Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: March 11, 2016
RE: Director's Report: March 16, 2016, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief statement of the work in which the Department of Elections (Department) is engaged relevant to the June and November 2016 elections.

A. To ensure the Department can properly conduct the upcoming elections, the Department continued to identify the necessary resources to procure and personnel to hire.
   1. Following Department of Human Resources' (DHR) procedures, the Department hired temporary personnel to assist with current workloads in the Precinct Services and Poll Worker Sections, Voter Services Division, Warehouse, Campaign Services Division, and Ballot Distribution Division and hiring plans are being finalized for additional personnel to join the Department. The Administration Division is cognizant that DHR will freeze the use of the City's personnel system in mid-May when DHR migrates to a new personnel system.
   2. Following practices set by the Office of Contract Administration, the Department is procuring two additional ballot extractors due to an expected increase in returned vote-by-mail ballots during the June and November elections.
   3. Continued to purchase materials and supplies in accordance with City procurement policies for various election-related and such purchases will be ongoing through May 2016.

B. To provide appropriate services to voters, the Department continued reviewing and updating plans and procedures and continued preparing associated materials and supplies.
   1. To increase service levels at the City Hall Voting Center, the Department has been modifying existing plans to increase by 13 the number of stations available to issue ballots, which also necessitates identifying new space for distributing materials and ballots to the Inspectors after their training classes and modifying related processes.
   2. To effectuate the Secretary of State's implementation of its statewide voter registration database in compliance with the Help America Vote Act, the Voter Services division continued reviewing and processing potential duplicate voter registration records while the Department's Technology Division prepared to conduct a full scale mock election using the statewide database that will include data extractions for permanent vote-by-mail voter mailings, receiving vote-by-mail ballots, exporting polling place data, reporting registration information and results reports, etc.
   3. To fulfill state and local election laws the Department reviewed and updated processes associated with election-related requirements such as the intake of ballot arguments, drafting security plans in collaboration with the Sheriff's Department, the locating of 54 polling places using a new web-based tablet application and newly categorizing the associated steps involved in obtaining polling sites, the preparation and distribution of materials for Field Election Deputies, and delivering voting equipment which included a mock staging of materials that delivery trucks will transport to determine truck capacities and appropriate handling sequences.
   4. Since the Department will lose access to Pier 48, Shed A, and Lot A due to the San Francisco Giants' night game occurring on Election Day, several divisions have considered alternative locations for staging more than 200 vehicles and have begun planning for the impact on established plans.
   5. To increase its capacity to answer phone calls and emails, the Department reorganized its office operations to create space for its phone bank to nearly double the number of ports available for connecting phones and computers for phone bank personnel.
6. To provide the appropriate ballots and voter guides to voters, the Publications Section continued collaborating with the voting system vendor to refine ballot drafts and evaluate layout options due to the large number of candidates for U.S. Senate and balancing legal requirements against voting system requirements California Elections Code (CEC) section 13109, reviewed and updated informational pages of the Voter Information Pamphlet in preparation for sending to the typesetter, created and distributed notices, agendas, and discussion materials and facilitated the meetings of the Ballot Simplification Committee under Municipal Elections Code (MEC) sections 610 and 620, prepared and published a Notice of District Election related to Proposition AA (Bay Restoration Authority District), and prepared a Notice of Ballot Arguments related to local ballot measures for newspaper publication (MEC section 525).

7. To meet staffing and language assistance requirements at the polls, the Poll Worker Section initiated its contacting high schools to schedule poll worker recruitment outreach, continued to finalize the bilingual poll worker requirement plan (includes state bilingual requirements, as well as City requirements developed in conjunction with the Department of Justice), continued with the opening of the recruitment office one day a week until April 11 when the office opens three days each week, mailed poll worker availability letters, and to engage young and future voters the Poll Worker Section developed concepts for “High School Voter Education Weeks” occurring in the last two weeks in April.

8. To support poll workers in their mission to assist voters, the Poll Worker Section completed the filming of several training videos and a new Poll Worker Mission video in collaboration with SFGovTV and is preparing to test bilingual online training in two weeks, and has continued to develop ballot issuing procedures since there will be a high number of primary ballot versions, and is updating instructions on how to activate voter cards for a primary election on the touch screen (Edge) accessible machine.

9. To provide clear instructions to vote-by-mail voters the Department conducted a focus group including members of various community and advocacy groups to review the insert and included in each vote-by-mail packet and signage provided each polling place and has implemented the focus group’s feedback.

10. To provide information to voters and candidates associated with the June presidential primary election the Campaign Services Division hosted a workshop on the preparation and submission of ballot arguments and in April will host a nomination workshop for candidates for the Board of Supervisors.

C. To facilitate the engagement of voters to participate in elections and to provide voters with information regarding the primary election, as well as the Department’s services, the Department continued outreach and registration-related activities.

1. To inform voters without party preferences of cross-over voting allowed by the American Independent, Democratic, and Libertarian parties, the Department developed a new page on its website, sflections.org, that provides information about primary election rules and a flowchart showing voters’ options. The Department also modified the online Voter Registration Status Look-Up Tool to allow voters who vote by mail or live in mail-ballot precincts to request ballots online that include the presidential contest with candidates from the American Independent, Democratic, or the Libertarian party.

2. To inform permanent vote-by-mail voters with no party preferences of their ability to cross-over and vote a ballot with candidates from either the American Independent, Democratic, or Libertarian party, the Department mailed 80,000 notices to these voters in accordance with CEC section 3205(b).

3. To inform voters of the Department’s election services in languages other than English, the Department mailed notices to 8,000 new voters who have not indicated a language preference and were born in a Spanish-, or Filipino-speaking country or did not indicate their country of origin when registering to vote.

4. The Outreach section has planned 10 community events in March including the first in a series of community resource events at public housing developments, providing information to parents and teens at summer resource / summer job fairs, two USCIS citizenship ceremonies, Project Homeless Connect, outreach to young people at Juvenile Probation, and on March 24 will participate in the Youth Empowerment Day at City Hall.