

Regular Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)
San Francisco Elections Commission
Wednesday, September 20, 2023
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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, September 20, 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 6:06 p.m.

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

Also Present: Director of Elections John Arntz, Deputy City Attorney Jaime Huling Delaye, Commission Secretary Marisa Davis.

2. General Public Comment

In Person

Alan Burradell commented that the Elections Commission reputation has steadily grown, even when embroiled in controversies which threaten to erode Commission's status and trust – such as redistricting maps / appointees and the replacement of Director Arntz as two examples ~~of being on the brink of catastrophe but the~~ Commission stepped back in time, and he hopes the Commission will divert from another potential catastrophe.

Marie Hurabiell said AB 1248 is an ill-conceived, blunt instrument which can yield unintended consequences – despite FIERCE assertions to the contrary. Diverse appointees are good for San Francisco and there needs to be a continued, robust process regarding redistricting.

Stephanie Lehman spoke about how redistricting is essential and AB 1248 threatens the process by placing appointees into the hands of non-elected officials and making the process more political. She stressed it is far better to have appointments made by officials who are directly accountable to the voters.

Chelsea Waite indicated AB 1248 deals with issues most relevant to Los Angeles that is bad for San Francisco and the Elections Commission should now step away and make no recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to put charter amendment on the ballot regarding redistricting.

Via WebEx

Lauren Girardin, League of Women Voters [San Francisco, thanked the Commission for its thoughtful inquiry into redistricting reform, and said: AB1248 and AB 764 offers best practices for San Francisco redistricting-reform.](#)

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

~~General consensus approved.~~ The July 19, 2023 meeting minutes [were approved by general consensus](#) with no corrections.

4. Director's Report

Director Arntz reported on various Election Department activities including revisions to the Poll Worker Training Manual and training details, Declaration of Candidacy documents, as well as staffing issues (both regular staff as well as poll workers); the budget decrease for the current and next fiscal years and how it will impact staffing activities.

September 19 was Voter Registration Day and the Department collaborated with outreach partners to participate and facilitate registration events throughout the City. [Commissioner Parker asked about success metrics, and Director Arntz said they come when invited and don't limit participation based on expected turnout.](#) A post-event analysis will provide information to refine outreach protocols as well as to field additional requests for more events.

Specific note was made about the launch of the Department's new Outreach Calendar; additionally, the Department has partnered with the San Francisco Library and has compiled two book lists about civic engagement and voter registration. [Links these items are available on our Vice President Jerdonek requested that the book lists be shared with Commissioners and with agreement from all, suggested posting them on the Commission website page under "Resources."](#)

Director Arntz also reviewed the Ambassador Program activities - in addition to high school outreach, the Department also partners with San Francisco Juvenile Hall. President Stone offered kudos regarding this internship program as it provides valuable leadership training and empowerment for young voices. Commissioner Parker asked how student ambassadors are chosen, and the Director noted that they volunteer and develop their own plans to reach their peers.

Director Arntz also reported on the status of the "I Voted" sticker contest. On this meeting date, there were approximately 250 entries (amount increases daily), so this has proven to be a very popular event. Voting will take place, via Survey Monkey, October 10 – 17, 2023.

There was Commissioner inquiry as to the cost savings realized by the Go Green initiative which will be reviewed after the election cycle.

Public Comment

Via WebEx

No public comment.

5. Commissioners Reports

Vice President Jerdonek presented his memo "A Multilanguage Open Source Ranked Choice Voting Results Reporter" and outlined the program he created to improve ranked choice voting (RCV) reporting and to remove technical barriers in the current results reporting. More specifically, Open Source Reporter can generate reports in screen-reader friendly HTML and multi-languages. The Commissioners all expressed their overt support and appreciation for this program and thanked Vice President Jerdonek for his work and insight regarding this project and his collaboration with Director Arntz and the Elections Department.

President Stone presented information about the process for presenting Department proposed legislation for the Board of Supervisors, an agenda item that ~~will~~ she has been working on with Director Arntz. This agenda item will be slated for the October meeting.

Public Comment

Via In Person

Via WebEx

Pedro Hernandez, Legal and Policy Director, California Common Cause, offerred s theirhis support and encouragement for this RCV Reporter program, especially for the language translation component, and Hhe further commented this is a model for outreach, providing clarity and transparency.

Lauren Girardin, League of Women Voters of San Francisco, indicated the importance of ~~equal accessibility via~~ language ~~access issues~~ as well as a variety of access issues such as screen readers, etc. and is supportive of this RCV Reporter program as it provides a clear path toward important information and ~~voting~~ transparency of election results.

Jen Tse, League of Woman Voters of San Francisco, offered the suggestion to ~~have use Chinese~~ candidate's' Chinese names, for those who have them ~~to include a translation of their Chinese name~~.

Commented [CD1]: This is not limited to Chinese candidates. Many (non-Chinese) elected officials have their names translated into Chinese.

Preston Jordan, Albany (Alameda County) City Council Member expressed his interest in the RCV Reporter program, especially the first and third round posting and the candidate ordering. –Albany started using Ranked Choice Voting in 2022 and this program is of specific interest. ~~and~~ Council Memberan Jordan expressed his appreciation for the program and its RCV features.

John Palmer, ~~as~~ a long-time San Francisco voter and business owner, stated his appreciation and support for this RCV program and hopes it is implemented.

Steve Chessin, Santa Clara County Citizens' Advisory Commission on Elections stated he was impressed with the RCV Results Reporting, ~~and~~ He indicated Santa Clara County uses the same Dominion equipment, ~~and~~ they are considering changing their elections to RCV. – He believes if San Francisco implements VP Jerdonek's RCV Results Reporting then Santa Clara County could also use it; additionally, this would be a great service to the RCV Community throughout California.

