



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: December 13, 2019
RE: Director's Report: December 18, 2019, 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 report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on November 20, 2019.

I. Update on voting system-related matters.

- A. The Department and Dominion Voting Systems have begun updating the City's voting system from version 5.2 to version 5.10, which the Secretary of State's Office (SOS) approved in October 2019.
- B. As part of the version update, Dominion is providing 16 upgraded scanners staged in the Department's office and for primarily processing vote-by-mail ballots.
- C. The Department has begun steps to accept \$1.5 million in State grant monies and disbursed through the SOS for voting system replacement. The funds will cover costs associated with the City's lease for its voting system. The funds are part of the State's 2019 Budget Act to provide monies to counties to replace voting systems and are in addition to grant funds that counties received from the State's 2018 Budget Act. The funds require a 3:1 (75%:25%) match of funds. The contract that the City entered into with the SOS that the Board of Supervisors approved in February 2019 will be amended to include the second set of funds.
- D. The State also provided \$444,000 in grant monies to fund the City's election management system that the Department uses to maintain voter records.

II. In accordance with state and local law, the Department continues to facilitate candidate and measure filings for the March 3 election.

- A. Commencing on Monday, November 25, the Department facilitated meetings of the Ballot Simplification Committee. The Committee concluded its work on Wednesday, December 4, completing fair and impartial summaries for local ballot measures to be printed in the Voter Information Pamphlet.
- B. The Department facilitated the filing of nomination papers for candidates running for Member of the County Central Committees/County Council. The nomination period closed on December 6 with 91 qualified candidates. December 6 also marked the close of nomination period for candidates running for judicial offices with six candidates qualified to appear on the ballot for the three contested seats. The Department updated the candidate list on sfelections.sfgov.org/candidates to display the names of candidates who have qualified to appear on the March 3 ballot. The Secretary of State's office is currently reviewing the nomination paperwork of filers for congressional and state offices, and at this time, the final number of candidates for such offices or for President is not known.
- C. On Monday, December 9, the Department selected and assigned a letter to identify each of five local measures that will appear on the March 3 ballot. The Department updated the qualified local measures list on sfelections.sfgov.org/measures to reflect these letter designations.

- D. On Thursday, December 12, the Department facilitated the intake of proponents' and opponents' ballot arguments for local ballot measures to be printed in the Voter Information Pamphlet.
- E. On Monday, December 16, the Department will facilitate the intake of rebuttal and paid ballot arguments for local measures. (Paid arguments will not apply for Proposition A because it is a school measure.)

III. The Department continues to plan and administer the many processes required to conduct the March 3 election.

- A. The Department has been engaged in planning and preparations to open a third voting center, which will be located at the Joseph Lee Recreation Center, in the Bayview neighborhood between Newcomb and Oakdale Avenues.
 - i. The voting center will be open on Saturday and Sunday, February 29 - March 1, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Monday, March 2, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Tuesday, March 3, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 - ii. The voting center will offer approximately 14 ballot-issuing stations and 70 voting booths. A ballot drop-off station will be set up outside the facility for the convenience of voters returning their vote-by-mail ballots and be staffed with two employees during all hours of operation.
 - iii. To advertise the availability of the new voting center, the Department will include hours and information in the Voter Information Pamphlet, on its website, and work with the facility's staff to post informational posters near the site prior to the opening of voting. In addition, Department Outreach staff will coordinate with local organizations to publicize the opening of the voting center through in-person educational presentations and distribution of print materials.
 - iv. The Department put several measures in place for the November 2019 election to protect access to voter records from workstations at its first off-site voting center at the San Francisco State University Voting Center, and plans to employ the same measures at the Joseph Lee Recreation Center. First, access to voter files will be established through an access-controlled virtual private network (VPN) and a firewall. Second, the laptops used to access these voter files will be equipped with antivirus and malware protection programs that communicate with the City and County of San Francisco cybersecurity command center. Third, access to voter files will be limited to the specific actions necessary to process voters and issue ballots; staff will be unable to remove or alter voter records stored in the Department's Election Information Management system. Finally, staff will be trained to lock laptops when not in use, and after three minutes of inactivity, laptops will lock automatically. Laptops will be transported to off-site voting centers in locked and sealed vehicles three days prior to the start of voting. A security officer will be present during non-voting hours in the area where the laptops are set up. On a daily basis when a security officer reports to duty, the officer will be required to sign in, acknowledging the responsibility to provide security for the laptops and ballot-marking devices. In the morning, the officer on duty will sign out, transferring the responsibility for securing items in the voting area to Department personnel.
- B. The Department has secured 578 of the 588 facilities intended to serve as polling places on Election Day.
- C. The Department is in the final stages of revising its Poll Worker Training Manual, training program, and materials to prepare poll workers to serve voters on Election Day. Both the manual and training program will focus on the impact of party preference rules in presidential primary contests, issuing ballots according to voters' party preference, and administration of conditional voter registration at polling places. With the City's voting system still being relatively new, the manual will continue to focus on the operating procedures for the voting equipment, while poll worker

