

ELECTIONS COMMISSION
City and County of San Francisco

Christopher Jerdonek, President
Jill Rowe, Vice President
Charles Jung
Dominic Paris
Rosabella Safont
Winnie Yu



John Arntz, Director of Elections

Nadya Hewitt, Secretary

MEETING MINUTES

San Francisco Elections Commission
Wednesday, May 20, 2015
6:00 p.m.
City Hall, Room 408
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, California 94102

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

President Jerdonek called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and welcomed Commission Secretary Nadya Hewitt to her first regular meeting. Present: Commissioners Jerdonek, Jung, Paris, Rowe, and Safont. Commissioner Yu arrived at 6:03 p.m. during item 2. The seat appointed by the City Attorney is currently vacant. Also present: Director of Elections John Arntz and Deputy City Attorney Joshua White.

2. Discussion and possible action regarding open data

San Francisco's Chief Data Officer Joy Bonaguro gave a presentation on open data in the City and County of San Francisco. She is the country's third Chief Data Officer at the City level. Topics discussed included the City's open data policy and legislation, the City's data portal available from <http://datasf.org>, the City's plan to publish more data, how open data currently manages city services, and how open data can be further utilized to assist with business processes.

Ms. Bonaguro pointed out the current data inventory for the Department of Elections. The inventory was created by the Department and enumerates and prioritizes possible data sets that the Department can publish in the future as open data. She described the City Open Data Census, which lists the characteristics of what it means for data to be open: digital, public, free, online, machine-readable, available in bulk, openly licensed, and up-to-date. She described the City's Data Academy, which her office launched last fall and offers classes for city employees on things like data management, data visualization, and information management.

Following the presentation were a question and answer session and discussion.

Director Arntz said the Department is working on publishing the voter guide online not just as PDF but also as HTML for the November 2015 election, as well as other things like the nomination information when someone files for office. Director Arntz said the Department is also looking at publishing as open data certain information that would be useful for the Department internally.

Public comment:

Mr. Dale McGrew introduced himself as the Executive Director of the nonprofit We Vote. He requested that the information in the voter guide be released as open data, for example candidates and measures, including in different languages.

Mr. David Cary expressed appreciation for the Department's progress on publishing data and said that the need for transparency and the timing of elections make elections different from other departments.

Mr. Nolan Love introduced himself as the founder of the company PollVault.com. They are publishing federal, state, and local election information for the first time. However, they had to collect the information manually since it is not being made available in a machine-readable format.

Ms. Asha John introduced herself as a volunteer for Code for San Francisco. She said that they worked closely with the Ethics Commission and built an application that pulls data live from the City's data portal so people can see how much money is raised and spent by campaigns. She expressed interest in combining that data with open data from the Department of Elections.

President Jerdonek mentioned an organization called the Voting Information Project which is a partnership between Google and Pew Charitable Trusts to make election data available to the public for free nationally through Google's Civic API. The project is conducting a pilot project in California that counties can join for free. It currently involves the counties of Orange, Monterey, San Bernardino, San Diego, Solano, and Sonoma.

3. General Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Minutes for previous regular meeting

Moved by Commissioner Jung and seconded by Commissioner Paris to approve the draft minutes of the April 15, 2015 Elections Commission Meeting. No public comment. The vote was UNANIMOUS to approve.

5. Approval of Minutes for previous meeting

Moved by Commissioner Jung and seconded by Commissioner Paris to approve the draft minutes of the April 23, 2015 Special Elections Commission Meeting. No public comment. The vote was UNANIMOUS to approve.

6. Commissioners' Reports

President Jerdonek announced he is appointing Commissioner Paris to the Budget and Oversight of Public Elections Committee and thanked him for his willingness to serve.

President Jerdonek said that he spoke with Mr. Steven Bennett, who is a representative of San Francisco's current voting system vendor, Dominion Voting Systems. President Jerdonek said that Mr. Bennett shared with him that Dominion would be submitting its system for certification to the California Secretary of State's Office at the end of 2015, which is before early 2016, when Director Arntz said he would be issuing an RFP for a new voting system. President Jerdonek said that he would like to invite Mr. Bennett to a future meeting to discuss the system Dominion is submitting for certification. Director Arntz asked if other vendors would also be allowed to speak so as not to give Dominion preferential treatment. President Jerdonek said yes and that he would discuss the issue with Deputy City Attorney White before proceeding.

President Jerdonek said that Mr. Jason Fried of the Local Agency Formation Commission let him know that a draft version of their study on open source voting systems is now complete. The report is available online and in the public review file. Mr. Fried said they will be accepting comments until June 19. Mr. Fried offered to give a presentation about the draft at the next Commission meeting. Given the length of the report and the comment deadline, President Jerdonek said he will be referring the draft report to the Budget and Oversight of Public Elections Committee so the report can be discussed both in committee and by the full Commission.

Commissioner Paris said he would like to reach out to the Board of Education to learn what they are planning to do around voter outreach and education in September.

7. Director's Report

Director Arntz reported on departmental activities.

Due to the end of fiscal year, work orders and PO's are starting to be closed out.

A Language Access Ordinance Meeting was held regarding reporting requirements for other languages besides English.

The Department is working with the Ballot Production vendors to prepare for the addition of Filipino and are looking at getting an audio recording for the ballot on the touch screen.

