



## King County

### CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOC)

October 20, 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: Jayson Todd Morris, Hillary Coleman, Allison Feher, Linda Grez, Stuart Holmes, Julie Kang, Jeff Manson, Maya Manus, Quynh Pham, Stefan Sharkansky and Stanley Tsao

**Absent:** Vice Chair: Nanette Sullivan

**Special Guests:** King County Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles, King County Demographer Rebeccah Maskin, Alison Eisinger with Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH), and Maggie Malone with SKCCH

**Elections Staff:** Director Julie Wise, Deputy Director Janice Case and Kendall LeVan Hodson

**Council Staff:** Erin Arya and Sherrie Hsu

#### **1. Call to Order**

CEOC Chair Kyle Vixie called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

#### **2. Approve September 15, 2021 minutes**

Chair Vixie noted grammatical updates to the draft minutes sent in by Member Allison Feher. Member Feher moved amendment and approval of the minutes of the September 15, 2021 meeting. Member Stefan Sharkansky seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **3. Election Observation Stipend/Transportation (carryover from September meeting)**

Chair Vixie shared that advice on reimbursable costs from the county has changed and he recommend the vice chairs draft another letter to Council to send around for review and adoption at the November meeting. He noted that if the county wants the CEOC monitoring drop boxes and value it that they need to update the code to include more transportation options.

Vice Chair Morris suggested a different form could be helpful since the current one is not designed for boards and commissions.

Chair Vixie asked members to email Vice Chair Nanette Sullivan with ideas on this matter noting the committee will discuss it again at the November meeting.

#### 4. Director's Report

Elections Director Julie Wise began her report with news of the soft rollout of a new [ballot return statistics](#) dashboard and asked members to share any feedback.

Director Wise updated members on the General Election. She shared that ballots are out and the mail delivery data from USPS by zip code allows Elections to target any problems and work through them with USPS. The Secretary of State's office leads daily calls with county every morning and USPS. She noted they have a 98% delivery rate at this point.

Director Wise shared that Elections is preparing to open vote centers which include Lumen Field in partnership with the Seattle Seahawks, Bellevue College, Kent and Kenmore City Halls, Federal Way Performing Arts & Event Center, and Elections headquarters in Renton. Ballot returns today stand at 4.2 percent.

Member Manus inquired whether vaccine mandate rules will apply to volunteers and people on site. Director Wise answered that permanent and temporary Elections staff all have to be vaccinated or go through human resources for accommodations if possible. She said that for political party observers and vote centers they have asked for an exemption from the Executive office. Observers and voters must wear a mask and social distance.

Member Sharkansky asked what happens when you get a replacement ballot online and what security measures are in place to prevent someone from pretending to be someone else. Director Wise answered that these ballots are still subject to the normal verification process for ballots like signature verification and that there is a steep penalty for voter fraud. Deputy Director Janice Case added that when a ballot goes through their ballot system, it checks the weight for unusual ballots which are flagged and removed for further scrutiny.

Director Wise shared that the recall election for Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant will be on December 7 and that Elections is building the ballot. The ballot is a single issue and will contain all of the information including the charges and the elected official's response. She added that there will be an insert explaining what a recall election is and which drop boxes are open. All drop boxes within a three-mile radius of the district will be open. They are working to find a vote center location in Council District 3, but the Elections headquarters vote center will definitely be open.

Member Manus asked what happens if the result of the election is to recall the elected official. Elections answered that there will be an appointment process for the seat through 2022 and then the position would appear on the 2022 General Election ballot. A recall election costs \$250k-350k depending on how many ballots are returned. Vice Chair Jayson Morris asked if an elected official is recalled, are they able to run for the seat again. Deputy Director Case answered that yes, they can run again.

Deputy Director Case provided a quick overview of the data available on the ballot return statistics dashboard. Member Stanley Tsao recommended adding in language ballot return statistics to the dashboard.

## **5. Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles**

King County Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles shared that she represents the smallest, most dense district in the county bordered by Madison Street on the southern border, Shoreline city limits on the northern border and I-5 on the east.

Councilmember Kohl-Welles thanked members for all their work to ensure that elections are fair, free and transparent. She encouraged members to consider what can be done structurally to ensure access for everyone regardless of background. There was some discussion of the idea raised by Councilmember Girmay Zahilay of establishing a democracy voucher program in King County.

