

**Citizens Election Oversight Committee
June 8, 2016**

MINUTES

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

Absent: Kristina Swanson

Excused: Linh Thai, Paul Berry

Elections Staff: Julie Wise, Kendall Levan-Hodson, Susan Southard, Nathan Valderas, Jerelyn Hampton, Sonja Rowland, Jacque Larrainzar, Nhien Huynh, Cherry Cayabyab

CEOC Staff: Hiedi Popochock

1. Call to Order:

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 11:31 am.

2. Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of April 13, 2016 were approved.

3. Director's Report:

Candidate Filing

Director Wise discussed the candidate filing issue in more detail and provided the CEOC members with filing statistics for the Special Election. She indicated that 105 candidates filed online and 1,818 precinct committee officers filed online. Director Wise mentioned that the candidate filing issue was diagnosed as a server configuration issue. The configuration did not allow for proper data load bearing across multiple servers. Elections staff worked with KCIT to resolve the issue and will continue to work with KCIT to develop a critical response process for issues such as this.

Presidential Primary

Director Wise mentioned that the Presidential Primary marked their 29th election with zero discrepancies. She provided CEOC members with a summary of election turnout information. Director Wise stated that the turnout rate forecast for the Presidential Primary was 32 percent and the actual turnout rate was 33 percent. She also mentioned that Elections had a total of 10,892 mail ballot challenges. Over 66% of the initial 12,299 ballots were challenged due to no declaration and ended up being cured. She indicated that the Presidential Primary was certified yesterday, June 7, 2016.

Director Wise received feedback from voters regarding the Presidential Primary and will forward the information to the Secretary of State on how the election can be improved in the future.

August Primary Preview

Director Wise provided CEOC members with summary information regarding the August Primary election. She highlighted that no State measures will be on the ballot. There will be six local ballot measures, 200 candidates and 343 precinct committee officer candidates. Elections forecast the turnout rate at 37 percent which is approximately 456,322 ballots. She also indicated that of the six ballot measures, two will be for the city of Seattle. There will be three King County voter pamphlet editions with about 80 pages each for two of the pamphlets and 100 pages for the third pamphlet. The pamphlets will include federal and state offices since the Secretary of State's Office does not produce a pamphlet for the Primary.

Director Wise reminded the CEOC members that there will be 29 ballot drop box locations open as of July 14. She provided the CEOC members with copies of the ballot drop-off location insert translated in various languages that will be in the ballot packet.

New Brand

Ms. Hodson presented a PowerPoint to the CEOC members to describe the process that Elections went through to develop their new brand and to show visuals of the new logo, color palette, typography, icons, illustrations and photography. She indicated that the new brand is currently on the drop boxes. All drop boxes will have the blue wrapping with the exception of a small number of boxes that will be replaced in the General election. Those boxes will be wrapped with the new brand at that time. Ms. Hodson highlighted that voting pamphlets with a "red" theme signifies a primary or special election and voting pamphlets with a "blue" theme signifies a general election. Also she stated that the regular mail ballot outbound envelope is blue and the regular mail ballot return envelope is red. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) envelopes were also color coded. The UOCAVA mail ballot outbound envelope is blue and the UOCAVA mail ballot return envelope is green. CEOC members were provided with hard copies of the presentation in their CEOC meeting packet.

CEOC members expressed interest in including the "I voted" sticker in the voting materials. Director Wise indicated it costs approximately \$30,000 for each election to include this sticker in the packet. She indicated that the ballot stub will now serve as the "I voted" keepsake. The stub will have the date of the election on it as well.

Focus Groups

Ms. Hodson indicated that in conjunction with the new branding, Elections will conduct focus groups to solicit feedback regarding the barriers to voting. She provided a list of dates that the focus groups will occur. The focus groups will be coordinated by "The Connections Group". Two downtown locations were selected, one South County location and one East County location. CEOC members requested additional information regarding the criteria of the focus group participants (see excerpt below). Ms. Hodson invited CEOC members to attend the focus groups.

Excerpt from follow-up email from Julie Wise to CEOC members dated, June 14, 2016

"Criteria used for selecting participants:

- Non Voters – Those registered but not voted in the last 8 years*
- Less Frequent Voters – Those voted less frequently, only once or twice in the last few years*
- New Voters – Those registered in 2016*
- Young Voters – Those aged between 18 and 22*

Our vendor that is coordinating and conducting these focus groups will also ensure that we have representation in terms of ethnic background and geographic location. The focus groups will be happening in rooms with two way mirrors, so everyone who would like to attend may – please just let Kendall know. Also, the focus groups will be recorded, so there will be additional opportunities to view them first-hand.”