The Department sent out 57,000 letters to notify voters that bilingual ballots would be available. The Department received an 18% response in return.

There has been no change in the budget since the last Commission meeting. Director Arntz is going to meet with budget and finance on June 15. If there is a challenge to the proposed budget, a meeting will be held on June 22.

The current Sheriff, Sheriff Mirkarimi, will be on the November 2015 ballot, so an alternative Security plan will be put into place. In the past, the procedure would be to have the Sheriff excuse himself from logistics regarding election plans, and the Field Operations Division would take over. Sheriff Mirkarimi is comfortable with this and has offered to have someone come to the next Elections Commission meeting to discuss the plan.

The 1950 Assistant Purchaser position has been filled. When DHR lists the 1840 and 1842 scores, hiring procedures will begin for those vacancies as well.

Ballot distribution along with the Mayor's office is holding Commercial Business elections for economic workforce development in Rincon Hill, West Portal and Dogpatch at the end of June through the beginning of July.

Ballot Distribution has over the past several years developed data sets used to project election activities. This was the first group to create data sets, and the knowledge collected will assist in forecasting staff needs and streamlining other processes.

The Department is developing a better process for the 1% manual tally process to get ballots from City Hall to the warehouse. The Department is working on ballot orders and processing going from a trilingual card to three bilingual cards, and several in the Department went to Alameda to learn processes in relationship to their State Senate race.

The Department is working on signage, and depending on if City Hall will permit, would like to hang information regarding the processes to inform people on what is going on. They are also working on color coding different processes. The languages have already been color coded: blue for English, green for Chinese, red for Spanish, and gold for Filipino.

Campaign Services hired some people for the front counter that started last week. The signatures in lieu of filing period will end on May 26 for Mayor and District 3 Board of Supervisors. The nomination period already began and will end June 9.

The Voter Information Network will hold a meeting in Room 34 of City Hall. Starting in June, 500 buses and 1000 signs informing voters of the bilingual ballot will circulate.

SFGTV finished another Election Connection documentary. There is a kiosk in City Hall that can stream this content.

The Poll Worker Division contacted 40 high schools about voter registration week. Seven schools invited the Department to come give presentations. The total number of potential voters in the various high schools was 60.

Outreach is looking at signage to have a more uniform look and feel to it. Since Room 34 is now going to become a bike room, the Department is working with City Hall to hold poll-worker trainings during the weekend.

Available polling locations are sufficient so scouting is not needed. Polling locations are being consolidated from 572 to 390. Delivery for polling places will be more streamlined by removing over 20 vans. The Department will be working with the Department of Public Works to obtain appropriate permits for Porta Potties for polling places.

Director Arntz reported that Publications is working on implementing the Filipino language and is hiring new staff to review the current language before it is translated.

The Voter Services Division has statistics to display content on internal processes. This will allow individuals in the Department to understand and know that their processes are up to date.

Director Arntz noted that processes are improving in the warehouse right now by transitioning the internet connection from DSL to a microwave-based system run by MonkeyBrains. This has internet speeds fifty to one hundred times faster which will allow things like video conferencing. They are also looking into using gravity-based conveyor belts and shipping machines similar to those used by UPS.

8. Discussion and possible action regarding the Commission Annual Report for the 2013 calendar year

President Jerdonek explained that this item was on the agenda because Vice President Rowe reported at the last meeting that the Commission had never adopted a 2013 Commission Annual Report.

Moved by Commissioner Safont and seconded by Commissioner Paris to approve the draft 2013 Commission Annual Report that was written previously by Vice President Rowe. No public comment. The vote was UNANIMOUS to approve.

9. Discussion and possible action regarding the Commission Annual Report for the 2014 calendar year

President Jerdonek reminded the Commission that Deputy City Attorney White had explained at the last Commission meeting that the Commission does have the authority per the Commission Bylaws to revise the draft Annual Report prepared by a previous Commission President.

President Jerdonek said that he wanted to suggest two sets of changes. The first set of changes was included in the agenda packet. The second set of changes was to remove the final section regarding the evaluation of the Director.

Vice President Rowe agreed with both sets of changes and clarified that the text to remove should be from line 92 to line 129 in the agenda packet document, in addition to the footnote.

Moved by Vice President Rowe and seconded by Commissioner Safont to approve the draft 2014 Commission Annual Report with both sets of changes. No public comment. The vote was UNANIMOUS to approve.

10. Agenda items for future meetings

President Jerdonek mentioned discussing the draft study on open source voting systems. He also said that he is still considering an RCV reporting policy.

Commissioner Paris suggested discussing what kinds of data the Department could publish as open data.

No public comment.

11. Public Employee Performance Evaluation for Director of Elections John Arntz

No public comment.

Moved by Commissioner Paris and seconded by Commissioner Safont to go into closed session. No discussion or public comment. The vote was UNANIMOUS to approve.

The Commission went into closed session at 7:47 p.m. Pursuant to Sunshine Ordinance section 67.16, the closed session attendees were the Commissioners, Deputy City Attorney Joshua White, and Commission Secretary Nadya Hewitt. The Commission resumed open session at 8:40 p.m.

Moved by Commissioner Safont and seconded by Commissioner Paris to disclose no information about the closed session discussion. No discussion or public comment. The vote was UNANIMOUS in favor.

Adjourned at 8:41 p.m.