

**Citizens Election Oversight Committee  
November 12, 2014**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Ellen Hansen, Paul Berry, Chuck Gerring, Bruce Huang, Sven Kalve, Marilyn Knight, Sheryl Moss, Frank Radford, Linh Thai, Monica Tracey, Emily Willoughby  
**Elections Staff:** Sherril Huff, Kim van Ekstrom, Dale Hartman, Rene LeBeau, Nathan Valderas  
**CEOC Staff:** Katherine Cortes

1. Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 11:30 am and shared with members that James Rigby had resigned from the committee due to imminent relocation to Montana. That resignation leaves two vacancies (WA Republican Party and junior taxing district). In addition, terms will have expired by the end of 2014 for four positions:
  - nonpartisan organization active in King County that evaluates candidates and ballot measures, such as the Municipal League;
  - nonpartisan organization active in King County that provides elections information to the public, such as the League of Women Voters;
  - King County Republican Party
  - King County registered voter not representatives of any of the groups listed in subsection A.1. through 7. and 9. through 14. of section 2.53.021 of King County Code (1 of 2)

Members with expired terms may continue to serve until and unless another appointment to that position is made.

2. The minutes of September 10, 2014, were approved with one correction. The pre-election forecast turnout rate was specified as 62%.
3. Director's Report: Sherril Huff distributed a written report on the November 4 General Election and reviewed highlights, and additionally addressed some points of interest raised on the meeting agenda. She also indicated that Elections will provide binders to members for committee materials including director's reports going forward.
  - **The November general election** will be certified November 25; Elections will continue counting ballots until then. At the time of the report, ballot returns were at 55% of registered voters, and Saturday shifts were needed to process ballots. Though early returns were lower than anticipated, the ballot count from the dropboxes (approximately 90,000) was the highest since the 2012 Presidential election. Approximately 6000 ballots were postmarked too late; these voters will receive letters indicating this as a courtesy. At this time, Elections does not anticipate any recounts.

Director Huff described a few incidents that had arisen during the general election that Elections had addressed, but did not consider cause for concern.

- **Ballot cuts/tears:** In a typical election, a few ballots (in the 10s) have tears or cuts on the folds, which require additional effort to be processed. This number was larger in this election (potentially around 100, though Elections did not count them) and the print vendor (K&H) will conduct an internal investigation

to try to identify the cause and resolve it. Some cuts may also have resulted from Elections' use of an older piece of equipment (the "Envelopener") to process envelopes with irregularities such as multiple ballots inside.

- **E. Newton missing ballots:** Voters from two households in East Newton (Capitol Hill) called on 10/23 to report not receiving their ballots. They had been experiencing mail delivery problems and also did not get voter pamphlets from the state or county. Elections determined that the issue only impacted a few additional households and contacted all of them to re-issue ballots or offer online ballot marking as an alternative.
- **Misprinted ballots:** Two voters in one household reported receiving ballots without printing on the last page; Elections directed them to the online marking option, which they took. Elections traced the error to the print vendor, where an individual staff person failed to follow protocol for a "hard stop" (print interruption) which they determined affected 8 ballots. The vendor hand delivered replacement ballots to the other voters whose ballots were affected, except for one who had moved out of the area.
- **Update on Reorganization:** Several staff members shadowed others during the general election, and appreciated the opportunities for internal growth.
- **Deputy Director Nomination:** Council would need to pass a Code change ordinance in order to be able to consider the deputy director nomination sent by Elections. Staff anticipates such an ordinance may be considered in December.

#### 4. Observations of November General Election

Marilyn observed at the new Redmond location, where it is easier to drive up. She raised a question about police officers placing ballots into the box for voters. Sheryl Moss noted that there is no law preventing anyone from giving their ballot to anyone else for deposit, but Elections staff clarified that officers assigned to the drop box locations are there to focus on traffic control specifically. Ellen and Monica observed at the Ballard location that Elections staff requested the officer stop taking ballots at 5 minutes before drop box closing, since they felt they could not accept ballots that would not have made it into the drop box by the deadline without assistance. This raised the further issue of whether the practice of accepting ballots from voters "in line" at the deadline extended to people who were queued in cars at the drop box locations (and whether this applied to non-drive-up drop box locations). Director Huff noted that at Elections HQ, police cut off access to the parking lot at 8pm sharp, and only those cars in the parking lot were considered to be in line and allowed to submit their ballots.