Mission, Vision and Principles

Director Wise shared Elections’ new mission, vision and principles in order to provide a clear vision for the department. She indicated that the leadership team had a one day retreat to develop the new mission, vision and principles.

Vision

- To be the leader in providing inclusive elections.

Mission

- We conduct fair, open and accurate elections.

Priorities for 2016 – 2018

Voter Access: Actively identify and work to remove barriers to voting at both the individual and community level.

Relationships: Strengthen relationships with community and governmental partners.

Employee Development: Create a culture of professional growth and development, openness and inclusion.

CEOC members were interested in learning more about the goals and actions that Elections plan to take to achieve these priorities (see excerpt below).

*Excerpt from follow-up email from Julie Wise to CEOC members dated, June 14, 2016
“Priorities & Goals/Actions for 2016 – 2018*

Voter Access: *Actively identify and work to remove barriers to voting at both the individual and community level.*

Goals/Actions:

1. *Work with communities that have been historically disenfranchised to remove barriers to voting and voter registration.*
2. *Partner at the state-level to advocate for more inclusive election laws.*
3. *Make voting easier and more convenient.*

Relationships: *Strengthen relationships with community and governmental partners.*

Goals/Actions:

1. *Work closely with other King County agencies, including the King County Council, to achieve organizational goals and priorities.*

2. *Elicit a broad set of perspectives and recommendations from partners on how to improve the election process.*
3. *Build respect, trust and credibility by communicating early and often with key stakeholders and soliciting their feedback.*

Employee Development: *Create a culture of professional growth and development, openness and inclusion.*

Goals/Actions:

1. *With the intent to inform communicate early and often with employees.*
2. *Develop and promote opportunities for agile and training.*
3. *Support employees in having a healthy work-life balance.*
4. *Provide employees the resources and tools they need to be successful.”*

Annual State Elections Conference

Director Wise indicated that 32 of the Elections staff will be attending the conference. She stated that Elections has approximately 30 people who are State certified administrators in elections and this conference allows them to maintain their certification. Director Wise mentioned that the conference is funded by a grant that was awarded to Elections in 2007. 2016 is the last year that the grant will fund the conference expenses. Elections will continue to look for other funding sources to cover the expenses for future conferences.

4. Presidential Primary Observation Debrief:

1. *Regional Justice Center:* Mr. Kalve indicated that the volume of voters on Election Day was low.
2. *Ballard Library:* Mr. Avery indicated that there wasn't a high turnout like in the General election. There were about a dozen people that arrived as Elections staff were closing the box. He also indicated that there were about another dozen people who showed up after the Elections staff were gone and dropped their ballot in the box anyway. Mr. Avery stated that it was a relatively quiet night.
3. *Kirkland City Hall:* Mr. Radford indicated that the drop-off location had to be moved since there is construction going on at Kirkland City Hall. Mr. Radford indicated that the new location was better. Mr. Valderas mentioned that the permanent drop box will be installed on the south side of city hall (new location) tomorrow morning.
4. *Union Station Accessible Voting Center:* Mr. Huang indicated that there was only 25 voters.
5. *Elections Headquarters:* Ms. Willoughby indicated that Mr. Berry and herself observed Elections staff unload ballots from the ballot pick-up vans at Elections headquarters. She stated that there was an Elections employee to watch as the door was unlocked and the ballots were deposited. She also mentioned that there were many people taking selfies with the drop boxes.

6. *Redmond City Hall*: Ms. Knight and Mr. Valderas observed this location and indicated that there were no problems. Ms. Knight stated that there weren't any ballots dropped off after the box was closed.
7. *Magnuson Park*: Chair Hansen observed this location and was pleased to see that Elections staff was handing out notifications that the Magnuson Park box will no longer be open and providing the new drop-off locations that would be closest to them: Lake City Library and the University of Washington.
8. Chair Hansen mentioned that Mr. Berry was unable to attend the meeting today however, he had some feedback regarding this observation experience. Mr. Berry was at a couple of locations and indicated that the loading vehicle for the ballots did not have any identification on it. This has been shared with Elections and will be addressed by affixing magnetized signs on the side of the personal vehicles.

Chair Hansen expressed concern about the security of ballots. Specifically, the possible need to have law enforcement officers to escort the ballots from the drop-off location to King County Elections.

