



King County

CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOC)

May 19, 2021 Meeting | 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. | Zoom Conference

MINUTES

Members Present: Chair: Kyle Vixie, First Vice Chair: Eliseo Juárez, Vice Chair: Nanette Sullivan, Vice Chair: Jayson Todd Morris, Stanley Tsao, Hillary Coleman, Allison Feher, Julie Kang, Jeff Manson, Maya Manus, Seth Orr, Quynh Pham, Stefan Sharkansky

Absent: Stuart Holmes

Special Guests: Washington State Districting Commission and King County Districting Committee Member Paul Graves, King County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove, Bryan Finney, Founder/CEO Democracy Live

Elections Staff: Director Julie Wise, Deputy Director Janice Case, Kendall LeVan Hodson, Naheed Aaftaab and Dave Wilson

Council Staff: Erin Arya

1. Call to Order

CEOC Chair Kyle Vixie called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

2. Approve March 17, 2021 minutes

Member Allison Feher moved approval of the minutes of the March 17, 2021 meeting. Member Seth Orr seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Washington State and King County Districting Process

Washington State Districting Commission and King County Districting Committee Member Paul Graves provided the committee with an overview of the redistricting processes occurring at the state and county levels. Topics included how members of the bodies were selected, legal criteria they must follow for the purposes of redrawing the boundaries and completing their work, the delay in census data, planning for public outreach meetings, and software at the state level that will allow the public to draw their own maps (expected in June).

4. Director's Report (with updates on Legislative Priorities, KCD Elections, April 27, 2021 Election, Candidate Filing Week)

King County Elections Director Julie Wise provided an update to the CEOC. She noted that the legislative session has finished and provided a few quick updates since her email including that fake ballot drop boxes are now illegal and all 39 counties will issue voters' pamphlets.

Director Wise reported the King Conservation District election had a turnout of 9,231 voters online and 321 mail. They mailed 1.3 million voters and were unable to count 43 ballots. She noted the need for the election to be on a regular ballot. The District is left on their own to run their own elections in the first quarter of the year because of state law. They are making do with the online only option.

Director Wise noted that discussions are happening related to alternatives to signatures. It doesn't work for all voters to use signatures. Character based languages and voters with disabilities have higher challenge rates. Also, younger voters were not taught cursive. Elections wants to prepare to have another way in the future. Director Wise noted this is a discussion point CEOC can be involved in along with the Disability Advisory Committee. There could be a pilot or convene community groups to discuss ideas.

She reported that 370 candidates have filed for office so far which is lower than projections. The majority of candidates filed online and just a few filed in person. Every candidate across the state is using the statewide system VOTEWA. Filing is open until 4 p.m. on Friday. At 5 p.m. they will do a lot draw streamed on Facebook and the results will be posted on the website. An updated list of who has filed can be accessed here: [Who has filed - King County](#)

King County Elections reported that their plans for staff amid the state lifting COVID restrictions will not change right now. Staff will continue only coming in to the office for work that needs to be done in person and continue wearing masks. They are working closely with the Executive and Public Health and will keep the committee posted.

Kendall Levan Hodson introduced staffer Naheed Aaftaab whose focus includes language access.

5. Remarks from Councilmember Dave Upthegrove

King County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove (District 5) thanked the committee for its work noting that at this moment in history the work of the committee is more important than ever. He noted that a lot of people don't have faith in elections so advancing the cause of free and fair elections is important work that can go unnoticed but not unappreciated.

Chair Vixie asked for feedback on the CEOC request to Council to provide a stipend for drop box observation. Councilmember Upthegrove answered that compensating people for their time is one of the ways we ensure equity. He noted it has been done piecemeal, but that it's time as a government to address the lending time and talent and comes down to equity. He added if only those who participate are those who can afford that time, we lose out.

Member Manus asked about ideas for innovative ways to make elections more accessible for running for office or for the voters. Councilmember Upthegrove expressed the need to eliminate barriers to voting. Councilmember Upthegrove praised

the work Elections is doing with community ambassadors to hire trusted leaders to share information and connect with people that have language or other barriers to voting. That work we do as a county to go above and beyond is exciting and KCE does it as well as any other agency. He also noted to make it easier to run for office there could be an option for signatures instead of paying to file to run. Regulating campaign finance to do more to take money out of politics would encourage more people to run.

6. Democracy Live (involved with election for King Conservation District)

Bryan Finney, Founder and CEO of Democracy Live, presented on the online voting technology used in the King Conservation District election. He discussed the possibilities for populations of voters otherwise disenfranchised to move their ballots online. In Arlington, VA all voters with a disability have access to the technology and the ability to review their, listen to the ballot, and electronically return it.

Democracy Live is looking toward innovations in voter education and outreach. King County pioneered fulling interactive and accessible voter information. In 46 states they do not provide a voter's guide. When they show up at a polling place is when they see who is on their ballot.

Member Stefan Sharkansky asked about ballot privacy referencing a demonstration he received where the operator could look up his ballot. Finney responded about finding the right balance of security and accessibility. He noted voters can access the ballot online and print it out and process that way or submit online. Member Sharkansky asked to discuss the issue more offline.

Member Maya Manus asked about some of the tactics Democracy Live is exploring for accessibility. Finney responded the need for next generation voters to explore next generation technology. To fully engage voters requires providing next generation technology where you operate your life. Paper, polling place or mobile device. Once you have interactive balloting on your device, think of possibilities. What if we can provide information that lowers the cost of running for office or find out who is funding the candidate. Not just ballot but information to make an informed voter.

7. CEOC Annual Report Schedule Draft

Chair Kyle Vixie raised for discussion the draft of the Annual Report Schedule previously emailed to the Committee. He noted the goal was to lengthen the timeline, increase input and involve the vice chairs more in the process. Member Orr indicated support for the draft noting it would allow for a thoughtful process and also sets a timeline for responsiveness, feedback, and checking emails.

Member Sharkansky moved approval of the Annual Report Schedule. Member Feher seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

8. KCC Staff Updates

Erin Arya updated the committee on the appointment status of an applicant for the jurisdictional representative on the CEOC as well as the reappointment of members Julie Kang and Quynh Pham.

9. New Business and/or for Good of the Order

Chair Vixie noted that Vice Chair Nanette Sullivan will email any updates on election monitoring to the committee.

Member Feher raised an issue she heard brought up at a high school meeting. Feher reported the Department of Licensing has waived the written signature during COVID so it is impacting young voters in terms of signature verification. This may be a future topic of discussion for the next meeting.

10. Adjournment

Member Quynh Pham moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Jayson Morris seconded. The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 12:37 p.m.