Paul toured Elections headquarters twice during the processing period, and heard about the slit ballots. He observed at Auburn on Election Day and thought the new drop van location was excellent.

Emily observed at Elections headquarters, where there was a steady stream of cars. During processing she requested that pairs of staffers reviewing ballots move to workstations with externally viewable observation monitors when those were available; Elections staff was sometimes able to accommodate this request and sometimes not able.

Linh observed at the Rainier Community Center, which he noted was a family-friendly location. He and other members heard many requests for “I Voted” stickers. There was discussion of whether Elections should make stickers that it has available. It would be cost-prohibitive to send stickers to all voters with their ballots, but providing stickers to only voters who go to staffed drop-box or AVC locations might not meet the intent of publicizing the elections and serving as a timely reminder to vote.

Monica observed with Ellen at the Ballard drop box location on Election Day. They commended the staff but noted issues with traffic flow (and lack of parking) at the Ballard library, which is otherwise a great (central, familiar) location. Ellen noted that CEOC badges were not given out, though members reported getting them at other locations. Director Huff asked for prior notification of expected observation locations, so that Elections can ensure the badges are available.

Bruce observed at Bellevue City Hall, which has both an AVC and a drop box. The signage and parking availability was good but the two locations used only one atomic clock, which led to a small (1-minute) delay in relaying the time for the end of voting to the AVC staff. It does not appear to have affected any voters, and Elections staff indicates that they can supply an additional clock in future.

Katherine observed at the University of Washington (Red Square) drop van, which had steady foot and bicycle traffic. At least one voter raised the issue of the long distance from available parking, which had been raised in previous elections.

Several members observed the Logic and Accuracy ballot tabulation test, and praised the staff for a well-organized process that was attentive to the importance of the test. The anticipated tabulation results provided in advance to the Secretary of State’s office were one vote off from the results reported by the machines. Elections conducted a hand count of the test ballots and were able to confirm that the machine results were consistent with the votes on the test ballots. The error was only in the prior anticipated results sent to the Secretary of State, which apparently were incorrectly updated when the Secretary of State requested changes to make the results less uniform. CEOC members noted that this gave the staff an opportunity to practice and demonstrate a recount procedure. Director Huff credited Dale Hartman and his staff for improvements in the testing administration.

Frank observed at the Kirkland drop box and praised staff for their politeness and professionalism.

Sven observed at the Kent Regional Justice Center. He noted the last car in line at 8pm (was able to drop off their ballot) but felt that there should be a police officer there to help enforce the deadline for the queue of cars. A half-dozen ballots arrived too late to be counted. He also toured HQ with Katherine and noted many improvements and an overall higher level of engagement with fewer people. Viewing additional components of Elections operations (GIS, phone bank, etc.) was educational.

Chuck observed at HQ three times during election week and was impressed by staff, including at the L&A test. He noted that the advisory votes were very confusing, and Sheryl Moss confirmed that there were strict limitations on the wording based on the initiative that put them in place, but that the legislature had the opportunity to change the rules since it has been two years since the initiative passed.

5. CEOC 2014 Accomplishments/Annual Report – Members agreed to look at items in the 2014 Work Plan to determine if the committee had accomplished those items. In terms of the first item, monitoring all aspects of the Elections process, the committee discussed requiring all members to visit Elections HQ during an election at least once per year. Staff emphasized the importance of being physically present as compared to the limited perspective of webcam viewing.

There was additional discussion of the need for the major political parties to deploy observers. Representatives noted some reluctance of the parties to continue sending observers since elections have been running so smoothly, but also that all who observe come away favorably impressed with the process.

Members who receive voter concerns were asked to share information about the concerns and their responses with the group ongoing, so that they can be documented (reflected in committee meeting minutes).

Because the meeting time had elapsed and the Canvassing Board was going to meet in the room, members agreed to continue the discussion by email and telephone conference as necessary.

6. Discussion of the CEOC 2015 Work Plan was deferred until January.
7. Good of the Order: Katherine briefly noted two relevant Council items, and indicated that members would receive an email with relevant detail and/or links.
  - The chair's striking amendment to the 2015-16 budget ordinance has been released and was to be discussed in committee on Thursday 11/13.
  - Director Huff will brief the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee on December 9 at 10am at Newcastle City Hall, on preparations for the 2016 Presidential Election.
8. The next meeting is scheduled for January 13.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katherine Cortes