Chair Vixie shared that the committee will be sending a letter to Council soon regarding reimbursement of transportation costs.

## **6. Voter Education Fund Recipient Feedback with CEOC Questions/Discussion**

Maggie Malone and Alison Eisinger of Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH) shared their experience as recipients of the Voter Education Fund grants. Eisinger shared that SKCCH is one of many community-based organizations committed to ensuring that every eligible voter knows they can vote and how to do so. Eisinger said every time they send trained staff or volunteers or drop-in day center or shelter, people tell us they are not eligible and can't vote so the education component of the work is critical and part of changing the landscape. Eisinger praised Elections as a great partner noting that the ability to register and vote on election day is hugely important.

Member Manus asked if they had feedback on vote center locations or where might be most inclusive to ensure access for lived experience populations. Eisinger offered that it would help to have the same options and hours at the vote centers and the ability to offer a bus ticket to get there.

Member Sharkansky pointed out that the SKCCH has advocated for ballot measure positions in past years while a VEF grantee, and in the current year advocated for a King County Proposition that was on the August primary ballot. Its Facebook page commingles get out the vote messages with encouragement to vote for the particular measure. He asked (1) How does the organization specifically separate its advocacy for ballot measures from its VEF voter education fund work; and (2) What specific guidance has KCE given this year about separating advocacy from get out the vote? Eisinger answered that as a 501C3 they have a very clear process. She said volunteers helping with registration are trained and explicitly told not to give voters guidance about \*candidates\*. She said they are explicit about what it means to be a part of a nonpartisan voter registration effort and the same is true for their partner organizations. While she made clear that SKCCH staff and volunteers do not tell voters \*who\* to vote for, she indicated that they do provide information to people about initiatives and

measures that are on the ballot. She did not offer that the information provided to voters on ballot measures is balanced or objective. She also stated that she was not aware of KCE's current year guidance to VEF grantees regarding ballot measure advocacy. Sharkansky expressed his feeling that she did not address his question regarding SKCCH's separation of its ballot measure advocacy from its other VEF activities.

Note: Unfortunately, the Chair had to end this conversation at this point due to time, therefore staff will contact SKCCH directly to seek additional information/clarity to share with the committee.

## **7. Census 2020 and Districting Process Update**

King County Demographer Rebeccah Maskin presented the results of the 2020 Census data. Maskin shared that the first wave of Census data was released in August and that the goal of the Census is to count every individual in the U.S. Maskin observed that 100% of the growth in King County in the past 10 years is from BIPOC communities. She shared visualizations of population concentrations by race and ethnicity after the 2000, 2010 and 2020 Census counts. She also noted that King County's youth population is more diverse than its adult (18+) population.

Maskin noted some questions Census data accuracy due to the schedule and rate of questions skipped. She shared that race and ethnicity questions in general are often skipped. In addition, she noted that Census practices changed because of covid, some people moved because of covid and the process lacked in-person follow up because of covid. Maskin said the Bureau instituted differential privacy which blocks some data thus preventing reverse engineering to identify households. She noted that overall, she is fairly confident in the data.

The update on King County redistricting will be sent to members by email.

## **8. Disability Advisory Committee**

Vice Chair Jayson Morris attended the September 13 meeting of the Disability Advisory Committee for King County Elections. He shared that topics of discussion included an accessibility plan, as well as signature alternatives including fingerprints, facial recognition and other forms of identity verification. They are in the process of finalizing a survey of inmates to better understand barriers to voting in jail and the impacts of/needs for communication around the community custody bill. Member Sharkansky asked if Vice Chair Morris could share the report on signature alternatives once it is available.

## **9. CEOC Calendar for 2022**

This item was deferred to the November meeting.

## **10. KCC Staff Updates**

Due to time constraints, staff will send updates to members by email.

## **11. New Business and/or for Good of the Order**

Member Grez asked for more information about opportunities to serve in leadership. Chair Vixie answered that staff will distribute information by email.

Chair Vixie reminded members about the opportunity to visit Elections headquarters on General Election day.

## **12. Adjournment**

Member Sharkansky moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Grez seconded. The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 12:59 p.m.