

ELECTIONS COMMISSION
City and County of San Francisco

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



John Arntz, Director of Elections

MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

San Francisco Elections Commission
Wednesday, January 18, 2017
6:00 p.m.
City Hall, Room 408
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, California 94102

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Vice President Jerdonek called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. as President Rowe was traveling today. Present: Commissioners Jerdonek, Jung, Paris, and Safont. Excused late: Commissioner Donaldson arrived at 6:32 p.m. during item 5; President Rowe arrived at 7:01 p.m. during item 6. Excused absence: Commissioner Yu. Also present: Director of Elections John Arntz and Deputy City Attorney Joshua White.

2. General Public Comment

Mr. Brent Turner read a statement urging the Commission to move forward on open source voting and provided a packet of information.

Ms. Denise Dorey spoke against proprietary voting systems.

Ms. Jeanine Lewis spoke in support of open source voting.

Mr. Alec Bash spoke in support of open source voting and expressed concern about how long the process is taking.

A member of the public said that San Francisco should ask for assistance from the National Security Agency.

3. Approval of Minutes for Previous Meeting

Moved by Commissioner Jung and seconded by Commissioner Safont to approve the draft minutes of the December 21, 2016 Elections Commission Meeting. No public comment. The vote was UNANIMOUS to approve.

4. Review of the November 8, 2016 Election

Commissioner Jerdonek reported on BOPEC's review of the election. He circulated an updated version of a document he prepared for BOPEC that included statistics on vote-by-mail and provisional ballots.

Director Arntz described the documents he provided to the Commission as part of the agenda packet.

Commissioner Jung asked about the high rate of rejected provisional envelopes, which was 20.5%. Director Arntz said the numbers closely tracked the numbers for the November 2008 election. He said that in Presidential elections, people who aren't registered come out to vote, causing the percentage to be higher.

Director Arntz also explained that the percentage of challenged vote-by-mail went down because voters are more motivated and because the Department has more signatures and data points to compare with over time.

Public comment:

Mr. David Cary commended the Department for shorter wait times for voters despite higher turnout, as well as for its RCV reporting.

5. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Paris reported on his efforts to register students at the high school he is teaching at. He also reported on his progress interviewing candidates by phone for the Commission Secretary position.

Commissioner Donaldson reported he was a polling-place inspector and commended the Director on the poll-worker manual.

Vice President Jerdonek said he circulated an article on open source voting that appeared in the San Francisco Examiner on Jan. 10. He also said he recently learned that the federal government declared elections as "critical infrastructure," which is a special designation by the Department of Homeland Security. Director Arntz elaborated on what the designation means.

No public comment.

6. Director's Report

Director Arntz gave an update on the open source voting project, which also appears in his written report. He said the Department would be issuing an RFP to identify a consultant that would essentially be doing a cost-benefit analysis for developing an open source voting system.

Commissioner Paris asked Director Arntz to clarify item D(2) in the report, which is about voter pre-registration for sixteen year-olds.

Vice President Jerdonek asked how much of the planning phase would be devoted to a cost-benefit analysis as opposed to other steps that are needed before beginning development, like specs and mapping out the next steps. Director Arntz replied that it would primarily be to determine the costs versus the benefits to see whether the City wants to move forward.

Commissioner Donaldson expressed surprise that the objective of the RFP will only be for a cost-benefit analysis given that San Francisco has already stated a policy preference for open source voting. He said that work should be done to map out next steps, components, and recommended approaches, as opposed to only a policy and financial exercise.

Director Arntz said that he doesn't know what the technical components of a voting system are and said he would welcome that information.

Commissioner Jung spoke in support of Commissioner Donaldson's point. He said that the Commission has already spoken on the policy preference and now needs a game plan.

Vice President Jerdonek agreed and said that after the planning phase we should be at a point where we can start actual development of the system.

Public comment:

A member of the public spoke in support of the Commission having a Commission Secretary.

Mr. Alec Bash expressed disappointment in the Director's description of the RFP and said he thought the purpose of the RFP was to bring someone on to do the work needed before hiring someone to develop the system.

