

**Citizens Election Oversight Committee
September 16, 2015**

MINUTES

Members Present: Ellen Hansen, Bruce Huang, Sven Kalve, Marilyn Knight, Sheryl Moss, Linh Thai, Monica Tracey, Emily Willoughby

Elections Staff: Sherril Huff, Kim van Ekstrom, Dale Hartman, Rene LeBeau, Nathan Valderas, Julie Wise, Susan Southard, Chris Rudolph

CEOC Staff: Katherine Cortes

1. Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.
2. The minutes of June 17, 2015 were approved.
3. Director's Report:

August 4 primary election report: Director Huff provided the Stakeholders' report and reconciliation report for the August 4 election. She reported that low turnout in the primary election caught the whole state by surprise, but that the election otherwise appeared to go smoothly, and that King County Elections held a productive debrief afterwards. Elections counted just short of 290,000 valid ballots in King County, for a final turnout of 25 percent. Members noted that the number of online ballots cast increased to 858.

Preparations for November general election: Director Huff provided fact sheets and other materials (including a complete schedule of observation opportunities) for the November 3 General and Special Election. Elections notes that there are approximately 1.173 million active voters, and estimates a turnout of 48%, or 563,000 ballots.

Technology projects: Elections provided copies of the 2014 – 2018 Elections Technology Strategic Plan that was transmitted to the County Council. This plan will be briefed in the Government Accountability and Oversight committee on October 13. Staff will send out the agenda when available.

Legislative changes and Title 1 Code update: Deputy Director Julie Wise reported on two elements of updates for Elections: 1) revised Public Rules developed by Elections are in a public preview period that will conclude this week, after which the Director will sign and transmit them to Council; and 2) Elections has transmitted a proposed ordinance to update King County Code with three key anticipated effects. The ordinance is intended to align the KCC with the Washington Administrative Code; reflect current organization of Elections as a department rather than a division of the County; and modify some aspects of the local voters' pamphlet, with respect to notification of jurisdictions and language that candidates can submit. The Code change ordinance is anticipated to be briefed in Government Accountability and Oversight committee on November 4.

The County Auditors will meet at the end of September into October to develop position papers for the legislature. King County Elections has been participating in preparatory work along with the auditors' association (WSACA). One key item would be to move the voter registration deadline closer to each election.

Presidential preference primary: Elections provided a handout on Presidential primary planning including key dates. Sheryl Moss reported that the Republican Party intends to use the results of this primary to choose 100% of their delegates, but the Democratic Party will not use the results at all. Members asked, and staff responded, that the lists of voters with the party declarations they must make to participate (have their votes counted and get a vote credit) will be public information. A six-member King County team is working closely with the Secretary of State's Office to prepare for this primary. Election Day is May 24.

Voting center location planning: No changes in voting center locations (set by King County Council motion) are anticipated for the 2015 general election. However, Bellevue City Hall is experiencing construction, so if they are not able to accommodate Elections, this could constitute a Code exception emergency. Elections has had discussions with King County Libraries and determined that the Bellevue library could accommodate the voting center with better vehicle access (parking and a circular drive). The Disability Advisory Committee has also raised concerns with accessibility at Union Station in Seattle and suggested the Seattle Central Library as a possible alternate voting center location.

Strategic Plan activities report

Kim van Eckstrom noted that some new work projects, such as the Presidential preference primary, were added to the Strategic Plan work plan. The management team took a step back to review timing and scope. 32 projects were consolidated to 30 projects, of which:

- 9 are on track for 2015 completion
- 13 have substantial progress
- 6 will be slowed down for capacity reasons
- 2 will be halted for the time being. These 2 are the alternative to the voters' pamphlet, and self-selected surveys.

These categories will be reflected in the Q3 2015 progress report.

Quadrennial voter survey: Elections expects the statistically valid telephone voter survey to be completed on schedule, to provide information to Elections on voter opinions of service going into the 2016 Presidential election. Currently the survey team is reviewing RFP responses for a survey administrator. The survey will go out in November, with preliminary reports anticipated by the end of 2015.

Be Informed campaign: The Be Informed campaign has signed up Head Coach Sigi Schmid of the Seattle Sounders as its most recent celebrity promoter.

4. Observation reports – August primary

Sven Kalve observed at Federal Way City Hall on Election Day. Elections staff were efficient and pleasant. Per the direction of departmental leadership, they did not take ballots from voters in cars, and there were traffic back-ups.

Emily Willoughby observed at Elections HQ on Election Day. Road work was being done outside, so it took extra time for cars to be able to turn into the lot. Some were not able to turn in timely and their ballots were not accepted. However, two people who entered the lot but needed additional time to complete their ballots were allowed to complete and submit their ballots.

Marilyn Knight observed at the Redmond drop box. Some voters had trouble finding the new location. Elections staff encouraged voters in cars to drop their own ballots, but did take some ballots from drivers.

Linh Thai was out of the country and used the online ballot marking process to vote. He noted that this was an evolving technology process and that it was difficult to find a way to get a signature on the actual ballot and to scan it back in. He suggested that using biometric verifiers on mobile phones could be a strategy to overcome this obstacle.

Bruce Huang observed at Bellevue City Hall on Election Day and noted that the distance between the AVC (deep in the building) and the drop box in the garage is still an issue. Elections staff still have only have one atomic clock between those two locations. This Election Day, the staff was prepared (connected by telephone) announce closure simultaneously, but because the clock was only at the AVC, there was no countdown at the drop box.

Ellen Hansen observed at the Ballard library drop box on Election Day, where the staff included Nate Valderas. She noted that the traffic and process were chaotic at this location even at a low-turnout primary. Like at UW, the availability of computers inside for voters to use for online ballot marking was beneficial. It is still a problem that the drop box faces in to the sidewalk, not out to the street, so voters cannot drive by and drop in their ballots. She noted the value of the previous policy of marking the end of the car line at 8pm, and letting cars in line submit ballots, and made an analogy to the last person in line outside of a polling place, prior to the implementation of vote-by-mail.

Members discussed the vehicle queue and ballot reception rules with Elections staff. Frank Radford, who was not present at the meeting, had also emphasized the vehicle queue issue by email to the CEOC. Director Huff referred to a (2013?) Office of the Secretary of State ruling that people still filling out their ballots at 8pm should be allowed to submit them, as complicating the ballot reception rules. She noted that Elections will be consulting traffic experts, but that logistics of drop box placement are an ongoing challenge. Some members asserted that Elections has done a lot to notify voters of the importance of arriving early, and felt that voters have sufficient notice of the deadline to be able to meet it. Other members posited that if the logistics of reception make it difficult for people to submit ballots in a timely manner on Election Day, Elections must continue to seek better solutions.

5. 2015 CEOC Work Plan check-in: This discussion was deferred to October. Ellen would like to cover disaster planning as a discrete agenda item within the Director's Report.
6. Good of the Order –
 - Staff noted that Kris Swanson, the Cowlitz County Auditor, had been nominated by WSACA to represent that organization on the CEOC, and that the candidate materials would be circulated to CEOC and Councilmembers prior to consideration of the appointment by the Employment and Administration committee.
7. The next meeting will be October 15.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine Cortes

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