

**Citizens Election Oversight Committee  
August 10, 2016**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Marilyn Knight, Glenn Avery, Monica Tracey, Chuck Gerring, Emily Willoughby, Ellen Hansen, Bruce Huang, Frank Radford, Sven Kalve, Sheryl Moss, Paul Berry

**Telephone:** Kristina Swanson

**Excused:** Linh Thai

**Elections Staff:** Julie Wise, Kendall Levan-Hodson, Susan Southard, Nathan Valderas, Chris Rudolph, Sonja Rowland, Cherry Cayabyab

**CEOC Staff:** Hiedi Popochock

**1. Call to Order:**

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.

**2. Meeting Minutes:**

The minutes of June 8, 2016 were approved. Chair Hansen suggested that the meeting minutes for the CEOC be posted on the CEOC page of the King County Council website.

Mr. Gerring recognized Ms. Popochock for providing CEOC members with detailed meeting minutes.

**3. Director's Report:**

*August Primary Election Results*

Director Wise briefed the CEOC members on the current statistics for the August Primary election and provided materials with ballot return data at the drop-off locations.

As of August 10, 2016

King County Active Registered Voters: 1,240,245

Pre-election Turnout Forecast: 37%

Current Return Rate: 36.8%

Ballots Returned: 456,395

- Mail – 290,463 or 63.6%
- Drop Box – 162,815 or 35.7% (This is the highest percentage of ballots returned via drop box. The previous highest percentage was in 2015 at 26.3 percent.)
- Alternate Format – 3,117 or 0.7%

Director Wise highlighted that of the 19 new drop box locations, the Lake City Library received the most ballot returns with over 6,500 ballots returned.

Director Wise also described the “tray and weigh” method utilized by Elections in the August Primary to estimate the number of ballots returned from the various locations. She indicated that 20 ballots equals one pound however, the ballot weight will vary depending on the number of inserts from one election to another.

Director Wise mentioned that there was 101,000 ballots returned on Election Day which includes the accessible voting centers. This is the highest number of ballots returned on Election Day. The previous highest number was in 2012 where 90,000 ballots were returned. She indicated that the election will be certified on August 16. There will be a Canvass Board meeting on August 11. There are approximately five precinct committee officer races that are currently tied and will be recounted. If the races are still tied, then a coin flip will determine the candidate, which has historically been the practice.

#### *November General Election*

Director Wise provided CEOC members with a one-page summary of the November General election planning and preparation activities completed by Elections. She indicated that Elections is forecasting an 80% turnout with an estimated 1.3 million active registered voters participating. Director Wise stated that the last Presidential election had about an 84% turnout. The state is forecasting an 81.5 to 82% turnout rate. Elections anticipates over one million ballots returned and 42% of those ballots are forecasted to be returned via a drop box.

Director Wise mentioned Elections is preparing to hire nearly 500 short-term temporary workers and to extend the hours of support services. Mr. Valderas stated that Elections has a pool of approximately 300 short-term workers that have worked a previous election and may be returning depending on their availability.

Ms. Moss indicated that there will be four initiatives to the people, two initiatives to the legislature, two advisory votes and one constitutional amendment that will be on the ballot for the state.

#### *Ballot Drop Box Expansion Project Update*

Director Wise provided the CEOC members with a detailed list of the 43 drop box locations including the city in which the drop box resides, the location name and the address. Mr. Valderas announced that the drop box expansion project is moving along and that Elections is evaluating the ballot processes and identifying lessons learned from the 29 additional drop boxes in the August election. He also indicated that he is currently working with the drop box vendor in developing a schedule for the delivery of the Phase II drop boxes. Mr. Valderas stated that there are five existing boxes that still need to be replaced. Three drop boxes will not be replaced due to limited exposure to the outside elements: Issaquah City Hall, Crossroads Shopping Center and the King County Administration Building. Elections is working on finalizing the drop box locations for the International District and Kent East Hill. He indicated that Elections will continue ribbon cutting ceremonies for the Phase II drop boxes.

Mr. Valderas stated that there weren't any new or emerging issues related to the new drop boxes in the August election other than the increased volume of ballots. Also, he indicated that there was some timing issues to get all the ballots processed. Director Wise

clarified that Elections is not receiving more ballots, the ballots are just being returned in a different manner. Elections has to manage the flow of the ballots. Ms. Moss commented that adding the new drop boxes aligns with the secretary of state's vision.

