

ELECTIONS COMMISSION
City and County of San Francisco



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

John Arntz
Director of Elections

Elections Commission Meeting
Wednesday, July 20, 2016
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 Rowe called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. PRESENT: Commissioners Rowe, Jerdonek, Safont, Yu, Jung, Paris and Donaldson. ALSO PRESENT: Director Arntz, Deputy City Attorney Josh White.

2. General Public Comment

One member of the public spoke.

3. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Jerdonek reported that: NBC Bay Area interviewed him regarding open source voting, and the interview will be aired this summer. He received an email from a San Francisco voter whose ballot was not counted in the June election. He will look at this issue when we review the election at the next meeting.

Commissioner Paris reported that he will be employed part time with the San Mateo Elections Department, probably starting in September. His role will primarily involve poll worker training.

Commissioner Safont agreed to review the applications submitted for the Commission Secretary position.

Commissioner Paris agreed to compile the Commissioner's written evaluations of the Director into a single report.

PUBLIC COMMENT: One member of the public spoke.

4. Director's Report

The Director provided a written report in advance of the meeting, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. He also reported that we may see news about the size of the ballot and voter information pamphlet, as he is expecting more than 30 measures on the ballot. The Department is getting ready for intake of paid ballot arguments.

Commissioner Jerdonek questioned the Director regarding proposed state legislation relating to voting centers. The Director reported that per the legislation, counties can opt in. It would be a challenge for San Francisco because we would need to find 47 spots for voting centers. In some form, voting centers are what we need to be shooting for, but San Francisco voters have more affection for polling places than other places in the State. One challenge is that we would need VPN connections for a dynamic roster. It would also be challenging to find space for voting centers that is consistent through time so that locations don't change from election to election. Another challenge is ensuring accessible ballots for voters with disabilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT: One member of the public spoke.

5. Slate Mailer Organization Filings

Commissioner Jerdonek thanked Oliver Luby for bringing the issue of slate mailer organization campaign report filings to his attention. He began by stating that the issue relates to money in politics. In San Francisco, the Ethics Commission makes information available to the public about campaign reports. All campaign reports are filed with the Ethics Commission with one exception: slate mailers, which are filed with the Department of Elections. Slate mailers are mailers that take a position on multiple campaigns. As a result, the slate mailer organization campaign reports are not easily accessible to the public because they are not received by or published by the Ethics Commission. Commissioner Jerdonek met with the new Executive Director of the Ethics Commission, LeeAnn Pelham, who says Ethics is aware of the issue and that she would reach out to Director Arntz to discuss.

Director Arntz reported that the slate mailer organization reports received by the Department are in the public file. The Department does not receive a lot of slate mailer organization reports. Director Arntz supports having the reports filed directly with the Ethics Department. If there is an impediment to having the slate mailer organization reports filed directly with Ethics, he has no problem receiving them and transferring the reports to Ethics so that Ethics can publish them with the other campaign reports.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Oliver Luby stated that there is no legal impediment to have City slate mailer organization reports filed directly with the Ethics Department, and that the City is not compliant with current law in having them filed with the Department of Elections. State slate mailer organization reports must be filed with the Department of Elections, but City slate mailer filings should be filed with the Ethics Commission. He has an FPPC advice letter which he will share with the Commission. The Directors of Elections and Ethics can simply announce that they are going to change the practice. This would benefit for public transparency.

MOTION:

Commissioner Jerdonek moved that the Commission urge the Director of Elections to meet with the Director of Ethics to request that the designated filing clerk for County slate mailer organization reports be transferred from the Department of Elections to the Ethics Department. Commissioner Safont seconded. The vote was UNANIMOUS TO APPROVE.

6. Future Agendas

No Commissioner Comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Brent Turner would like the Commission to extend an invitation to experts such as Dr. Gilbert to discuss technology and open source.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 pm.



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: July 15, 2016
RE: Director's Report: July 20, 2016, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief statement of the work the Department of Elections (Department) has undertaken in relation to conducting the November 8, 2016, Consolidated General Election in a free, fair, and functional manner.

