



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
**DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS**

John Arntz, Director

## Memorandum

To: Elections Commission  
From: John Arntz, Director  
Date: January 14, 2019  
RE: Director's Report: January 16, 2018, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous Elections Commission meeting on December 19, 2018.

**I. Update on the City's efforts to develop a highly accessible, open source voting system.**

- A. The Department of Technology (DT) has onboarded one technical lead who will support the City's efforts associated with developing an open source voting system. The technical lead will focus on system level requirements, security and hardware specifications. The technical lead is currently researching and canvassing previous and current development of open source voting systems and intends to issue a summary of his findings in February.
- B. The person expected to fill the project manager role and focus on community involvement, project planning/scheduling, and communications has declined the City's employment offer and this position remains unfilled. DT is assessing options to identify a project manager, including engaging with employment agencies and agencies that recruit personnel to fill openings in information technology-related opportunities.
- C. Funding for both positions will be drawn from the programmatic budget set up when the Committee on Information Technology (COIT) initially approved funding for this project in 2017.
- D. DT has submitted an application to COIT requesting \$3 million to fund potential development work in the next fiscal year. While specific development work is not identified in the request, obtaining COIT funding at the beginning of the fiscal year will facilitate the issuing of request for proposals to fund possible development work identified during the current fiscal year.

**II. The Department initiated a review of its website to improve the customer experience and make services more accessible for all.**

- A. The Department set several goals for the website review, all guided by established principles: ease navigation to desired services and information; simplify content; improve usability for mobile and desktop users, including those using assistive devices; and expand access for limited-English speakers.
- B. Among the project goals are consolidation of lookup tools (e.g., registration and ballot status lookup tools) in one centralized Voter Portal; expanding access to live streams and information on observable activities; introducing new practices to assure the public that content is current and accurate; testing website usability across multiple platforms.

**III. The Department has undertaken a review and redesign of polling place signage and posting mechanisms to improve voters' experience at the polls and to streamline polling place operations.**

- A. Department personnel have begun reviewing the Department's existing methods for meeting the polling place posting requirements required by federal and state election laws in tandem with considering alternative methods for meeting these requirements.
- B. Department personnel have also begun revising the content and design of polling place signage with the goals of simplifying voting instructions for all voters, expanding voters' knowledge about the services available at the polls, and simplifying posting mechanisms for poll workers, while maintaining compliance with posting requirements.

**IV. The Department continues to seek opportunities to engage potential registrants and voters to promote their participation in elections, and to provide residents about the Department's services.**

- A. The Department continues to attend USCIS ceremonies, providing information about voter registration and voting to nearly 1,000 new citizens at each ceremony.
- B. The Department will participate in eight Pop-Up Resource Fairs at Rec Centers throughout the City from February 15 to April 6, hosting an informational table to provide election information, facilitate voter registration, and sign up residents to volunteer as poll workers. The Resource Fairs, organized by the SF Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, the Recreation & Parks Department, and the SF Public Library, feature City programs and services available to San Francisco residents.
- C. The Department began developing information to facilitate public outreach about the earlier schedule of the 2020 presidential primary election, California's modified-closed primary system for presidential contests and open primary system for voter-nominated offices, and why a voter's party preference matters when voting in a presidential primary. The Department will feature this information on its website home page and in outreach materials and presentations beginning in February.

**V. The Department is planning for three elections FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 and is conducting or preparing for two special elections.**

- A. The Department has been preparing requests for funding necessary to support fixed and variable operating expenses for services and programs associated with the three elections scheduled during the FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 budget period: November 5, 2019, Consolidated Municipal Election, March 3, 2020, Consolidated Presidential Primary Election, and November 3, 2020, Consolidated General Election.
- B. The Department mailed ballots and informational pamphlets to eligible property owners for the 2019 SOMA West Community Benefit District Election. The 45-day voting period in this special election commenced on December 22, 2018.
- C. The Department has begun its preparations to conduct the 2019 Health Service Board Election scheduled to take place in May 2019.

**IV. The Department continues to undertake many actions associated with the maintenance of the voter file to achieve accuracy and completeness and remove any duplicative or outdated records.**

- A. Since mid-October, the Secretary of State's office has been performing a secondary review of Motor Voter records transmitted by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to confirm the accuracy of the information before sending these records to counties for processing. In early January, the Department received approximately 7,200 Motor Voter registration applications from the SOS that were transmitted by the DMV after the close of registration for the November 2018 election. The Department continues to process these records and provide services and outreach to new voters who become registered through the Motor Voter program.
- B. As authorized under state election law, the Department will send a Residence Confirmation Postcard in early February to voters who are currently active but who have not participated in any election in the previous four years or updated their registration information in that time. Voters who receive this postcard will have the opportunity to confirm their residence with the Department and their records will be updated to reflect their current information. The records of those who do not respond will be placed in the inactive file of voters who do not receive election materials and are not included in determining precinct boundaries.
- C. As authorized under state election law, the Department is preparing to update records that were previously placed in the inactive file of voters for failure to respond to an address confirmation mailing; these records may be cancelled for failure to participate in two general federal elections since the date of the mailing.