



## King County

### CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOC)

November 15, 2023 Meeting | 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. | Virtual Meeting

**Members Present:** Vice Chair: Jude Ahmed, Vice Chair: Mathew Patrick Thomas, Hanna Floss, Tyson Hartman, Kathy Sakahara, Mike Flood, Stuart Holmes, Chris Hayes, Dr. Jason Frederick Lambacher, Julie Kang, and Hillary De La Cruz

**Absent:** Chair: Eliseo Juárez and Stanley Tsao

**Elections Staff:** Director Julie Wise and Janice Case

**Council Staff:** Sherrie Hsu, Jonathan Fowler, Terna Wilson, and Tania Mondaca

### MINUTES

#### 1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 11:34 a.m.

#### 2. Chair Update

Vice Chair Thomas introduced Matthew Vinci who was recently appointed to fill the vacancy for a jurisdictional representative from a junior taxing district or a city with a population of under twenty thousand. Member Vinci shared his professional background experience.

#### 3. Approve October 18, 2023 minutes

Member Sakahara moved approval of the minutes of the October 18, 2023 meeting. Member Kang seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously as amended.

#### 4. Director's Report including the November General Election Overview

Director Wise gave an update of the 2023 November general election. King County Elections (KCE) was expecting a 45% turnout rate but only 37% of voters turned out to vote. Projections are done by looking at similar elections from the past. KCE uses projections to determine staffing needs. The largest group of voters were people who were 65+ and the lowest turnout was for voters under the age of 24. There was under 4,500 signature challenges of which 57% was due to signatures not matching their voter registration records. About 700 voters used KCE's online signature resolution tool to resolve their signature issue. The election will be certified on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

On election night, the King County website experienced slowdowns, including the KCE webpages which caused a delay in posting election results until 8:30 pm. King County IT (KCIT) stated that the slowdown was due to high traffic. Director Wise has expressed to Executive Constantine of her disappointment and the importance of resolving IT issues prior to the 2024 elections which historically results in higher traffic to the KCE webpages.

On November 8<sup>th</sup> around 11 am KCE staff were opening regular mail in their mail room. One of the envelopes had powder come out. Staff immediately followed protocols to contain the substance, pulled the fire alarm and staff were evacuated. Staff members at home watched security cameras and security guards ensured no one entered the building once they had exited. It was determined that the

substance was fentanyl. No staff were injured and ballots on the second floor remained secure. The FBI is investigating the incident. Staff safety is one of the top priorities for Director Wise. All staff will now be trained to use Narcan moving forward. Additionally, for this year's legislative session, Director Wise plans to advocate for WA state to make it a class c felony to harass election administrators in-person. It's currently a class C felony to harass an election administrator virtually.

Lastly, voters informed King County Elections that their ballots had not been counted. It was determined that a USPS mailbox had not picked up mail from a mailbox in 15<sup>th</sup> and John in Capitol Hill. 85 ballots were discovered and KCE concluded that the ballots could still be counted per RCW.

## **5. Election Recount Overview**

King County Election Deputy Director Janice Case gave an overview presentation on election recounts. The presentation included information on when a machine recount is mandatory vs. a hand recount, who can request a recount, cost of recounts and the process on how recounts are conducted.

## **6. Election of Best Practices Vice Chair Position**

Member Sakahara made a motion to appoint Member Hays as the new Vice Chair of Best Practices and it was seconded by Member Floss. The motion unanimously passed.

## **7. CEOC Workgroup Vice Chair Report Out**

Vice Chair Ahmed, Vice Chair Thomas and Member Hays shared workgroup updates. Workgroups discussed ideas to focus on in 2024. Their workplans will be voted on at the January CEOC meeting.

## **8. Discussion and Potential Vote on the Draft 2024 CEOC Workplan**

CEOC members approved an amendment directing CEOC staff to work with King County Elections to include an overview of King County Election's budgetary priorities in the 2024 workplan. Member Hays made a motion to approve the 2024 CEOC Workplan as amended. Member Kang seconded the motion. The motion as amended was unanimously approved.

## **9. CEOC as a Notified Partner with King County Elections**

Member Floss made a motion for the inclusion of a recommendation in the CEOC's annual year-end report, suggesting that King County should investigate the legislative or administrative actions required to grant official recognition to the CEOC, similar to the recognition extended to the two major political parties. The motion was seconded by Member Hays and was unanimously approved.

## **10. Discussion of the Draft End of Year Report**

Chair Juárez will follow-up via email with the draft end of year report.

## **11. KCC Staff Update**

Staffer Mondaca will be sending out calendar invitations for the 2024 CEOC meetings. In addition, members were reminded to complete their online training and complete the Doodle polls if they are part of a workgroup. Members were also reminded to check their CEOC email address regularly.

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

No new business or good of the order was shared.

## **13. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at about 1:03 p.m.