- A. To ensure the Department can properly conduct the November 2016 election, the Department continued to identify the necessary resources to procure, personnel to hire, and has begun reviewing processes.**
1. To prepare for many operational challenges associated with the November election, the Department has been developing plans, schedules, and staffing ratios commensurate with the projected workload and complexities of the election. Specifically, the Department has been considering expansion of the established processes and increase in staffing resources necessary to process new voter registrations and manage expanding voter rolls; facilitate new vote-by-mail requests and mailing address updates; coordinate intake and review of hundreds of ballot arguments for the probably more than 20 ballot measures that may qualify for the ballot; compile, proofread, and evaluate translations of all ballot content with already 17 state ballot measures and the 20 or more local measures expected, and up to 10 candidate races; compile, proofread, and evaluate translations of all ballot content and a Voter Information Pamphlet that will likely consist of 200 pages or more; serve an increased number of voters at the City Hall Voting Center; reach higher poll worker recruitment goals, including placement of bilingual poll workers; facilitate additional poll worker training classes, with emphasis on line management; expand the public phone bank to respond to a high volume of telephone and email inquiries; support polling place activities by augmenting the Election Center and Election Day Field Support teams; procure and manage additional vehicles to accommodate a higher number of Deputy Sheriffs tasked with picking up voted ballots; check signatures on thousands of vote-by-mail and provisional ballot envelopes; process and tabulate over two million potential ballot cards, etc.
 2. Following the procedures set by the Department of Human Resources, the Department has been devising plans, including schedules and staffing resources, necessary to ensure timely hiring and onboarding of approximately 300 seasonal workers expected to be hired to assist the year-round staff with a variety of functions associated with the November election.
 3. In accordance with the City's procurement policies, the Department continued to purchase materials and supplies and procure services necessary to conduct the November election.
 4. To inform voters of the Department's materials in languages other than English, the Department has prepared notices for mailing to 11,000 new voters who were added to the voter roll since a similar mailer was sent prior to the June election cycle, have not indicated a language preference, and were either born in a Chinese-, Spanish- or Filipino-speaking country, or have not indicated their country of origin.
 5. To provide voters with the information about the November election, the Department has been reviewing, revising, and translating the content of its website, including tools and information regarding voter registration, voting by mail, military and overseas voting, and other voter services as well as various voter forms, applications, and other voter correspondence.

B. To provide appropriate services to voters, the Department continued processing records and reviewing procedures.

1. To facilitate candidate nomination filings, the Department has begun reviewing signatures in lieu of filing fee petitions, which will continue until the July 28 deadline.
2. To facilitate the initiative petition process, the Department has begun its review of four local initiatives received since July 8, which includes conducting a raw count of the signatures, processing registration cards – over 2,600 – submitted with the petitions, and preparing to conduct the random sampling of signatures.
3. To maintain voter records, the Department continued to process registration information, deceased listings, felony listings, registration information received from the DMV; update records according to address change service information based on U.S. Postal Service data; and attach signature images gathered during the June election cycle to voter records in EIMS, for reference when processing future ballots.
4. To prepare for a greater number of returned vote-by-mail ballots, comprised of possibly six cards, the Department has been evaluating and reconsidering its established methods for tracking of ballots during processing.
5. To set baseline projections for workloads and associated staffing levels, the Department has begun to analyze historical turnouts to apply to the upcoming November election regarding vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing.
6. To adequately prepare poll workers to administer voting at polling places, the Department has been revising poll worker training materials to include information about ranked-choice voting, managing expected high voter turnout at the polls, and other topics specific to the November election. The Department will soon begin filming videos to be shown in poll worker training classes that feature various topics such as alerting voters to instructions on how to mark a ranked-choice card, and procedures for opening, setting up voting equipment, assisting voters, and closing.
7. To facilitate voting on Election Day, the Department has already secured 556 sites of the 576 sites that the Department will provide for the November election.
8. To meet staffing and language assistance at the polls as required by federal, state and local laws, the Department has begun reviewing the criteria that originate from a variety of sources, including the number of voter requests for translated election materials and voter countries of birth, to identify precincts in which voters may need language assistance, and to determine the number of bilingual poll workers to assign to those precincts.

C. The Department is preparing materials to facilitate the engagement of voters to participate in elections, to provide voters with information regarding the Department's services and information on the upcoming election.

1. To provide voters and potential registrants with information about the November election, the Department has begun planning its summer calendar of outreach activities, which include participation in six U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization ceremonies to explain voting rights to new citizens; partnering with SFUSD to participate in summer youth activities, including four youth job fairs; six Sunday Streets events; seven Mime Troupe shows; and Backpack Giveaways events in the Western Addition and Bayview.
2. To expand its library of information videos, the Department has begun developing the content of the fifth in its series of evergreen public service announcement videos that serve as another means of sharing election information with voters, community groups, and the media. The fifth installment will feature the many resources the Department offers on its website and will highlight an array of interactive tools in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino that allow voters to access their registration information, track the journey of their vote-by-mail ballot, find the location of their polling place and view their sample ballot, and add their language preference for election materials.
3. To continue public education about ranked-choice voting process, the Department has begun developing content of a new video intended to explain the main concepts of ranked-choice voting, particularly how voters mark their ballots and how the ballots are tallied. Produced in various languages, the video will provide for an effective, transportable method of continuing public education at many outreach events.