the offices on the ballot. Normally due to the decrease in turnout, we can decrease the election account. However, due to the increase in minimum wage we had to adjust our pollworker payroll negating the usual decrease.
- Primaries/Specials accounts fluctuate depending on the type of election conducted (i.e. Presidential, Gubernatorial or Local). The primaries/election account, for this budget cycle, is based on the projected assumption of a town wide single Presidential Party Primary in April 2023. This account also considers one or two potential district primaries which could take place in September 2023. This account does not take into consideration any unexpected special elections, primaries or referendum which may occur.
- The unanticipated major expense to every municipality in Connecticut will be Early Voting. Our calculation is based on ten days for the 2023 Election and ten days for the

There is a different kind of election held every year in Stratford – for example, presidential in 2020, mayoral in 2021, state offices in 2022, and town council in 2023. The budget for the ROV office changes with the type of election and whether there are any additional primary or special elections in a given year.

The ROV budget for 2023-24 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) had to cover the cost of a Sept. 12, 2023 primary election in one Town Council district; the town wide Nov. 7 municipal election in November 2023; and the presidential primary election set for April 2, 2024. In general, spending will track the same kind of election held four years earlier (plus additional costs like the Connecticut minimum wage going up for poll workers).

One unknown was the cost of the start of Early Voting for four days before the upcoming April 2, 2024 presidential primary. The actual cost for Stratford is now projected at about \$13,000, and the state’s decision to provide a flat \$10,500 to each municipality, regardless of size, will not cover all of the town’s real costs. There will be much higher costs for the expected August 2024 primary election (seven days of Early Voting) and the Nov. 5, 2024 presidential election (14 days of Early Voting), but they both will be covered by the 2024-25 town budget.

STRATFORD: ONE OF HIGHEST VOTER REGISTRATION RATES

Stratford is the 17th largest Connecticut municipality, based on the 2020 U.S. Census. If we look at the number of registered voters in the Top 20 communities, and the percentage of residents registered to vote, we find Stratford has the second highest percentage of residents who are registered to vote – ahead of such towns as Fairfield, Greenwich and West Hartford.

Twenty largest CT Municipalities, ranked by % residents registered to vote (2022)

Rank/size	City	Population	Reg. voters 2022	% Registered
18	Milford	52,308	38,277	73.18
17	STRATFORD	52,360	34,812	66.49
11	Fairfield	61,737	40,114	64.98
10	Greenwich	63,455	41,146	64.84
9	West Hartford	64,034	41,305	64.50
14	Bristol	60,733	37,369	61.53
6	Norwalk	90,821	54,616	60.14
19	East Hartford	50,971	30,084	59.02
20	Middletown	47,164	27,583	58.48
12	Hamden	61,160	34,877	57.03
15	Manchester	59,452	33,846	56.93
2	Stamford	134,820	73,447	54.48
13	Meriden	60,790	30,716	50.53
7	Danbury	86,197	43,496	50.46
16	West Haven	55,518	27,829	50.13
4	Hartford	121,562	60,790	50.00
5	Waterbury	113,783	54,128	47.57
1	Bridgeport	148,529	69,449	46.76
8	New Britain	74,022	33,829	45.70
3	New Haven	133,874	54,030	40.36

Municipal registration from SOTS, November 2022;

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SOTS/ElectionServices/Registration_and_Enrollment_Stats/Nov22RE.pdf

If we expand the list to the 30 largest municipalities and also bring in such nearby communities East Haven, Ansonia, Orange, and Derby, Stratford continues to do well, ranking sixth highest on the expanded list of 34 municipalities.

If you take our 34,800 registered voters and add in residents who are too young to vote and convicted felons who are not eligible to vote, the percentage of town residents who are registered exceeds 80%.

“DON'T YOU PEOPLE JUST WORK ONE DAY PER YEAR?”

What do Registrars do between elections? You may be surprised, based on a list of statutory duties from the Connecticut Secretary of State:

1. REGISTER VOTERS

Receive and process voter registration applications.

Schedule and conduct voter registration sessions.

2. MAINTAIN VOTER REGISTRY LISTS

Prepare, maintain and update a list of active and inactive voters. Prepare a voter list for each polling place.

Organize and conduct the annual canvass of voters to ascertain residency. Remove from the list electors who move from the voting district, pass away, or are disenfranchised.