classes will continue to incorporate Practice Makes Perfect workshops – a one-hour, mandatory equipment practice for both inspectors and clerks.

- D. The Department has been working on templates and production plans and timelines. Most of the ballot-related work, including organizing a matrix of the City's jurisdictional ballot types, receiving information on state measures and federal and state candidates from the Secretary of State's office, proofing ballot content and layout, and providing final proofs to the layout and printing vendors will occur during the last three weeks of December. In early January, the Department will be focusing on audio, touchscreen, and downloadable ballot formats. All ballot formats will be produced by January 18 to meet the statutory deadline of transmitting ballots to voters serving in the military or living overseas.
- E. The Department is working on the Voter Information Pamphlet. The pamphlet will include sample ballots for all political parties holding March presidential primaries as well as sample crossover ballots for voters with No Party Preference (NPP). Pamphlets mailed to NPP voters will have a different version of the vote-by-mail application on the back cover, specifying the ballot options available to these voters and serving as another means for them to request a crossover ballot.
 - i. The Voter Information Pamphlet will include information about primary rules and highlight the availability of online tools that allow voters to check party their registered party preference and request a crossover ballot.

IV. The Department continues to provide information to City residents about primary election rules and ballot options for voters with No Party Preference.

- A. On December 4, the Department mailed notices to nearly 107,000 voters registered with No Party Preference (NPP) and who vote by mail. The notices describe voters' options and steps to be completed to receive a crossover ballot with the presidential primary contest for American Independent, Democratic, and Libertarian parties; these parties will allow crossover voting in the March 3 election. The Department offers various ways in which NPP voters may request a crossover ballot: via the Department's Voter Portal at sfelections.org/voterportal, by calling, emailing, sending a fax, or completing and returning a detachable postage-paid section of the notice.
- B. On December 11, the Department sent an email reminder to nearly 45,000 NPP voters with email addresses on file who vote by mail, encouraging voters to submit their requests for a crossover ballot.
- C. The Department has launched an online March 2020 Presidential Primary Ballot tool to inform voters about steps they may need to take to receive the ballots with their preferred presidential candidates.
 - i. The tool, which provides information and actions that are customized to the individual's political party preference, can be accessed from the homepage of the Department's website, and is available in English, Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish.
 - ii. Voters utilizing the tool are reminded that the voters' registered party preference will determine which presidential candidates will be listed on their March 3 election ballots. On the same screen, voters are encouraged to check their registered party preference using the Department's online Voter Portal, to which a link is provided. With that information confirmed, a voter may enter both their registered party preference and the party of their preferred presidential candidate using two simple dropdown menus. With that information entered, the tool generates a list of options for that particular voter.
- D. In the next three months, the Department will continue to deploy a variety of strategies to advise voters about primary rules and explain why party preference matters and how to update party preference or request a crossover ballot. These strategies will include public transit, radio, and newspaper advertisements, press releases, mailers, and direct outreach to voters at events.

- V. **The Department continues to identify and procure resources and to hire, onboard, and organize temporary personnel necessary to conduct the March 3 election.**
- A. The Department has commenced the hiring of temporary staff to assist the Department with the March election's various processes and activities. Several divisions in the Department will need to increase their staffing levels commensurate with the projected workload and complexity of the March election. Over the next two months, the Department expects to hire nearly 300 additional temporary employees.
 - B. The Department has begun preparing requests for funding necessary to support fixed and variable expenses for services and programs associated with the two elections scheduled during FY2020-21 and FY2021-22 budget period.