



King County

CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOC)

September 21, 2022 Meeting | 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. | Zoom Conference

MINUTES

Members Present: Interim Chair: Eliseo Juárez, Vice Chair: Jayson Todd Morris, Hanna Floss, Linda Grez, Tyson Hartman, Stuart Holmes, Julie Kang, Jude Ahmed, Kathy Sakahara, Mike Flood, Mathew Patrick Thomas, and Stanley Tsao

Absent: Hillary Coleman

Special Guests: N/A

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

Council Staff: Sherrie Hsu, Angelina Pogolian, and Tania Santiago Pastrana

1. Call to Order

Interim Chair Juárez called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

2. Approve July 20, 2022 minutes

Member Floss moved approval of the minutes of the July 20, 2022 meeting. Vice Chair Morris seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

3. CEOC New Member Introduction

Interim Chair Juárez introduced the new members to the board including: Jude Ahmed, representative from the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle; and Mike Flood, representative from the Municipal League of King County. Both board members shared background information about themselves.

4. CEOC Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Interim Chair Juárez passed the gavel to Vice Chair Morris for the election of the chair vacancy. Eliseo Juárez was the only CEOC member who ran to fill the chair vacancy. Vice Chair Morris called for a vote and Eliseo Juárez was unanimously approved to be the CEOC chair for the remainder of the year. Vice Chair Morris passed the gavel back to Eliseo Juárez, hereinafter "Chair Juárez."

5. Director's Report

King County Elections will mail out ballots to military and oversea voters on September 23, 2022. The projected voter turnout is 80%.

During the primary election, someone placed surveillance signs by ballot drop boxes across King County. All signs were taken down and evidence was referred to detectives from King County Sheriff's Office and the FBI. The person who put up the signs recently filed a first amendment violation lawsuit. The lawsuit sites Julie Wise, Secretary Hobbs, and Governor Inslee.

King County Elections will be piloting the expansion of their Observer Program for this coming general election. Currently King County Elections allows up to 4 members from both major political parties to observe the ballot processing area at a time. According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, the best practice is to include nonpartisan observers. The pilot will allow 2 nonpartisan observers and increase the total amount of observers allowed on a floor at a time from 8 to 10. This pilot will be led by the Seattle chapter of the League of Women Voters.

Julie Kang: What is the achievable goal for voter turnout?

Julie Wise: Considering internal planning, temporary election hires, processing time - our historical data tells us that 80% turnout is realistic.

Kendall Hodson: There was 76% turnout in 2018.

Stanley Tsao: Expand the program to multiple language communities.

Hanna Floss: If people wanted to be a part of this, who do they contact? Clarifying that they don't have to be members of the League to participate?

Kendall Hodson: Ballot Processing Manager directs people to the 2 party coordinators. They don't have to be members of the League.

Kathy Sakahara: Do CEOC members have privilege to come anytime, or do we have to go through a process?

Julie Wise: Yes, CEOC members can come anytime.

6. Special Purpose District Election Process

King County Elections has 192 jurisdictions they run elections for. All elections in Washington state run the same way with a few exceptions, including drainage districts and conservation districts.

Under some circumstances drainage districts can run their own elections. In order to vote in a drainage district election, a voter must be a property owner and registered voter. In addition, drainage district elections are held on even number years. Some drainage districts contract King County Elections to run their election process.

Conservation districts are also run differently. King County only has one such district, called the King Conservation District (KCD). It serves 1.3 million King County residents with the exception of Enumclaw, Federal Way, Milton, Pacific, and Skykomish. In 2019, KCD asked

King County Elections to help with their election. They were linked up with Democracy Live, which assists with their online ballot platform. State law requires that conservation districts take place during the first quarter of the year, which presents unique challenges getting ballots out.