#### *Vacant Positions in Elections*

Director Wise indicated that she and Bill Kehoe, King County Chief Information Officer will be interviewing the top three candidates for the IT division director position in Elections. There were 60 applicants for the position. The candidates were interviewed by two Election staff panels: IT team and the Leadership team. She also announced that her deputy director, Shannon Cortez, has resigned due to a personal matter. Ms. Cortez accepted a position with the Secretary of State's Office as the deputy director. Director Wise indicated that she will come back to the CEOC in the coming weeks to present the CEOC members with a solution to maintaining continuity in relation to staffing in Elections. She does not believe it is a good idea to start a recruitment for a deputy director prior to a Presidential election. The recruitment process is planned to commence in late December/January 2017.

#### *Tabulation System Replacement Project Update*

Ms. Rowland provided CEOC members with a status report on the tabulation system replacement project. She indicated that the Request for Proposal (RFP) was advertised on July 27<sup>th</sup>, one week later than the scheduled due date due to a delay in legal review. The pre-proposal will be on August 11. Ms. Rowland shared that all five vendors that responded to the Request for Information (RFI) earlier this year also responded to the RFP. Proposals are due September 27, and the scoring of the proposals will be completed by October 21. The remaining five milestones will be unchanged.

Ms. Rowland stated that Pierce County has requested to have the vendor demonstrations and interviews at a "neutral" location and to invite the media and the CEOC. The demonstrations are tentatively scheduled for the week of December 16.

Chair Hansen reminded CEOC members that Mr. Gerringer and Mr. Berry are on the project team for the system replacement project and she is on the steering committee. She mentioned that she attended the first steering committee meeting and was impressed on how the participants expressed the importance of having CEOC representation on the committee.

Mr. Berry indicated that he and Mr. Gerringer had the opportunity to review the draft RFP, make comments and edits. He also shared that he saw some of his edits in the final version of the RFP. He thanked Elections for their increased appreciation of the value of the CEOC's recommendations.

#### *Community Based Organization Partnerships & Language Preference Cards*

Ms. Cayabyab indicated that Elections has finalized the list of community based organizations (CBO) that will assist in voter engagement. She provided CEOC members with a list of the 22 voter engagement community partners for 2016. Ms. Cayabyab also indicated that Elections and the Seattle Foundation are interested in continuing the CBO partnership program in the coming years. Director Wise indicated that the full implementation of the Korean and Spanish voter materials (pamphlets, ballots,

correspondence) has a target date of September 4, in time for the General election and subsequent elections.

CEOC members questioned the nature of the meetings between Elections and the community based organizations. Ms. Cayabyab stated that the community based organizations provide feedback and advice to Elections regarding the voter engagement processes and education.

Director Wise provided CEOC members with the new language preference card. Ms. Levan-Hodson indicated that the cards will also be available online.

#### *Communications/Advertising*

Ms. Levan-Hodson stated that Elections explored new communication strategies for the August Primary such as utilizing the radio and Pandora for election announcements. She also indicated that Elections did targeted advertising that provided information to neighborhoods that had a new drop box. Ms. Levan-Hodson mentioned that 5,000 to 10,000 people were targeted for the ads. In addition, Elections added election announcements on the Next Door neighborhood website.

#### **4. August Primary Observation Debrief:**

- *Skyway (new location)* – Mr. Berry stated that more staff is needed for this location for the General election. In addition, Mr. Berry indicated that the parking lot at this location cannot be used. There were many vehicles that were jammed in the small parking lot. He mentioned that the location received a high turnout of voters on Election Day.
- *Federal Way* – Mr. Kalve mentioned that there was more traffic at this location than in previous elections. The Elections staff were very helpful in getting people through the line. Voters didn't have to get out of their vehicles. Director Wise stated that Elections is considering another drop box location in Federal Way – the Commons Shopping Mall.
- *Redmond* – Ms. Knight indicated that there were more ballots received after 8pm than in previous elections.
- *Ballard* – Mr. Avery stated that he noticed that the volume of voters decreased. However, there were traffic issues on Market Street. The Elections staff tried to keep traffic flowing. Mr. Avery also stated that some of the election employees arrived late.
- *Kirkland* – Mr. Radford mentioned that more signage would be helpful such as directional signs (where to go). He suggested that Elections staff should have a cone to manage the end-of-the-line process. Mr. Radford indicated that Elections staff were emptying the drop box ten minutes prior to 8pm. He also expressed concern regarding ballots being transported by Elections staff in an unsecured private vehicle. He believes that the staff were not trained well, for instance, in the closing process. Mr. Radford stated that Elections staff arrived late (between 5pm

and 6pm) leaving only him and a police officer to manage traffic flow. Ms. Rudolph indicated that Elections tries to deploy drop off location staff by 7pm or earlier.

