

ELECTIONS COMMISSION
City and County of San Francisco

Robin M. Stone, President
Christopher Jerdonek, Vice President
Lucy Bernholz
Cynthia Dai
Nancy Hayden Crowley
Renita LiVolsi
Michelle Parker



John Arntz, Director of Elections
Marisa Davis, Commission Secretary

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

San Francisco Elections Commission
Wednesday, November 15, 2023
6:00 p.m.
City Hall, Room 408
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, California 94102
& Remote meeting via WebEx

Order of Business

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

President Stone called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Present: President Robin Stone, Vice President Christopher Jerdonek, Commissioner Cynthia Dai, Commissioner Nancy Hayden Crowley, Commissioner Michelle Parker, Commissioner Renita LiVolsi, and Commissioner Lucy Bernholz (via Remote).

Also Present: Director of Elections John Arntz, Deputy City Attorney Ana Flores, Commission Secretary Marisa Davis.

2. General Public Comment

In Person

Two public commenters were redirected to share their comments during the appropriate agenda item.

3. Director's Report

In addition to the items as listed on his report, Director Arntz also discussed the Department's actions regarding the safety of staff (and the public) in light of the recent reports about suspicious envelopes, some laced with fentanyl, which have been sent to other election offices in at least five US states including California. Prior to this report,

Director Arntz was proactively working with the USPS, Building Management, the Department of Public Health, and the Sheriff's office to provide training for staff regarding potential issues necessitating the administration of Narcan. Given the incidents involving Elections Departments and staff being potentially exposed to fentanyl, the training and best practice protocols for staff and the public accessing the Department and polling places is essential. Similar to the anthrax incidents in 2000, and with the upcoming elections in 2024, there needs to be an established protocol for safety and awareness.

Director Arntz highlighted information from his report regarding registration updates, NPP (No Party Preference) primary voting restrictions, the Ballot Simplification Committee (BSC), and updated polling place locations, including 60-80 new spots, bringing the total to 501. President Stone asked why so many new locations were identified and Director Arntz explained new locations are representative of the routine addition and subtraction of polling places.

4. Commissioner's Reports

VP Jerdonek reported on low cost RCV options for the next "I Voted" sticker contest. Utilizing an RCV system would further educate people as to rank choice voting as well as providing valuable metrics regarding actual voting percentages.

VP Jerdonek also provided a synopsis of the meeting he and Commissioner Bernholz had with the San Francisco Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) Michael Makstman. Election security was discussed, specifically regarding Dr. Halderman's previous notice to the Department of Elections about vulnerabilities. Makstman indicated the best practice for reporting issues is at <https://securitytxt.org/>. As to the matter reported by Dr. Halderman, Mr. Makstman said he and his team were aware of the issue and are working on it; he indicated the update will be implemented by December 2023 – if not then, by early 2024.

VP Jerdonek is still editing the 2022 Annual Report and it will be available at the December 12 regular meeting. A BOPEC meeting has been scheduled for December 7, 2023.

Commissioner Bernolz relayed to the Commission about her participation in Democracy Day at Stanford University <https://www.democracydaystanford.org/> ("...an academic holiday to promote thoughtful discussions about the importance of civic engagement and the state of democracy, both at home and abroad..."). She indicated she thought there might be an opportunity to engage Stanford and, perhaps, UC Berkeley in a friendly rivalry to encourage voter registration, such as the athletes engaging in a postcard writing session.

President Stone reminded the Commission of the December 1 special meeting that will include a unique tour of the Department of Elections' warehouse and discussion of special projects. She also reminded the Commissioners of the availability of laptops and, if not already received, to contact Secretary Davis to arrange a pick up. And, finally, confirmed Commissioner Bernholz has accepted a reappointment to the Commission.

Public Commenters

In person

A community member made a request that prior Annual Reports be posted clearly on the SFEC webpage; missing are reports for 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. VP Jerdonek indicated those reports will be posted on the Commission webpage.

