**Elections Commission Meeting**

**Wednesday, February 20, 2013**

**6:00 p.m.**

#### City Hall, Room 408

#### 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

#### San Francisco, California 94102

**DRAFT MINUTES**

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

President Jill Rowe called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. PRESENT: Commissioners Arnold Townsend, Rosabella Safont, and Richard P. Matthews.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Commissioner Catalina Ruiz-Healy.

Commissioner Gleason arrived at 6:03 pm. Commissioner Winnie Yu arrived at 6:08 pm.

1. **Public comment on any issue within the Elections Commission’s general jurisdiction unless otherwise included in an item on this agenda.** NO PUBLIC COMMENT
2. **Approval of Minutes from previous meetings.**

Commissioner Matthews motioned to approve the Minutes of the January 16, 2013 Elections Commission Meeting and it was seconded by Commissioner Safont. President Jill Rowe noted that Commissioner Ruiz-Healy was in attendance at the previous meeting and sited that her name needed to be added to the attendance. The roll call vote was UNANIMOUS to APPROVE the minutes.

1. **Director’s Report.**

Director Arntz

Division Reports

1. Administrative (Budget/Personnel) – Currently working on the performance measures which go into the budget as well as the climate action plan for the Department. The Department is supposed to estimate its carbon footprint and find ways to decrease it and how its promoting the “Transit-First” policy of the city. Both of these reports are due in March and they’re taking up a lot of time. Tomorrow is the day the Department inputs the information into the system so no changes can be made after that. If any changes need to be made the Mayor’s office will need to make them. Reimbursement information is being gathered to be sent to the community college and school district for their 2012 elections which were consolidated into the general election.
2. Ballot Distribution – have been working on using data trends numbers from previous elections to formulate to start a process in the Department where statistics are used more than they’ve been used in the past to measure work flow and efficiencies of processes. This group is the furthest along in the Department. The voter services division will begin tomorrow, along these same lines. Since there is no election in June, all the divisions are going through their procedures and updating the multi-volume procedures manual. This group is also looking at ballot extractors which are machines that open the envelope with the vote-by-mail ballots and extract the cards. Other counties use these machines and our group will be going to Contra Costa tomorrow to see just how they function. This group is also looking at automating the smaller elections that are held such as the health services retirement and community business district elections to where the envelopes will work better with the equipment that was purchased recently. This group has also created a scan card so instead of having to count all of the votes from the election they will be scanned and tabulated by using a homemade program.
3. Campaign Services - have been cleaning out the cabinets, looking at an old logbook dating back to1903 which had a petition to recall a police judge or commissioner as well as documents from 1906 trying to find poll workers.
4. Outreach Division - have set their goals for January to July prior to going in to the election cycle. The first community network meeting is next month and they’re developing a plan to reach voters and this is the foundation they’ll use to reach voters in November.
5. Poll Worker Division – have settled on 40 people to join the poll worker network and their first meeting will be in March. The Department took into consideration the number of years they’ve worked, positions, and different parts of the city they’ve worked in to get a fair representation of participants in the network meetings. There were approximately 200 respondents and they wrote essays about why they wanted to be a part of this group so now they’re trying to figure out how they can have the remaining 160 still be included in the group to provide feedback to the department after every election. The first meeting they will talk about the instructional material that will be used in the classes, they’re looking to redesign the kiosks at the polling places (because they’re broken down and recycled every election).
6. Precinct Services – they have been trying to pull all of their information into the new precinct numbers so this November the Department will consolidate the number of polling places it has because there is no State or Federal contest on the ballot; in the past it used the previous numbering system before but that doesn’t work anymore. The new registration system that was adopted 1 ½ years ago is taking a lot of time. The new “Sensitivity Training” video is still being viewed
7. Technology Division – Database work and teamed up with the ballot distribution division is trying to maximize the space in the computer room where the tabulators are being kept.
8. Voter Services – is doing a lot of maintenance work and follow-up with voter whose writing couldn’t be read, sending out cards to voters who haven’t voted in the last 8 elections if the Department gets a return from the post office it’ll inactivate them, going through deceased section of Chronicle and making note of the voters

Commissioner Matthews asked if there were any differences between the

Chronicle or any other published obituaries and whatever you get from Vital

statistics people?