6. Fair, Independent, and Effective Redistricting for Community Engagement Committee Updates

Commissioner and FIERCE Chair Dai provided an overview regarding the FIERCE Committee activities ~~regarding during~~ July, August, and September meetings, ~~specifically the ongoing proposed reforms and related process and deadlines~~. The July meeting focus was on the presentation by Dr. Sara Sadhwani, a commissioner on the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission, who shared ~~and~~ her expertise regarding the state process ~~and as well as~~ challenges of redistricting reforms in Los Angeles. –The August and September meetings focused on reviewing the proposed reforms – AB1248 and AB764 – both of which have passed the legislature and are awaiting the signature of the governor, ~~media talking points, the April 2022 City Attorney memo, and reviewing the information~~ Commissioner Parker had synthesized reforms into a precise PowerPoint deck entitled: "Proposed Reforms for Fair & Effective Independent Redistricting."

~~This report highlights the structure of the committee, line drawing criteria, funding, process, and timing and~~ Chair Dai reviewed highlights of the FIERCE Committee's discussion of each component in the deck, including the structure of an independent

redistricting commission, line drawing criteria, funding, process, and timing, how these items were presented and discussed at the August and September meetings as well as legislative timelines. Commissioner Bernholz asked a question about financial disclosures and Commissioner Hayden Crowley raised a question about whether major donors should be excluded from serving. Chair Dai asked other Commissioners to raise any other concerns or issues they would like the Committee to address. Because many of the reforms are interdependent, the Committee will meet October 30 to formally vote on a package to present to the full body.

Public Comment

In Person

Alan Burradell emphasized that a robust discussion is essential as redistricting is an overtly political matter, and the that reform would take power away from the Mayor and Commission could 'place their finger on the scale' with their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Via Webex

Russia Chavis Cardenas, California Common Cause, stated that independent redistricting commissions that adopted Fair mMaps that better reflect the interests of communities over incumbents, and that there should not be direct appointments by elected officials.

Jen Tse, San Francisco-League of Women Voters San Francisco, reminded the Commission about November 2020's Prop C, which clarified that anyone of legal voting age and is a San Francisco resident and the impact on who can serve on commissions. At least one member of the Redistricting Task Force was not a citizen (or registered to vote).

Lauren Girardin, San Francisco-League of Women Voters San Francisco, emphasized fair elections need fair maps and the drawing of such maps needs to be free from the influence of elected officials. Minimally, the charter needs to be amended to remove the current mapping and deadlines and the Census timing trigger as San Francisco should not wait for census data to begin.

7. 2023-2024 Policies and Priorities

President Stone stated that the mandate of the Commission is not just ensuring elections are free, fair and functional but is also tasked with establishing Ddepartment policy and priorities. These topics before the Commission include Ranked Choice Voting Results Reporting, (increasing) Voter Registration Policy Reporting, and Open Source Voting Systems.

Public Comment

Via Webex

David Schmidt, California Clean Money Campaign, voiced his support for Vice President Jerdonek's work on open source voting program and encourages a demonstration of a system before the 2024 general election.

Alec Bash, a former San Francisco resident and voter, also supports the open source voting program policy and discussed the issue of lack of voter participation in San Francisco due (in part) to the lack of national campaigns (which focus on battleground states). He encourages registration events and making this a Commission priority as discussed.

Preston Jordan, Albany (Alameda County) City Council Member again expressed his interest in and support of ranked choice voting results reporting.

Steve Chessin, Santa Clara County Citizens' Advisory Commission on Elections, Santa Clara County shared that his county also uses the same Dominion equipment that as San Francisco and has yet to obtain the right choice voting module from Dominion and hopes San Francisco adopts this proposal the open source RCV program as it would be beneficial to all California counties.

Jim Lindsey, Alameda County Elections Commission and former San Francisco citizen, also supports Open Source Voting and believes the proposed RCV Reporting can and will be a state-wide best practice. Mr. Lindsey also emphasized greater registration outreach through trusted community groups.

Commissioner Hayden Crowley moved to adopt the proposed policies and procedures as presented and President Stone seconded.

MOTION TO ADOPT PROPOSED POLICIES AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023 / 2024

President Stone	YAY
Vice President Jerdonek	YAY
Commissioner Bernholz	YAY
Commissioner Dai	YAY
Commissioner Hayden Crowley	YAY
Commissioner LiVolsi	No Vote – Left @ 9PM
Commissioner Parker	YAY

6 Yays 0 Nays 1 Absent
Motion passes.

8. Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Vice President Jerdonek indicated he is scheduling ~~up~~ a BOPEC meeting and will present ~~its a draft~~ annual report at the next Election Commission regular meeting. Commissioner Hayden Crowley suggests a review of the Elections Department Outreach calendar to identify potential registration events Commissioners can participate in with Department staff. -President Stone indicated a FIERCE update will not be on October's meeting agenda as Commissioner Dai said the next FIERCE meeting will take place at the end of October, after the next regularly scheduled Elections Commission meeting. ~~President Stone is also drafting the annual report.~~

President Stone will seek Commissioners' requests for the October 18 meeting agenda topics in early October and also said the ~~"offsite retreat"~~ ~~will be~~ scheduled for early December will include a tour of the Department of Elections warehouse at Pier 31 and a meeting at the North Beach Public Library meeting room. -The agenda and specific details for this special meeting will be posted at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

There were no public commenters.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.