5. Fair, Independent, and Effective Redistricting for Community Engagement Committee Update

President Stone acknowledged the presence of many members of the public and outlined the process for review and comments. The review process would focus on the following three items:

- Content
- Presentation
- Next Steps

Commissioner Dai provided an overview/update from the last FIERCE meeting on October 30. From that meeting (and earlier meetings) the deck presentation was prepared for review at this meeting.

Commissioners asked questions and made comments regarding the deck contents, including moving critical content to the beginning of the report, what are the “best practice” implication, sourcing statements, responding to feedback, being succinct. There were suggestions that a timeline of the initiative would be helpful, as well as hyperlinks to salient videos referencing topics and dates. It was also suggested to explain the focus of the report and diversity factors with proper citations to independent research. Additional comments regarding the effort at reducing barriers via stipends, simplifying the expense reimbursement process, offering remote participation access, and scheduling translation services. There were additional comments regarding various edits about wording, flow, and format which Chair Dai asked for these suggestions, edits and comments be forwarded to her/the committee for review.

Public Commenters

In person

A member of the public, Alan Burradell, requested time for public comments *before* Presentation section addressed by the Commission.

President Stone allowed for 20 minutes of in-person comments at this point in the meeting; any further comments (in-person and via remote) after this 20-minute in-person comment period, additional comment time will be provided after Commission concludes their discussion of this agenda item.

(No name provided) - Redistricting is chaos – the system is not broken and does not need to be fixed.

Sarah Silver – This process has created distrust and this Commission should make no recommendations.

Stephanie – The Commission is not a political body; you are unelected officials and this group should not advance a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Angela – Inexplicable alignment with groups such as San Francisco Rising and other political groups are improperly influencing recommendations.

Todd Davis – The process was not broken and there should be no recommendation.

(No name provided) --Please reject and offer no recommendations.

Marina – The references to AB1248 is vetoed legislation and should not be used as a model. There should be no action/no recommendation.

Luke - Among the 2022 chaos, the charter does not mention redistricting and political advocacy that is influencing this committee. Stay away from political posturing and make no recommendation.

Elizabeth – AB1248 is failed legislation; unnecessary costs and the commission should make no recommendations. San Francisco Rising presented maps as fait accompli and this Commission should make no recommendation.

Richard – Diversity is vital and this Commission should not make recommendations.

Continuation of Commission Discussion

Upon the review of the deck document by all commissioners, it was decided to restructure the report and present the information in a traditional, narrative form. The

slides will be formatted as a report with the information structured to provide an executive summary, timelines and charts, section by section organization, hyperlinks, footnotes, bibliography, and the appropriate appendix. Other narrative information should include the law and rationale, should clearly represent public comments, and should review the implication of repeatedly using the word 'everyone.'

President Stone formally dissolved the FIERCE Committee.

Commissioners Parker and Dai took responsibility to redraft and share with the Commission an updated report for review at the December 12 regular meeting.

Public Commenters

In person

Alan Burradell – Comments by the Commissioner regarding recommendations for inclusion are appreciated. The Commission needs to realize they have placed themselves “in the middle of it” (April 2022) by allowing the influence of political activist groups. What determines ‘best practices’ and where is the content for this? The very groups that created the chaos now influence best practices?

Marie Hurabiell– Respects the work done but discretion is encouraged. The redistricting that happened in 2022 was robust with lots of perspectives and it was a good process that needs to be respected. There should be no recommendations by this body.

Remote

Lauren Giradon, League of Women Voters – This has been a great process and we are long overdue to update how our city does redistricting. Our communities and residents deserve the recommendations and the essential changes in a redistricting process that will help the city carry out free, fair and functional elections.

Justine, League of Women Voters - Provided clarification about southern California redistricting bills, commission appointments, and the past support of AB1248. She also offered her thanks for the work and recommendations of this Committee and their presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

Russia Chavis Cardo – Thanks the committee for their time to strengthen San Francisco's redistricting process and the alignment with the prior committee's recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

6. Agenda Items for Future Meetings

There were no public commenters.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 PM.