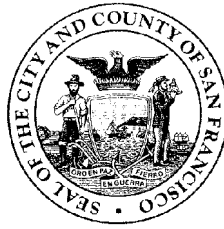


ELECTIONS COMMISSION
City and County of San Francisco



Richard P. Matthews, President

Chris Jerdonek, Vice President
Charles Jung
Jill Rowe
Rosabella Safont
Winnie Yu

John Arntz

Director of Elections

Elections Commission Meeting – Minutes
Wednesday, October 15, 2014
City Hall, Room 408
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, California 94102

1. President Matthews called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Present: Commissioners Jerdonek, Safont, Yu, and Matthews. Excused absences: Commissioners Rowe and Jung. No appointee of the Board of Education. Also present: Director of Elections John Arntz and Deputy City Attorney Andrew Shen.

2. Public comment. None

3. Public Employee Performance Evaluation.

Item delayed to a future meeting. No public comment.

4. Approval of Minutes from previous meeting

Moved by Commissioner Safont and seconded by Commissioner Jerdonek to approve the Minutes of the September 17, 2014 Elections Commission Meeting. No public comment. Vote was UNANIMOUS to APPROVE.

5. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioners Jerdonek and Matthews will both serve as Election Inspectors for the November 4 election.

6. Director's Report

VBM Ballots. The Director reported that the U.S. Postal Service had contacted the Department the previous week because some vote-by-mail (VBM) mailing envelopes had been damaged by their equipment—tears, crunching, marks. The contents of the envelope were almost all fine and usable. A total of approximately 9,400 outgoing VBM ballots were affected. The Department has received 30 calls to date. The Department had staffed the call center for Saturday, October 11; however, when they received 8 calls in four hours, they closed the center for the day.

The Director said that this does not appear to have had much effect on operations or on voters. The Department worked with the print vendor to reprint and mail to voters the day after receiving batches of information of the voters affected. The Director is still waiting to hear from the USPS about a formal explanation of the cause of the ballot damage. The USPS offered to pay for the costs of the remailing.

The Department has received approximately 6,300 returned VBMs. This is roughly 11% lower than projections, but the Director pointed out that these projections are not necessarily translatable to final turnout, but is just a number formulated to help guide staffing and resources.

Precinct ballots. Cards 1, 3, and 4 for the precinct ballots have had to be reprinted because the design vendor (Dominion) did not correctly format the border coding so that the precinct tabulators could read the cards in any orientation with which they were inserted. This is a total of 1.2 million cards. Dominion will pay for that.

The Department is now approximately ten days behind schedule in packing the ballot cards for Inspectors to collect and take to their precinct. The Director said that this will be made up.

Early voting. 267 early voters as of October 20. They were projecting 567 based on previous election data, but again, the Director cautions that this should not be used to project final turnout.

Administration. Procurement, staffing, scheduling are all ongoing. The Port of San Francisco has been in touch to inform the Department that the parking area adjacent to Pier 48 might be unavailable to the Department due to the needs of the Giants in their amazing post-season run.

The Department is running a special type of tax election for eight parcel holders near the Transbay Terminal.

The Department has received two machines for extraction of VBM ballots; testing and training on that equipment is starting.

The 5-card ballot is hard on the tabulation equipment.

Campaign services. Thursday, October 9 there was an informational session for the Election Observer Panel. Division managers gave presentations about their responsibilities. Campaign services is organizing a Department open house for Thursday, October 16 which they do before every election.

Outreach. Ninety-seven events have been scheduled to be held between October 1 and November 4. Ads are up on busses, television, social media, and a postcard mailer that went to every San Francisco address.

Pollworker Division. Looking for some Inspectors, and to have enough standby pollworkers on hand. The Department plans for an 8% cancellation rate. The Department has recruited more Field Election Deputies due to the high number of cards in the ballots. Equipment labs are being held, and the Pollworker Division is handing out fliers during pollworker classes to ensure that each pollworker knows about the labs.

President Matthews asked where the ballot cards are printed. Director Arntz replied that they are printed by K&H in Everett, Washington.

Commissioner Jerdonek asked if the Department knows what can be done to reduce the likelihood of VBM envelopes being damaged again in the future. Director Arntz

replied that they don't know yet, because the Post Office has not yet explained the specific cause. The Department will continue communicating with the Post Office.

Commissioner Jerdonek asked about the special tax election. Director Arntz explained that it is a special parcel tax election called a Mello-Roos election. Eight land owners are participating that include developers and public agencies. The amount of acreage owned by each parcel owner determines that owner's proportion of the total vote. Around \$1.2 billion of taxes are being voted on.

7. Discussion and possible action regarding the ongoing updates and improvements to the Commission's webpage.

Commissioner Jerdonek reported that the home page for the Commission now announces upcoming events such as meetings; there is an Election Plan archive page; the YouTube account has been created along with posting the audio for four recent meetings; the Twitter account has been established, through which two people contacted about the ballots, and Commissioner Jerdonek referred them to the Department of Elections.

8. Discussion and possible action related to notifying voters after elections in which their vote-by-mail ballot was rejected.

Commissioner Jerdonek referenced the memo he distributed at the August Commission meeting summarizing information about uncounted ballots in the June 2014 election. He raised the point that 1.9% of returned vote-by-mail ballots in San Francisco were ineligible to be counted, slightly below the California statewide rate. He said that a group called the California Voter Foundation (CVF) proposes that counties be required to notify voters when their VBM ballot was rejected and the reason for that; in this way, voters "can avoid making the same mistakes and repeatedly disenfranchising themselves." ("Improving California's Vote-By-Mail Process: A Three-County Study," Section V, Recommendations, California Voter Foundation, included in the agenda packet.) Commissioner Jerdonek also shared a sample letter from the San Francisco Department of Elections which gives that notice to a voter.

Director Arntz said that the Department has found that individual VBM voters seldom if ever commit the same error more than once, so he sees no evidence that supports the CVF's premise that voters "repeatedly disenfranchise themselves." Nonetheless, the Director said that he supports notification to voters and intends for the Department to continue using letters such as the one in the packet material to inform voters if their VBM ballot could not be counted and why.

Director Arntz pointed out that the Department tries to contact all VBM voters before Election Day if their return envelope has some voter error that could be corrected and thus rescue that person's vote. He said that he does not think that all counties do that.

President Matthews commented that a 1.9% error rate in any human task that is not performed often and comes with instructions that are dry and stilted is a very low rate, and possibly not improvable. He does, however, join in the support for notification to VBM voters if their ballot could not legally be counted, and the reason.

9. Discussion and possible action regarding items for future agendas. None. Adjourned at 6:47 p.m.