Director Arntz answered yes there will be some because the Chronicle’s daily and

The Department gets monthly reports for the local agencies and quarterly updates

from the state.

Commissioner Matthews asked once a voter has been inactive all he has to do is

show up and present his I.D.?

Director Arntz said yes or he could just ask the Department for a vote by mail

ballot and the signature could be cross referenced at the poll.

Commissioner Rowe wanted to know if the only difference between an active

and inactive voter is whether or not they’re listed in the voter log.

Director Arntz stated the active voters would be sent a voter guide, notice, and

etc. but inactive voters aren’t sent anything. If the Department gets a “return to

sender” from the post office we know that’s one less voter guide to send and that

person is put on the inactive list. Without having positive information that they’ve

moved, etc., they can stay inactive 8 years before the Department can cancel

them. Every county sends registration information to the Secretary of State’s office

and they compare it to each counties information and brings in DMV information

as well as social security information to positively identify voters (Name, DL#, Last

4 digits of SS# or Unique ID#) in the correct counties. However, if no further

information is gathered the voter would stay on the inactive roll for 8 years and

then be cancelled at the end of the 8 year period.

Commissioner Rowe wanted to know in regards to deceased voters what

information is used to correctly identify the voters?

Director Arntz stated that you don’t always so you have to send out a letter stating

that you want to update the Department’s information. However the person’s date

of birth is key to their identification. The other trend is most of the time if the

person is elderly this would be a big indication that we’re on the right track.

Commissioner Rowe made the observation that it was a great idea to look more

closely at the cardboard kiosks. She’s worked a few elections now and she hasn’t

seen anyone look at them. The Poll Worker Network is greatly appreciated for

volunteering their time and participation.

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **Discussion and possible action regarding the Department of Elections budget for FY 2013-14 and 2014-15.**

Commissioner Matthews stated that BOPEC received a briefing from Director Arntz and asked him to give the commission a full report. Director Arntz reported that there are only a couple of lines that are of main concern. Line 3A (Temp. Salaries $450,000 and 3rd Ballot Card for June Election $291,287) The Mayor’s office has agreed with those additions for the base budget for the next fiscal year. There is also a $10 increase to the poll worker stipend that has not been noted but has been approved going forward for 13-14 and for 14-15 we will try to raise it again. We have also met with the Mayor’s office regarding the warehouse situation and he wants us to put together a plan where the postal service currently is occupying space.

Commissioner Matthews wanted to know if there was a total but there was none.

No Public Comment

Commissioner Matthews moved to approve the Department of Elections budget for FY 2013-14 and 2014-15. Commissioner Safont seconded it. Roll call vote was UNANIMOUS to APPROVE.

1. **Discussion and possible action regarding reducing and consolidating precincts.**

Commissioner Gleason suggests that the commission look at the reality of operating 560 precincts. The number of voter information pamphlets that are mailed out can be reduced and people should be able to opt for electronic version. My feeling for reducing the number of precincts has to be openly discussed so that the public understands why we’d be doing this so that they don’t feel that we’re taking away an opportunity for them to cast their ballots. The Director talked about doing some things that we could possibly do as a charter city or county that would allow us to approach the Secretary of State otherwise it’s a state code issue.

Director Arntz agrees that it’s a great idea. San Francisco should put itself out there as a pilot program with a deadline. For 5 years it will remove the permanent vote-by-mail voters from the total number of registered voters in each precinct and do a study on it and report back to the legislature or something like that. The law requires us to order ballot cards that equals 75% of the registered voters for each precinct so if 52% voted by mail then (there are some precincts where 75% are permanent vote-by-mail voters) we have to include them in the precinct counts so if we were able to exclude those folks that would reduce the number of polling places in SF. It wouldn’t be drastic but we would have more leeway and put polling places in better locations. It might be a bit more of a walk for some people but for most elections I think it would work out pretty good and it would be a big saver for us as well. So essentially we end up ordering ballot cards for people that are never going to show up.