Mr. David Cary expressed appreciation for the report on open source voting and echoed concerns of the RFP only being a cost-benefit analysis.

Commissioner Jung suggested that the Department needs a "quarterback" within the Department that can assist the Director and that has technical expertise.

Commissioner Donaldson agreed with the public commenters and Commissioner Jung. He suggested the idea of having an RFI in advance of the RFP.

Commissioner Jerdonek agreed with Commissioner Jung. Commissioner Jerdonek said that in his mind the original purpose of the \$300K was to provide the Department with the funds needed to bring someone on with the expertise that the Department needs.

Commissioner Paris asked what the \$300K can be used for, and whether the Department needs permission.

Director Arntz said that if a different use is needed, it can be brought up and presented.

Commissioner Safont spoke in support of writing a letter to the Mayor's Office spelling out the Commission's expectations for this next phase of the project.

Commissioner Jerdonek said that the Commission has already authorized him to speak on behalf of the Commission on this issue. He said that he would communicate with the Mayor's Budget Office based on the discussion happening at this meeting.

7. Future Agendas

Commissioner Jung suggested having a standing item on the timely delivery of an open source voting system.

Commissioner Donaldson suggested forming a new committee to focus on open source voting.

Commissioner Paris suggested redesignating one or more people to serve as advocates for open source voting.

Commissioner Rowe suggested using BOPEC to discuss open source voting instead of forming a new committee.

Public comment:

A member of the public urged the Commission to act quickly on open source voting.

Mr. Alan Dechert said that his organization the Open Voting Consortium worked through a lot of these issues fifteen years ago and developed prototypes, and expressed disappointment in the progress so far this year.

A member of the public spoke about psychiatric hospitals.

Mr. David Cary spoke in support of more regular discussion of open source voting and said he thought the \$300K was for the project director position mentioned in the Commission's original resolution.

8. Officer Elections.

Commissioner Jerdonek read and followed the process written in the agenda for the item.

Commissioner Jung said that he would like to ask the candidates for President how they plan to keep agenda item discussions within scope and how they would make sure that meetings use time efficiently.

Commissioner Jerdonek opened nominations for President. Commissioner Paris nominated Commissioner Jung, who declined. Commissioner Jung nominated Commissioner Jerdonek, who accepted. Commissioner Jung nominated Commissioner

Donaldson, who declined. Commissioner Jung nominated Commissioner Safont, who declined. Commissioner Jung nominated Commissioner Paris, who accepted. The resulting nominees were Commissioners Jerdonek and Paris.

The nominees answered Commissioner Jung's questions: Commissioner Paris said he would favor adding more agenda items that are more narrowly defined. Commissioner Jerdonek said he relies on the Deputy City Attorney to keep discussions within bounds, and schedules fewer agenda items to keep meetings shorter.

No public comment.

The vote was 5 for Commissioner Jerdonek (Rowe, Donaldson, Jerdonek, Safont, Jung) and 1 for Commissioner Paris (Paris), so Commissioner Jerdonek was elected President.

Commissioner Jerdonek opened nominations for Vice President. Commissioner Paris nominated Commissioner Jung, who declined. Commissioner Donaldson nominated Commissioner Rowe, who declined. Commissioner Safont nominated Commissioner Donaldson, who accepted. Commissioner Jung nominated Commissioners Paris and Safont; Commissioner Safont declined, and Commissioner Paris accepted. The resulting nominees were Commissioners Donaldson and Paris.

Public comment was requested again, and there was none.

The vote was 3 for Commissioner Paris (Rowe, Paris, Jerdonek) and 3 for Commissioner Donaldson (Donaldson, Safont, Jung), so no one was elected.

Commissioners Rowe and Jerdonek spoke in support of Commissioner Paris, and another vote was held.

The vote was UNANIMOUS in favor of Commissioner Paris, so Commissioner Paris was elected Vice President.

9. Adjourned at 7:51 p.m.