



## King County

### **CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOC)**

July 21, 2021 Meeting | 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. | Zoom Conference

#### **MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Chair: Kyle Vixie, First Vice Chair: Eliseo Juárez, Vice Chair: Nanette Sullivan, Vice Chair: Jayson Todd Morris, Allison Feher, Linda Grez, Stuart Holmes, Julie Kang, Jeff Manson, Maya Manus, Seth Orr, Stefan Sharkansky, Stanley Tsao

**Absent:** Hillary Coleman and Quynh Pham

**Special Guests:** King County Councilmember Girmay Zahilay and Michael Padilla, King County Executive External Relations

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

**Council Staff:** Erin Arya, Patrick Hamacher, Miranda Leskinen and Wendy Soohoo

#### **1. Call to Order**

CEOC Chair Kyle Vixie called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

#### **2. Approve May 19, 2021 minutes**

Vice Chair Jayson Morris moved approval of the minutes of the May 19, 2021 meeting. Member Seth Orr seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **3. Introduction of new CEOC members**

Member Linda Grez, Jurisdictional Representative (junior taxing district or city with population under 20,000) and Member Stuart Holmes, Secretary of State's Office Representative (Ex Officio) introduced themselves as official new members of the committee. All committee members and staff introduced themselves.

#### **4. Director's Report**

Elections Director Julie Wise provided an update to the committee. She shared that employees who provide proof of vaccination may return to the office. Director Wise offered a tour of the ballot processing center to new members.

Director Wise shared that the Primary election includes 56 offices across the county along with seven ballot measures and 216 candidates. The county's 73 ballot drop boxes will be open 24/7 until 8pm on election night. She noted a Kent box was relocated to the Panther Lake King County Library from Kentridge High School. Director Wise noted that VoteWA worked beautifully administratively and for candidates this year during filing week. A record number of candidates filed. She shared that limited English speakers have higher signature challenge rates as do younger voters so they are

having discussions about how to better communicate why they need your signature and explain it better.

Chair Vixie asked what feedback they have received on the new cameras. Director Wise noted that everything they have heard recently is positive: the cameras are working well, and it is nice for people to better see the work they are doing. Vice Chair Morris asked if the cameras will still work in the event of a power outage. Deputy Director Case noted that they have tiered levels of importance during an emergency and the cameras would not be powered.

## **5. Census 2020**

Michael Padilla with the King County Executive's office provided an update on the 2020 Census as it relates to districting at the county and state levels. He noted the schedules for participating in community meetings and resources for getting involved. He also noted the delay in receiving 2020 Census Data which is expected August 16. Padilla reported the data will be legacy data like what was used in previous years. A more user-friendly version is expected in late September which will be easier to navigate for those wanting to do so.

## **6. Petition Processing Overview**

Elections Deputy Director Janice Case shared that Initiative, Referendum, Charter Amendment petitions are filed with the district and that the rules regarding the petitions process vary by jurisdiction. Petitioners need 33,060 valid signatures for City of Seattle Charter Amendment No. 29 (also known as Compassion Seattle). Petitioners submitted 8,000 pages. King County Elections set a Certification of Terminal Date for withdrawals or additions of signatures for July 15 at which point they began processing. They have over 40 temporary staff working on the petition processing. July 30 is the estimated date for completion.

Deputy Director Case also mentioned there is a Recall Sawant signature collection effort running with an October 19 deadline for the February ballot. There is no period for accepting additional signatures after the petition submitted and only the person, committee, entity must submit the signatures to King County Elections. Signature verification must begin 5-10 days after signatures are filed with King County Elections and an election must be held 45-90 days after signatures are certified.

## **7. Districting Process Update**

Patrick Hamacher provided a brief update on the Districting Committee's process for redrawing the King County Council district boundaries using 2020 Census Data. The committee is in the process of holding roughly 20 community listening sessions. Hamacher presented a map of which districts are projected to need to grow in size and which are projected to need to shrink based on OFM population data estimates. The estimates show that Districts 2,3,4,8 would need to contract, and the rest would need to expand. He reported that the committee anticipates finishing the process of drafting the draft maps by the end of October and completing their work prior to the holidays.

## **8. Primary Election Observation**

Vice Chair Nanette Sullivan reviewed that in 2020, the committee kicked off a pilot for monitoring to make it easier to monitor election drop boxes. She reminded the committee of the process for completing observations in the Primary Election.

Member Allison Feher asked if there is a way to track which boxes have been monitored and that transportation can be a challenge. Vice Chair Sullivan responded that any time you can give a box and provide feedback that is helpful. She recommended members monitor whatever you find you can do without challenges which could be a morning and an event visit to the same drop box.

## **9. Ranked Choice Voting Legislation Briefing Charter Amendment Proposal\*\* Briefing and Discussion**

King County Council policy staff Miranda Leskinen provided a report on the legislation before Council that, if passed, would place a charter amendment on the ballot related to Ranked Choice Voting for county elected offices. The Committee of the Whole held two hearings and forwarded it to full Council where it was referred back to committee. Miranda noted Ranked Choice Voting allows for the ranking of candidates in order of preference. If a candidate receives over 50% of first choice rankings they would win, otherwise the last choice is eliminated in each round of counting. A cost estimate is not available currently, but leading cost drivers include updating the tabulation system, printing multiple pages for ballots, and voter education.

Councilmember Zahilay shared that the ordinance if approved by council, would be sent to a November ballot, then Council would establish protocols for factors like cost, timeline, stakeholder engagement and implementation. He noted that Ranked Choice Voting provides options for voters. It makes candidates campaign to everyone instead of their base. It incentivizes talking to more people, and coalition building where more candidates are viable.

Member Allison Feher shared that the League of Education Voters has supported the issue for a number of years and is excited to see it moving forward. Member Stefan Sharkansky noted concern that it adds a lot of complexity to the process. There was discussion of the recent problems with Ranked Choice Voting in New York City.

Director Wise noted that if enacted, Elections will work diligently to make sure they can roll it out with complete confidence. She relayed they have implemented lot of changes over the years and are confident they could rollout and administer better than anyone else.

First Vice Chair Eliseo Juárez expressed that he would like to encourage this body to think about the reason Ranked Choice Voting was not successful in Pierce County was its failure to bring people along and educate them. When they abandoned the project, many reasons given by voters were fear based, not necessarily that they felt it didn't represent their best interest.

#### **10. KCC Staff Updates**

Staff noted the process for reappointments and filling vacant positions on the committee will likely move forward in the fall.

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

The committee thanked Member Orr for his work on the committee (term expired) and wished him well in his next endeavors.

#### **12. Adjournment**

First Vice Chair Juárez moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Morris seconded. The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 12:59 p.m.