

ELECTIONS COMMISSION
City and County of San Francisco

**BUDGET AND OVERSIGHT OF PUBLIC
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (BOPEC)**

Roger Donaldson, Chairperson
Dominic Paris
Rosabella Safont



John Arntz, Director of Elections

MEETING MINUTES
Budget and Oversight of Public Elections Committee (BOPEC)
of the San Francisco Elections Commission
Wednesday, February 1, 2017
6:00 p.m.
City Hall, Room 421
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, California 94102

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Donaldson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Commissioners present: Donaldson, Paris, Safont. Also present: Director of Elections John Arntz

2. General Public Comment

There were none.

3. Approval of Minutes for Previous Meeting

Vice President Paris moved and Commissioner Safont seconded to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Review of Department's proposed budget

Commissioner Paris asked about the situation for warehouse space and if the Department would ever have its own space for storage rather than leasing. Director Arntz said it's difficult to assess the future need but, with the lack of space in San Francisco it is possible that they will look outside of San Francisco.

Director Arntz briefly reviewed the documents (Overview Department proposed budget 2018-19, and budget forms) with the Commissioners. The Department's budget is rather "static", with primarily fixed costs that change by inflation or cost of living adjustments, and the size and

nature of elections. He pointed out some increases (eg. The voting system contractor, election management system). Some legislative changes [see budget spreadsheet 2D]: Proposition N (Non-Citizen Voting in School Board Elections, Assembly Bill (AB) 1461 (California New Motor Voter Bill), AB 1436 (Voter Registration), and AB 2252 (Remote Accessible Vote By Mail Systems) will financially impact the Department's budget.

Ques: does AB 2522 address more than just having a paper ballot? Answer: yes, it would be essentially a digital ballot. There are 6 different programs under review by the Secretary of State (CA) but procedures and processes for how it will be managed aren't set up.

With Prop N, non-system voters will be included in the statewide voters rolls, but they will be separated from that in various ways (excluded from master voter files and not be able to get copies of them).

Question: Given the current voting system contractor's unwillingness to extend the present contract beyond the two-year timeframe, will the City be able to go to open source voting when that happens? Director Arntz believes not and will have to either get the contractor to agree to extend or install an interim system until an open source system can be implemented.

Question: Budget sheet tab 2C (Cost Recovery), where do the reimbursements come from? Answer: costs for district elections and how much is generated by each district (number of candidates, space taken in election guides, ballots, etc.). Each district reimburses accordingly.

Question: Budget sheet tab 3C (Staff Changes), why the change? Answer: currently it is vacant and the job descript was heavily geared toward grant management (there are no current grants). Getting a Management Assistant will bring more flexibility and different skill sets to meeting the Department's needs.

There were short discussions regarding some budget forms (eg. Prop J sample, Contracts tab 7A&B) but, were more for clarification than justification

Commissioner Donaldson moved to approve the proposed budget for full review by the Commission, stipulating that the Commission get more clarity on the soft end implementation and non-recurring costs.

Public Comment:

Mr. Brent Turner expressed what he said was the public's concern, that the City wasn't moving forward fast enough to establish the open source election process, creating the situation of having to find contingencies to bridge the gap between the current system and open source. He said that there needs to be assurance that the funds to establish the open source election system is committed.

Commissioner Donaldson asked Director Arntz where the funds for the open source election program were being held (since they do not appear in the Department's budget). Director Arntz said it was part of the general fund. COIT (Committee on Information Technology) reviewed an open source request from the Department and that's how the amount got set

aside. It was not clear by what process COIT's budget is implemented but, they do not allocate or release funds unless there's a concrete project that they can review and approve. Question: which budget form does that item show on? Answer: budget form tab 5. Commissioner Donaldson amended his motion: Moved to approve sending the Department budget to the full Commission, pending clarification on Prop N, and the budgeting process for the open source project. Commissioner Safont seconded.

Public Comment:

A member of the public commented that given that there will be no general election in 2017, the budget as presented should be adequate for the Department's operations.

Mr. Brent Turner again expressed concern that the funds are assured to be available for the build out of the open source election system, and feels it should be deployable in a relatively short time, given there already is an operational system in New Hampshire. He re-iterated that there was an open source program given to the Department to review, addressing the needs under Prop N, and is also being reviewed for certification by the State.

There being no further public comment, Commissioner Donaldson called for the vote. By voice poll, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Review of Open Source Voting initiative

Commissioner Donaldson asked Director Arntz if there has been any updates, either regarding the Feb. 3 meeting of COIT, or other developments. Is there anything the BOPEC or full Commission can do to help? Director Arntz said there has been no updates or responses, and that at this point no further help was necessary.

Vice President Paris asked if there were strategies for how the \$300K would be allocated: eg. having an in-house project manager, entirely in-house or with outside staff when needed, disbursing small grants to establish groups to re vamp projects. Director Arntz said that several thoughts had been gathered that centered on contracting work out rather than taking on staff. The paper hasn't been circulated yet but possibly can be with whatever information is captured at the Friday meeting.

Public Comment:

Mr. Brent Turner said it was ironic that there is very little transparency on how this issue is being addressed by the City, given all the resources (experts) who have come forth to advance the open source initiative. He hoped their advice will be heeded so the City can implement a good system.

5. The meeting was adjourned at 6:46pm.