- *Woodinville* – Mr. Gerringer stated that everything went well however, when he visited the previous drop-off location, he noticed many people circling around to find the drop off receptacle. He suggested that Elections staff provide signage notifying voters to go to the new location to drop off their ballot.
- *Downtown Bellevue* – Mr. Huang indicated that there are no tent signs for the drop box location on the street or anywhere to identify the site as a drop box location. He indicated that Elections staff may need to have attire that clearly identifies them as King County Elections' staff from the front.
- *UW Seattle* – Chair Hansen stated that some voters were unhappy about the relocation of the drop box from Magnuson Park to UW and that Elections staff removed ballots from the boxes early. She also indicated that it is difficult to locate the drop box from the street since the box is placed on the lower level of the building. Traffic was also an issue at this location. Chair Hansen mentioned that the parking spots on the street of the drop box should be reserved in order to manage ballot drop off traffic flow.
- *Secretary of State's Office Comments* – Ms. Moss stated that she received a phone call from a voter indicating that he was uncomfortable placing his ballot in a drop box when the ballots are being removed from the secured box and placed into boxes that didn't look like they were made for ballots.

Director Wise recapped the CEOC members' suggestions for the General election as follows:

1. Reserve parking spots at the UW location;
2. Have signage notifying of the new drop-off locations at all of the old drop-off locations;
3. The new closing process for the drop boxes will be the "lock and leave" method Elections staff will secure the box and leave for ballot transport staff to pick-up. Personal vehicles will not be utilized, instead large white vans utilized by ballot transport staff will transport the ballots;
4. Law enforcement/security personnel will remain at the drop-off location until the ballot transport team arrives;
5. Provide better traffic management; and
6. Staff the drop boxes on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

Ms. Tracey inquired about the absence of a drop-off location to the South Bellevue/Eastgate and Mercer Island areas. Director Wise indicated that Elections is exploring additional locations on the east side for 2017.

##### 5. **Elections Focus Group Debrief:**

Ms. Levan-Hodson provided CEOC members with a one-page summary of the focus group results. There were four focus groups that were held in June 2016 in different geographic areas – North, South and East King County and Seattle. She stated that the participants were from various backgrounds. Ms. Levan-Hodson indicated that the focus groups was an opportunity to understand why the participants weren't regular voters. She explained that some participants were overwhelmed with the amount of information.

Mr. Radford commented that some of the questions utilized for the focus group participants were really good. He also indicated that some participants stated that they were interested in voting in order to receive an "I Voted" sticker. Mr. Radford mentioned that participants wanted the voter pamphlet and their ballot to arrive to their residence at the same time. In addition, the contents of the voter pamphlets don't flow with the ballot, meaning that voters must go back and forth in the pamphlet to get the information relating to the corresponding item on the ballot. He also commented that the participants liked the drop boxes and would like more outreach.

Chair Hansen indicated that one of the participants in the focus group that she attended recently moved to Washington from the south and commented that she was amazed when she learned that her ballot would come to her in the mail versus going to a polling station. She also indicated that she doesn't think there's anything that we can do to get people to vote based on the focus group she attended.

Mr. Berry indicated that we have removed most of the barriers to voting and now it's a question on whether the culture will change so that people will vote.

Ms. Levan-Hodson indicated that Elections does have videos of the focus groups. She also indicated that Elections will utilize this information to launch a new communications campaign.

#### **6. Other Business/Good of the Order:**

Chair Hansen reminded members that the next meeting will be on October 12th and the last meeting is on November 16<sup>th</sup>, which is the third Wednesday.

Ms. Swanson indicated that she has a recount in the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, which will have to be coordinated with five counties.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hiedi Popochock