



King County

CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOCC)

February 19, 2020 | 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. | King County Elections, Renton

MINUTES

Attending in Person: Chair, Kyle Vixie, First Vice Chair, Eliseo Juárez, Hillary Coleman, Maya Manus, Sheryl Moss, Seth Orr, Quynh Pham, Stefan Sharkansky, Stanley Tsao

Attending by Phone: Vice Chair, Jayson Todd Morris, Allison Feher, Jeffrey Manson

Absent: Vice Chair, Nanette Sullivan, Julie Kang

Elections Staff: Elections Director, Julie Wise and Kendall LeVan Hodson

Council Staff: Carolyn Busch, Simon Farretta, Sam Porter

Executive Staff: HyeEun Park, Michael Padilla Ocampo

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kyle Vixie at 11:38 a.m.

2. Approve January 14, 2020 minutes

Seth Orr moved adoption of the Minutes of January 14, 2020. Eliseo Juárez seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously adopted.

3. Workgroup Updates

Voter Participation: Eliseo Juárez announced the next meeting for the workgroup is Feb. 26. They will be establishing the annual meeting calendar, outlining major work projects, and identifying other deliverables. LeVan Hodson is expected to attend.

Election Monitoring: Stefan Sharkansky reported for Nanette Sullivan: Sullivan met with LeVan Hodson and Director Wise about working group priorities, including opportunities to assist Elections in advancing communication with the public. Issues included highlighting the 70 new drop boxes and observer drop box checklists; reviewing other public outreach tools including digital tools; and beginning work on voter surveys to identify areas for improvement.

Best Practices: Jayson Morris participated in a walk-through at the print shop, which he noted was an impressive operation. The workgroup is in discussions with the Disability Advisory Committee. He reached out to David Lord, and received some good information about systems, outcomes and where things need to go.

4. King County Council Orientation & CEOC Legislative Intent

Carolyn Busch brought a map showing King County Councilmember districts. Busch asked CEOC members to apply a sticker to the map showing where they live. The stickers reflected a concentration in urban centers, such as Seattle.

Busch discussed how a county-wide executive and district-based council each represent a county in different ways. She discussed how issues, such as a proposed business payroll tax, are approached differently by members representing different constituents.

Busch discussed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and standards of voter inclusion and suppression. She noted that CEOC members play a critical role in advising the County Council on issues that could be inhibiting participation or opportunities for improving participation. She noted that part of the reason for the CEOC is to address barriers to voting, including language and disabilities. She noted that the CEOC is appointed by the Council and their role is to provide the Council with reports, work with the Elections Director and staff, attend canvassing board meetings, and give feedback from citizens about how the election system is working.

Moss asked about the appropriate role of personal vs. CEOC advocacy on state legislation. Busch noted that the County has an advocacy team in Olympia. If the CEOC identifies issues that require state advocacy, the committee should bring those issues to the Council, and the County will take appropriate steps. The Council is very pro-voting access and wants to hear about any issues that need to be addressed. She noted that the County needs to speak with one voice in Olympia. CEOC members can do individual advocacy, but they should not act as a County representative before the legislature. There was additional discussion about how to frame personal advocacy.

Sharkansky advocated for broader geographic diversity on the CEOC. Porter noted that there were efforts during the recruitment process to have geographic diversity. However, the controlling legislation has very specific committee members requirements, and geography is not among them. There was discussion about the remaining two vacant CEOC positions and trying to fill those spots with people from different areas of the County.

Juárez asked about what makes a great CEOC. Busch suggested that the committee stay focused on the enumerated mission, stay engaged with the Director of Elections, participate in election observation, attend canvassing board meetings, provide thoughtful analysis on the right to vote, help ensure every person and every community has an equal right to vote, and identify what else can be done to make improvements.

5. KCE Director's Legislative Priorities Update

Director Julie Wise reviewed legislative issues, including:

SB6313: Increasing opportunities for young voters. This bill is called the "Youth Voting Act" and would allow 17-year-olds to vote in the primary if they will be 18 by the general election. Also creates student engagement centers at UW Bothell and UW Seattle. Wise desires these at all campuses, not just at four-year institutions. However, Elections would not

necessarily be ready to successfully implement this across such a wide group of facilities in time for this November's election.

