

**OPEN SOURCE VOTING SYSTEM  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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**ELECTIONS COMMISSION  
*City and County of San Francisco***

Don Chan, Secretary

May 8, 2018

To: Elections Commission

From: Open Source Voting System Technical Advisory Committee (OSVTAC)

RE: OSVTAC Report #3 (May 2018)

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This is the third report of the Open Source Voting System Technical Advisory Committee (OSVTAC, or TAC) to the Elections Commission.

Below is a description of the TAC's activities since the last report dated January 5, 2018. Prior reports to the Commission are available at <https://osvtac.github.io/about>.

### **Background**

This section provides background on events that put the TAC's meetings in context.

As part of the agenda packet for the March 21 meeting of the Elections Commission, Slalom's feasibility assessment was published. The Elections Department issued an RFP for this feasibility assessment in May 2017, Slalom was selected for the contract in September 2017, and the report was originally supposed to be finalized by late January 2018. The TAC began to study and analyze this report at its April 12 meeting.

At its March 21 meeting, the Commission heard from Trent Lange, the Executive Director of the California Clean Money Campaign, an organization that is working with state legislators on a proposal of state matching funds for the development of open source voting components. This proposal would provide funds up to \$8 million, with a 2:1 match for components finished in time to be piloted in the 2020 election, and a 1:1 match for components finished by the 2022 election.

At the same meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Mayor's office and COIT an amount of \$4 million in the City's 2018-2019 budget for the first year of

development of an open source voting system. This \$4 million amount could max out the proposed state matching funds, for a total of \$12 million.

On April 1, the San Francisco Examiner reported on the Commission's budget request and the state matching funds proposal<sup>1</sup>. On April 5, the Examiner reported that Supervisor Malia Cohen, the budget chair of the Board of Supervisors, wrote a letter to the Governor and state legislators in support of the matching funds proposal<sup>2</sup>.

## Meetings

Since its last report, the TAC has had four meetings, all of which were held at 6:00pm at City Hall in Room 421:

- Thursday, January 18
- Thursday, February 8
- Thursday, March 8
- Thursday, April 12

The minutes for these and all previous meetings can be found at <https://osvtac.github.io/past-meetings>.

## Funding recommendation

At its March 8 meeting, the TAC voted unanimously to make recommendations<sup>3</sup> to the Mayor in light of the ongoing budget process. It recommended funds be budgeted for a project lead position at the Department of Elections, and for the development of the first phase of the project. The recommendation letter identifies five components that the TAC recommends be developed first. Together, these components would allow all vote-by-mail ballots to be scanned, tabulated and audited using only open source software. If the November 2016 election, more than 63% of all ballots were vote-by-mail ballots, so this would allow more than half of all ballots to be processed by open source software, with very low hardware and training requirements compared to a full system roll-out.

On March 21, 2018, the Elections Commission voted unanimously to support the TAC's recommendation letter and, as noted above, to request \$4 million in funding in the next budget.

On April 1, the Examiner article mentioned above reported:

*"The Elections Commission also approved the Open Source Voting System Technical Advisory Committee's recommendations. The committee envisions a phased-in approach for rolling out an open-source voting system, beginning with the components related to*

1 <http://www.sfoxaminer.com/open-source-voting-sf-may-require-match-state-local-funds/>

2 <http://www.sfoxaminer.com/state-funding-proposal-open-source-voting-gains-support/>

3 [http://sfgov.org/electionscommission/sites/default/files/Documents/meetings/2018/2018-03-21-commission/OSVTAC\\_Recommendation\\_re\\_Funding\\_March\\_19\\_2018.pdf](http://sfgov.org/electionscommission/sites/default/files/Documents/meetings/2018/2018-03-21-commission/OSVTAC_Recommendation_re_Funding_March_19_2018.pdf)

*vote-by-mail ballots, which account for more than half the ballots cast in San Francisco elections.”*

## **Member activities**

On March 25, TAC member Roan Kattouw gave a presentation<sup>4</sup> about San Francisco’s open source voting project at LibrePlanet, an open source conference in Cambridge, MA.

## **Development of recommendations document**

The TAC continues to work on a recommendations document that is aimed at providing guidance to the City for developing an open source voting system. The document is being developed iteratively and in public view on GitHub in the same way that open source projects are developed. The current version of the document is included at the end of this report as an attachment, and future updates can be found on TAC's website here:

<https://osvtac.github.io/recommendations>.

In the first four months of 2018, the TAC added recommendations to this document concerning agile development, the use of user stores, Remote Accessible Vote By Mail (RAVBM); added components for ballot batch management and audit support; and fleshed out the “key decisions” sections and its lists of pros and cons for various choices.

Starting with the December 14, 2017 meeting, annotations were added to each section of the recommendations document indicating in which meeting the latest modifications to that section were approved.

4 Slides: <https://github.com/catrope/sf-open-source-voting-talk/blob/libreplanet-2018/slides.pdf>  
Video: <https://media.libreplanet.org/u/libreplanet/m/san-francisco-s-free-software-voting-system/>