

**Citizens Election Oversight Committee  
February 11, 2015**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Ellen Hansen, Paul Berry, Chuck Gerring, Bruce Huang (by telephone), Sven Kalve, Marilyn Knight, Sheryl Moss, Frank Radford, Linh Thai, Monica Tracey, Carolyn Weikel, Emily Willoughby

**Elections Staff:** Sherril Huff, Kim van Ekstrom, Dale Hartman, Rene LeBeau, Nathan Valderas, Julie Wise

**CEOC Staff:** Katherine Cortes

1. Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.
2. The minutes of January 14, 2015 were approved.
3. Director's Report: Director Huff distributed binders for all CEOC members containing a written report on the February 10 special election results. She noted that the election stakeholder report had been sent via email to CEOC members, and that voter turnout was likely to hit forecast levels.

**Technology Projects:** Elections IT Service Delivery Manager Dale Hartman presented on the status of major technology projects. Elections has decided not to deploy the replacement EMS system for the April special election, in part because that election is anticipated to be countywide. The current system is functioning and stable. The new anticipated go-live date for the replacement system is December 7, 2015 (following the 2015 general election), for use in the February 2016 special election. Delaying the deployment will allow end-to-end testing and further incorporation into the main application of features now in side systems. The vendor is providing this customization at no additional cost to King County, as many of the features that King County wants will benefit other customers using the EMS product. An example of such a feature is more automated handling of overseas ballots (addressing and processing).

Elections continues to consider partnership with Snohomish, Pierce, and Thurston counties to purchase a ballot tabulation solution, to obtain cost efficiencies.

**Strategic Plan Progress:** Kim van Eckstrom presented on the development and implementation efforts around the Elections Strategic Plan (available online at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/elections/docs/pdfs/2014/strategic-plan.pdf>).

Elections staff formed teams for each of the 30+ supportive strategies in the Plan, with every permanent staff member assigned to at least one team to ensure engagement and inclusion of all the components of Elections' work. Each team for the strategies scheduled to launch in 2014 and 2015 was assigned a Strategic Advisor from the Elections management team, and has developed a white paper (work program) for their strategy. (A sample report on S32, Establish a statistically valid ongoing attitude and awareness survey with a regular defined cycle of administration, was distributed.) The teams are now moving into operational and organizational planning, including plans for monitoring and holding staff accountable to achieving the strategies. Director Huff commented that it was a huge task, but well worth the time. CEOC members also commended the work of Elections.

Some teams may have sought input from stakeholders outside the Elections staff (such as from KCIT) and Elections may consider future opportunities to use outside facilitators. Kim and Director Huff were asked to consider how the CEOC could be included in the stakeholder consultation around the Plan, and given advance notice of needs and requests. Kim agreed to bring back information on this.

**Special election observations:**

- Bruce Huang observed at the downtown Seattle (Admin Building) dropbox but saw no ballot drops in the half-hour prior to on-time Election Day closure at 8pm.
- Paul Berry and Sven Kalve observed at Burien City Hall. Many voters came just before Election Day closure – they estimated 150 in the last half hour. Staff were prepared and efficient. 4 or 5 voters came several minutes after closure and deposited their ballots after the box was emptied. Sven and Paul reiterated concerns about the placement allowed by the City of Burien, noting that the location in the parking lot is hard to find and does not allow a "drive-up" option, since the box is obstructed by parked cars. Nate Valderas responded that Election has included traffic analysis of every drop-off location as part of its 2015 workplan, which the CEOC commended. Members further offered their assistance in outreach to different jurisdictions hosting drop-off locations as needed.

**2014 Annual Report:** Chair Hansen reported that she presented the Annual Report to the King County Council Government Accountability and Oversight Committee on January 27, and it was well received. Sven was also in attendance.

4. Legislative update – Sheryl Moss distributed a list of current bills related to elections under consideration by the state legislature, noting that many would drop off if they did not receive hearings by the policy cutoff on February 20. She briefly spoke to competing bills related to raising the low bar to write-in candidates appearing on the ballot; the Washington Voting Rights Act authorizing district-based elections under certain circumstances; and companion bills requiring prepaid return postage on primary and general ballots (which would cost the state an estimated \$2.7 million in the first biennium).

Sheryl further noted that a bill would be introduced to hold the 2016 Presidential primary on the second Tuesday in March, which is in the Secretary of State's workplan but was not in the Governor's budget.

5. CEOC 2015 Work Plan – the 2015 Work Plan was approved as distributed. Director Huff indicated that Elections would respond to the Work Plan.
6. Good of the Order – Chair Hansen provided follow-up on some items raised at the previous meeting.
  - Chair Hansen forward to CEOC members an email from Julie Wise providing a comprehensive response and outreach strategy related to Seattle districting notification. CEOC members appreciated the mail, which addressed their concerns about potential voter confusion.

- The annual precinct alterations ordinance is expected to be considered by the Government Accountability and Oversight committee on March 24 or April 14.
- Secretary of State staff will present a 1-day version of their (typically 2-day) elections administrator training, tailored for CEOC members, on April 8 from 9am to 3pm at Elections.
- Elections has scheduled a tour of the print vendor prior to the April election for Council staff and members. CEOC members who have not been on the tour are invited to join.
- Chair Hansen led a discussion of the history of the CEOC, going back to 2003, including some lapses in the conduct of elections that led to the initiation of process reviews by both the King County Council and the Secretary of State's office.
- The King County Code change ordinance creating the Deputy Director position in place of the Superintendent of Elections position will be briefed in Committee of the Whole on February 18.
- Staff are working to propose reappointments for 5 members with expired terms through the Council Employment and Administration Committee, as well as to fill the two vacant CEOC positions.
- The CEOC website is also being updated and members are asked to review their brief biographies to ensure that they are accurate and current.

7. The next meeting will be the all-day training described above, on April 8 beginning at 9am.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katherine Cortes