Enroll party members and prepare and maintain party enrollment lists.



3. PARTICIPATE IN ABSENTEE VOTING ADMINISTRATION

Remove absentee ballot voters from the official voter registry list prior to an election, primary, or referendum.

Appoint and train people to count absentee ballots.

Supervise absentee balloting at institutions or dwelling places with 20 or more voters.

4. CONDUCT ELECTIONS

Appoint and train poll workers (i.e., Deputy and Assistant Registrars, moderators, official checkers, ballot clerks, tabulator tenders, greeters) based on need and historical election patterns and results.

Supervise all poll workers on the day of each election, primary, or referendum.

Declare polling place locations by voting district, including the place where absentee ballots are counted (Town Hall). Ensure polling places meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Request police presence at a polling place, if necessary, especially if school is in session.

Participate in recanvassing in the event of a voting discrepancy or an automatic recount in an especially tight election.

Prepare list of presidential and overseas voters who are not on the registry list.

5. ENSURE THE PROPER MAINTENANCE, TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE, AND PREPARATION OF VOTING MACHINES

Help determine if a voting machine should no longer be used. Test and program the tabulators and prepare them for Election Day.

Train polling location Moderators on the machines' operation.

(Source: Adapted from CT Secretary of State's Office; 8-23-23)



IT TAKES AN ELECTION TEAM

With 10 voting locations to staff on Election Day, plus same day voting at Town Hall, the Registrar of Voters office needs a lot of help to ensure Stratford's elections are run smoothly. We hire 100+ poll workers for each town-wide election; here is a look at what each type of poll worker does:

- ✓ **Moderators** serve as the chief official at a polling location. It is the Moderator's job to make the process of voting as smooth as possible for the elector and ensure the integrity of the election. (§ 9-439)
- ✓ **Assistant Registrars** (one from each party) deal with all voters who are not able to go through the normal voting process. They assist the Moderator with opening and closing the polls and assist voters with special needs.
- ✓ **Official Checkers** look at each voter's identification pursuant to state law. (§ 9-20) They locate a voter's name in the official voter registry list and mark that they have voted.
- ✓ **Ballot Clerks** give each voter a ballot and offer a privacy folder. If the voter has spoiled a ballot or wishes to change it, the ballot clerk issues a replacement ballot in exchange for the old ballot.
- ✓ **Tabulator Tenders** are in charge of the voting tabulator, assisting voters, and preserving the voters' right to ballot secrecy.
- ✓ **Set Up workers** help transform 10 public schools into voting locations by bringing the needed equipment, tables, chairs and setting up voting lines.

Interested in working on Election Day? We are looking both for seasoned workers and energetic newcomers, all of whom must be able to leave any partisan feelings at the door and help us conduct an effective, efficient and fair election. Contact us at registrars@townofstratford.com

STRATFORD'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION IS NOVEMBER 7, 2023

Are you ready to vote?

<p>1. Am I eligible to vote?</p> <p>Focus your cellphone camera on this QR code and follow the prompt</p>  <p>Or click on Voting Eligibility (ct.gov)</p>	<p>2. How to check my voting registration + location?</p> <p>Focus your camera on this QR code and follow the prompt</p>  <p>Or click on https://portaldir.ct.gov/sots/LookUp.aspx</p>
<p>3. How can I register to vote?</p> <p>Focus your camera on this QR code and follow the prompt</p>  <p>Or click on https://voterregistration.ct.gov/</p>	<p>4. How can I get an Absentee Ballot?</p> <p>Focus your camera on this QR code and follow the prompt</p>  <p>Or click on Connecticut Online Absentee Ballot Request Portal</p>
<p>More questions?</p> <p>Stratford Registrar of Voters office Phone: 203-385-4048, 4049 Email: Registrars@townofstratford.com</p>	

The Stratford ROV office is increasing its use of QR codes so voters can register and make changes to their registration more easily

**COME VISIT US AT STRATFORD TOWN HALL, ROOM 117,
MONDAY-FRIDAY, 8:30a – 430p:**

- ✓ Registrar James Simon (D); jsimon@townofstratford.com
- ✓ Registrar Louis DeCilio (R); ldecilio@townofstratford.com
- ✓ Judy Scala, administrative assistant; jscala@townofstratford.com