



# Planning Elections and Engagement Panel

Monday, April 8, 2019

## MINUTES

### **Attendees:**

City of Richmond - Brandon Evans  
Contra Costa Democrats - Renee Zeimer  
Contra Costa Mayor's Conf.- Robert Taylor  
Contra Costa Young Democrats - Jonathan Bash  
County Public Defender's Office - Rachel Belden  
County District I Office - Joan Carpenter  
County District II Office - Lauri Byers  
County District IV Office - Colleen Isenberg  
Democrats of Rossmoor - Carol Weed  
District 9 Senator's Office - Sherry McCoy  
East County NAACP - Odessa Lafrancois  
East County NAACP - Tom Lewis  
East County NAACP - Victoria Adams  
Ensuring Opportunity - Marianna Moore

League of Women Voters DV - Martha Goralka  
League of Women Voters DV - Shawn Gilbert  
League of Women Voters DV - Tammy Moulton  
NAACP - Willie Robinson  
RYSE Youth Center - Carlos Lemus  
RYSE Youth Center - Hawi Abraham  
RYSE Youth Center - Kaelyn Ochoa  
RYSE Youth Center - Kayla Munguia  
RYSE Youth Center - Stephanie Garcia  
San Francisco Foundation - Myra Chow

Nadine Peyracain – General Public  
Scott Rafferty – General Public

### **Staff:**

Assistant Registrar - Scott Konopasek  
Elections Services Manager - Sophie Lehman  
Civic Engagement Specialist - Paul Burgarino  
Elections Services Manager - Sara Brady  
Executive Secretary - Melissa Hickok

Elections Outreach Coordinator - Eren Mendez  
Elections Processing Supervisor - Chuck Waters  
Civic Engagement Assistant - Karen Tedford  
Election Services Specialist - Richard Woolever

Once introductions were completed, the meeting opened with questions from the group.

### **Redistricting**

Renee Zeimer was interested in discussing redistricting that is currently going on around the county. Scott Konopasek took some time to explain districting and the legislation pressure behind the adjustment, noting the Elections' Division has no role in this issue as it is a decision at the city- and district-level. There is extensive public outreach required, and as Bob Taylor commented, there is unfortunately an extreme lack of interest from the general public even after this outreach.

### **Polling Places for the 2020 Election Cycle**

Review is currently underway for 2020 polling places. The mapping unit is looking at redrawing precinct lines to allow for polling place volume to be more equally divided in volume ~ currently some polling places have a few hundred voters while others exceed 2,000. Each polling place also must be ADA accessible in addition to just being available. Securing appropriate polling places continues to be a

difficult task. The list of polling places for the 2020 election cycle should be finalized and released mid-to late- September. The Election Division also anticipates a four-card ballot for the March 2020 Primary.

### **My Ballot, My Way**

Paul Burgarino offered details about the push for voters to request to get their Official Ballot in the mail. Currently, close to 70 percent of Contra Costa voters are registered to vote by mail. With the 2020 election cycle promising to have a high turn-out, polling places will be under increased pressure to perform.

Two precincts are being tested for message response; one precinct will receive a generalized message, and the other will receive a message crafted for that particular voter group's issues (traffic, etc.). The goal of the My Ballot, My Way campaign is to increase Vote by Mail voters by approximately 150,000. Burgarino urged the group members to take action and share the message of this convenient voting option with all those they meet.

Youth are an important piece to this push as well; new voters are expectant of convenience, and not only are stamps no longer a requirement, but Conditional Voter Registration allows those who missed the deadline to still be able to register and vote. Additionally, Contra Costa's High school Poll Worker program is very robust and continues to grow with each election.

Joan Carpenter offered an explanation of reasons behind the distrust that minorities feel toward voting and their voting rights, and their votes counting. Sara Brady then described the process of taking the coded receipt off the top of the provisional ballot envelope, and then checking online to see if the vote was counted; and if not, then why.

This vote by mail campaign will be continuing indefinitely, information and material will be forwarded to group members for dissemination to constituents.

### **Voter's Choice Act**

Scott Rafferty asked whether Contra Costa County is considering adopting the voting model established by the state's new Voter's Choice Act. Scott Konopasek explained that the county is waiting to see the much-delayed report from the state that outlines the voter turnout and implementation costs to make that switch.

### **Provisional Voting**

Odessa Lafrancois and Carlos Lemus asked about how provisionals are counted and their timing. Sara Brady explained that the Elections Offices must count all provisional ballots that are eligible and that voters can check if their provisional counted on the elections website following the election. Sophie Lehman added that the office had about an 85 percent acceptance rate last November, with the majority of those that were rejected being because they weren't registered to vote.

### **Re-Entry Working Group**

Rachel Belden from the Public Defender's Office will be heading this group; interested parties please contact her at [Rachel.Belden@pd.cccounty.us](mailto:Rachel.Belden@pd.cccounty.us).

### **APPLE Training and the Clearinghouse Award**

Sophie Lehman announced the Division received a Clearinghouse Award from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission for its efforts to improve voter accessibility. The [award](#) was for [A Simple \(Accessible\) Path for All](#), which describes the innovative Accessible Polling Place Locations and Equipment (APPLE) class and polling place-specific kits for establishing and maintaining accessible polling

places. The kits are unique because they use plain language to identify the potential barrier and describe how to fix it. This allows poll workers to understand how the situation impacts the voter and how their actions improve access.

### **Regional Early Voting Sites**

While Brandon Evans expressed interest in a downtown Richmond-area site, Sara Brady described the regional concept of these sites. Sara was also able to expound on the cost-effectiveness of model using the number of ballots dropped at REV sites versus at the very-popular Drop Box program. Finalizing the list of REV site locations is expected to wrap up around the same time as the polling place locations, mid- to late- September. Sara also requested that any other location requests or ideas be sent to her through the Outreach email at Outreach@vote.cccounty.us.

### **May 7, 2019 Special Vote by Mail Election**

Because there are less than 1,400 eligible voters in this election, the Elections Division will conduct the entire election on Election Day, May 7<sup>th</sup>. All are invited to observe. The schedule will be included with the meeting minutes.

### **My Ballot, My Way toolkit**

Elections Division staff continues to work on putting together items to help groups spread the word about the campaign. Expect an email with materials in the next week or two. Our first flyer and a recent infographic is included with the meeting minutes.

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### **Future Agenda Items**

Citing his experiences with Brentwood voters and the need for 24/7 drop offs, Bob Taylor asked for an update on the expansion of the permanent drop-off boxes to be placed on the agenda for next time.

### **Next Meeting Date/Location**

Monday, June 24, 2019. 6:30 to 8:00 pm, Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department, 555 Escobar St., Martinez

### **Attachments:**

May 7, 2019 Election Details

“Make Your Home Your Polling Place” flyer

“Why get your ballot by mail” infographic