HB 2916: Concerning voters' pamphlets for overseas and service voters. This bill would require state and local voters' pamphlets to accompany ballots for all overseas votes. However, Wise believes this would be logistically challenging: Currently candidates have only one week between filing and when they must provide statements. This bill would push back deadlines even further. Instead, they currently provide a link to the website where the voters' pamphlets are posted.

Sharkansky raised concerns about Elections advocating against advisory votes. Manus raised issues about Youth Engagement Centers being limited to UW. Tsao asked about legislative deadlines. Manus inquired about whether the committee could have a "call to action" as part of legislative updates. Chair Vixie suggested the body could send letters to the Council.

6. Director's Report| Special & KCD Elections

Director Julie Wise provided an update, including: the February Special Election had 33% turnout, which was +1% over projections (nearly 125,000 ballots returned). The King Conservation District election had 0.5% turnout (nearly 6,500 ballots returned), where King County Elections did the signature verification and tabulation.

Presidential Primary Election: a sample ballot and envelope were provided to committee members. A big media briefing was conducted on Feb. 18, and ballots were mailed on Feb. 19. There is long history of Washingtonians not wanting to declare their party, but this is a party election and the parties set the rules. Parties provided the declaration and the list of candidates. If voters don't pick a party, Elections will reach out. However, if voters pick both parties, the ballot is spoiled. If they vote in the wrong column, the ballot is spoiled. All drop-box and vote centers will be open like a regular election. In the past, King County has had 30% turnout, but Elections is looking for 40% turnout, possibly even 50 or 60% since the primary is earlier this year.

Orr asked if the ballots will be sorted by political party. Wise indicated that they are pre-sorting them by party. CEOC members are welcome to come observe. Most of the sorting will be happening very early (around 6 a.m.) when the mail arrives. There might also be some afternoon opportunities to observe the ballot drop box sorts.

Sharkansky asked about the 0.5% turnout in the King Conservation District election. Wise confirmed but noted that this is double the last KCD election. Sharkansky noted concerns about the signature verification process for screen-based signatures. Wise indicated the system is effective and offered to provide a demonstration. She noted that there were two other pilot projects (one in Denver), and the matching had not been an issue. Wise further emphasized that King County is not moving to mobile voting, and there is no intent to move to these technologies for a King County election.

7. CEOC Feedback | Special & KCD Elections & K&H Tour

Orr expressed appreciation for the K&H tour and noted that they also were able to see processes used by other states.

LeVan Hodson suggested anyone who missed the tour should watch the social media video version produced by staffer Halei Watkins.

8. Census 2020

King County staffers HyeEun Park & Michael Padilla presented. March 2-12 will be the first wave of postcards with codes for people to answer the Census. The mission is to count each person once and only once. The Census is mandated by the Constitution. About \$675 billion in federal funds are distribution using the data. Fair representation in Congress (apportioning 435 U.S. House seats and drawing the boundaries) is based on the data. The data helps determine where federal funds are directed, including Medicaid, SNAP, transportation, education, housing assistance, and Head Start.

The law is clear: no personal information can be shared (Title 13). The penalty for illegally sharing personal data is up to 5 years in jail or \$250,000. Examples were provided of the Census questions. The Census portal opens on March 23. This is the first Census that will be conducted predominantly online.

King County invested in the Regional Census Fund: funding for community-based organization doing outreach to the hard to reach communities. Staff are also working with County departments to ensure departments leverage community relationships to emphasize the Census as they go about their business (for example: the voter guide has a section on the Census, Metro buses have ads, etc.). In total, the Regional Census Fund has invested \$1.29 million in 57 nonprofits serving historically underserved communities.

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

Chair Vixie: After the primaries, there will be a good opportunity to share a letter with the Council. Next month, the CEOC may look at possible adjustments of the quorum requirements. On Feb. 18, Vixie presented to the GAO Committee and the presentation is available online. Members are also encouraged to check out King County Elections social media.

Farretta provided a reminder about W-9 forms and the Annual Financial Disclosure. Coleman suggested members remind people about the new registration requirements.

10. Adjournment

Sharkansky made a Motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at about 1:01 p.m.