5. Technology Update:

Ms. Rowland provided CEOC members with a status report on the Tabulation System Replacement Project in their meeting materials. She indicated that Elections is currently working on an appropriation request and a request for proposal for the tabulation system replacement.

2017-18 Appropriation Request

Ms. Rowland stated the 2017-2018 appropriation request packet is due July 1 however, they have submitted the appropriation request packet by May 30 for early review by Executive staff. She mentioned that Elections should receive feedback regarding the early review of the appropriation request by June 14.

Request for Proposal

Ms. Rowland stated that they have completed the RFP draft with their subject matter experts. King County will be partnering with Pierce County on the RFP since it is also replacing its tabulation system. Ms. Rowland will be scheduling meetings with the project team and steering committee to go over draft.

6. Ballot Drop-off Location Expansion Update:

Mr. Valderas indicated that the project is on track and Elections is working on finalizing the agreements for the remaining locations.

Director Wise indicated that the new drop box at the University of Washington is at Schmitz Hall.

Ms. Hodson mentioned that Elections and the King County Council are planning to do a ribbon cutting event for the new boxes at various locations. The first event will be on July 13th at the Lake City Library.

Director Wise provided CEOC members with options regarding the closing process of 43 boxes.

Option One: Should we use County, rental and staff personal vehicles (appropriately marked) to travel to BDOL locations, perform closing processes (including ballot pick-up and transport) and return to the Elections office with all ballots?

Option Two: Should we have staff travel to BDOL locations using county and personal vehicles (appropriately marked), ONLY perform closing processes (including closing and sealing the box but NO ballot pick-up and transport)? Once all locations have concluded the closing process, ballot pick-up and transport will be completed by our BDOL driver pick-up staff.

CEOC members expressed concern regarding the security of the vans when transporting the ballots. Should a law enforcement officer escort the vans back to Elections headquarters? Also, CEOC members mentioned that they would like to know what the additional expenses would be for each option.

Ms. Moss indicated that both options are utilized by the State and the county may want to use both options, it depends on the county. For example, for the remote boxes (Snoqualmie, Vashon Island), you may want to use option one.

7. Language Services Voter Engagement Update:

Director Wise introduced some of the new employees of the Elections' Language Services and Community Engagement team.

Program Supervisor II – Jacque Larrainzar

After a 20-year long process, Ms. Larrainzar became a U.S. citizen in 2015. Her past experience includes counseling newly arrived immigrants and translating for the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and acting as the director of policy in the Office of Civil Rights at the city of Seattle. Her primary role will be to implement the two new languages: Korean and Spanish.

Elections Specialist – Nhien Huynh

Ms. Huynh has been working for Elections for four years. She has worked in ballot review in Elections as an elections specialist. Ms. Huynh also has worked as an interpretation and translation service provider in Vietnamese.

Elections Specialist – Signe Chan

Ms. Chan joined Elections six years ago. She will be officially joining the LS &CE team with a focus in providing Chinese translation services.

Elections Specialist – Kyung Jung (KC)

Ms. Jung is at the new employee orientation and could not attend the CEOC meeting. She worked for the Language Line which is a service that King County currently utilizes for translation services. She will support translation services in Korean.

Elections Specialist - Arturo Laris

Mr. Laris will be moving to Washington from California. He will be providing translation services in Spanish. He will join Elections on June 20, 2016. He is a Spanish instructor for the Windward School. He has a master's and a bachelor's degree in Spanish studies.

Community Based Organizations Update

Ms. Cayabyab provided the CEOC members with the names of the awardees from the first phase of the request for proposal for the community-based organization partnerships.

1. Asian Counseling and Referral Services
2. Latino Community Fund of Washington State, South Park Information and Access Resource Center & Colectiva Legal Del Pueblo
3. International Community Health Services
4. Interim Community Development Association
5. Korean American Coalition
6. White Center Community Development Association and the Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees and Communities of Color

Ms. Cayabyab indicated that there is a total of \$150,000 in funding for the first phase of the partnership grants. Each organization will receive \$25,000. Elections is expecting the organizations to engage 25,000 people at a minimum.

She recognized Mr. Huang and thanked him for serving on the RFP panel representing the CEOC. Also serving on the RFP panel was a representative from the King County Equity and Social Justice Office.

8. Good of the Order:

Director Wise indicated that Elections anticipates 100,000 new registered voters for a Presidential election year.

Chair Hansen reminded CEOC members that the Primary election is on August 2 and the next CEOC meeting will be held on August 10, 2016. The last two CEOC meetings for 2016 will occur on October 12th and November 16th, which is the third Wednesday.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Hiedi Popochock