Commissioner Townsend suggested when doing so that caution be exercised and that senior citizens be kept in mind. Also to be thorough and to make voting as easy as possible for every single person that we possibly can.

Commissioner Rowe inquired about the legal framework and who would be the one to make the request and whose consent is needed for a pilot program, etc.?

Assistant District Attorney Mollie Lee stated that the City has an established process for proposing changes to state legislation; they can either go through the State legislation committee or the board of supervisors. The commission would come up with its proposal then decide which entity it would approach. There is a City Lobbyist at the State level who would get involved in this and would funnel the proposal through him.

Director Arntz also suggested prior to submitting any kind of draft of legislation perhaps a commissioner could go up and meet with a board member just to “bounce and idea around for feedback.” By doing so you’re not doing any lobbying or submitting legislation but just on a fact-finding visit and can pick their brains to see what they think about the idea itself and know whether or not it would be a good idea to bring back to the board.

Commissioner Matthews asked who did the Director think should be targeted. Director Arntz indicated that the legislature would be best at this time because some of them may have the idea that they would like to be the Secretary of State in 2014 so they may entertain the idea. He also agrees with Commissioner Townsend in regards to the voter guides. He too prefers having a physical copy of the voter guide therefore the key to the whole issue is balance. Perhaps when deciding on this issue, consider criteria such as there has to be a polling place within a certain number of blocks of a senior home.

Commissioner Gleason indicated that he’s looking at this as a common sense issue that we have 52% of the people voting by mail and it’s just going to grow from there but I do acknowledge what Commissioner Townsend says. Nationally we’ve conducted Free Fair and Open Elections and now we have an opportunity to look at a way of running it more efficiently. I think we need to proceed with caution but the fact of the matter is the number of people voting by mail is increasing.

Commissioner Townsend stated that perhaps the way to get her not to stand in line for 6 hours to vote is to make polling places more efficient NOT to get rid of her polling place. I understand I’m just real cautious about that. I have some people at my church who are quite alert and active at my church but because of their history and background and because of where they come from are NEVER going to vote by mail. They are going to go to the polls because of what it costs for them to be able to go to the polls and I never voted absentee and never would have until I got on this commission.

Commissioner Rowe stated that I think it’s a good comment and we need to keep that in mind. I do know that in SF polling places are close in proximity.

Commissioner Matthews moved that the President or the President’s designee be authorized by this commission to look into this topic and further it by investigation in Sacramento conversation with anyone in legislature before we approach our city lobbyist have to report back to the commission and the commission can make a decision at that point. Commissioner Safont seconded.

Commissioner Gleason stated that this type of proposal has been made before in Sacramento both the assembly and the state legislature both have election committees; he thinks Lonnie Hancock chairs for the state senate side. As part of this somebody should do the background research on this, he volunteer to do it and provide it to everybody at the next meeting on what’s been done in the past and the players involved.

Roll call vote UNANIMOUS to APPROVE.

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **Discussion and possible action regarding voter registration through the California Department of Motor Vehicles.**

Commissioner Gleason reached out to Kim Alexander and she has not reached out back to him. He has located some documents the Election Commission had from four years ago but would like to continue this for the next meeting.

1. Commissioners’ Reports

Commissioner Townsend reports that tonight is his last meeting. He reminded

the Mayor’s office last week that this was his last meeting and President Rowe

may want to send him a gentle reminder as well.

President Rowe thanked Commissioner Townsend and commended him for his

service and for being the longest serving Commissioner serving 12 consecutive

years.

1. **Announcements**

Disclosure forms coming up; SEI Form 700, Ethics Training Forms due April 2, 2013, Sunshine Ordinance April 1, 2013 Must have original signature from you so fax/email is unacceptable.

1. **Discussion and possible action regarding items for future agendas.**
2. **Public Employee Performance Evaluation: Commission Secretary Tachina Alexander**

**Back in Open Session at 7:38 pm**

Commissioner Townsend made a motion: That the Elections Commission (not) disclose its closed session deliberations regarding the public employee performance evaluation. Commissioner Matthews seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS to NOT DISCLOSE.

1. Adjournment 7:39pm