King County Elections plans to continue advocating for the legislature to have conservation and drainage districts on a regular ballot. It's important to have drainage districts and conservation districts on a regular ballot to give them credibility. For example, typically only 10,000 voters submit their ballot for the KCD elections, which is a low turnout rate since they serve 1.3 million people. KCD has been vocal about wanting to get their election on a regular ballot too.

King County Elections will follow up with CEOC regarding their legislative priorities.

Kathy Sakahara: Do property owners each get a vote?

Janice Case: It can get complicated. Each property gets two votes. If it's community property, each spouse can get a vote. Or one property owner can cast both of the votes.

Jude Ahmed: Wanted to clarify, do you need to be a property owner to run or to vote?

Julie Wise: Just to vote but this only applies for drainage districts.

7. Briefing on Disaster Management Systems

In the event of an emergency, King County Elections has various plans to ensure operations can continue. This includes:

Continuity of Operations Plans – ensures continued operations during any emergency event, including flooding and earthquakes. Per state law, this plan is not subject to public disclosure for security reasons. However, it's shared with partners, Secretary of State's Office, and the military. The plan is regularly reviewed and updated.

Election Contingency Plan – This plan was created to ensure the operational aspects of the election can be executed. This includes back up plans if the network or website isn't working. This plan is reviewed prior to every election.

Tabletop Exercise – Prior to every election, staff walk through scenarios and practice how they would be handled in the event of an emergency. Some scenarios include power outages and natural disasters. Note that King County Elections has a large onsite generator and uninterruptable power supplies (UPS) for their tabulation systems in the event of a power outage.

Jayson Morris: Do the generators have a maintenance schedule? Is the fuel recycled?

Janice Case: Twice a year if not quarterly. Yes.

Tyson Hartman: Do these plans account for whether people can get to the facilities?

Janice Case: We work closely with the emergency management coordination center.

Kathy Sakahara: Is there a possibility for ballot submission accommodation during emergency events?

Janice Case: If something catastrophic happens, deadlines can be flexed in partnership with Secretary of State.

8. Briefing on Alternatives to Signatures for Ballot Envelopes

King County Elections is currently working with US Digital Response to conduct research and assess the feasibility of using alternatives to signatures to help make the voting process more inclusive. US Digital Response made three recommendations, including using a state issued ID, a one-time passcode, and signature verification. King County Elections is partnering with Amazon web servers to explore these three options. In addition, King County Elections is working on legislation to pilot using the three recommendations.

Julie Wise: Signatures don't work for everyone. We need to be looking at other options that aren't just signatures.

Stanley Tsao: How do we get a pilot?

Julie Wise: We need to get the legislature to approve a pilot. It may take several sessions to get a pilot approved.

9. New Member Recruitment Update

There are currently three vacancies including the academic institution representative, registered voter, and representative from the Vietnamese speaking community. The King County Council plans to interview an applicant at the September Employment and Administration Committee regarding the academic institution vacancy. In addition, the Council is in the process of reviewing applications for the registered voter vacancy. CEOC members were encouraged to share information with their networks about the vacancy for the representative from the Vietnamese speaking community.

10. KCC Staff Update

There were no staff updates.

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

Chair Juárez shared his vision for CEOC. He'd like to update the CEOC bylaws, discuss ground rules on how to communicate, and discuss changing the format of the agendas to

make the meetings more inclusive. Regarding the draft annual report to the King County Council, typically the report is authored by the CEOC chair. This time, Chair Juárez would like all members to contribute to the report. Each member will be delegated either a section or be asked to edit.

Chair Juárez asked for a temperature check regarding conducting CEOC hybrid meetings. CEOC members agreed to further discuss at the next meeting. CEOC would have to work with King County Elections to determine timing and logistics to host hybrid meetings.

Member Thomas shared that King County Elections was recently recognized by the National Association of Elected Officials for their extraordinary work. Director Wise shared that they received the Guardian Award for the Election Observer Program and the Eagle Award for innovative use of technology adapted during COVID.

Member Sakahara mentioned that the last day to register to vote is Halloween.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at about 12:40 pm.