



# Planning for Elections and Engagement Panel

**Monday, August 20, 2018  
6:30 – 8:00 pm**

**Clerk-Recorder-Elections Office  
555 Escobar Street  
Martinez, California  
925-335-7805**

## MINUTES

### Attendees:

Genoveva Calloway – San Pablo Mayor	Joan Carpenter – Board of Supervisors, Dist. I
Renee Zeimer – Contra Costa Democrats	Rita Xavier – League of Women Voters WCC
Carol Weed – Democrats of Rossmoor	Jonathan Bash – Contra Costa Young Democrats
Doreen Moreno - Hercules resident	Marianne Jameson – ECAP Emeritus
Colleen Isenberg – Board of Supervisors, Dist IV	Lauri Byers – Board of Supervisors, Dist. II
Teresa Gerringer – Sen. Glazer’s office	Lloyd Bell – ECAP Emeritus
Consuelo Lara – Concilio Latino	Landry Wildwind – El Cerrito Progressives
Helen Dickey – El Cerrito Progressives	Susan Shiu – CCC Dept. of Comm and Media
Kurt Schultz – Contra Costa Libertarian Party	Martha Goralka – League of Women Voters DV
Diddo Clark – Candidate, CCC Board of Ed	Willie Robinson – Richmond NAACP

### Staff:

Joe Canciamilla – Registrar of Voters	Eren Mendez – Elections Outreach Coordinator
Scott Konopasek – Assistant Registrar	Paul Bugarino – Civic Engagement Specialist
Sara Brady – Elections Services Manager	Karen Tedford – Civic Engagement Assistant
Sophie Lehman – Elections Services Manager	

#### 1) June election questions:

- a. **New Voting Equipment:** Following introductions, Joe Canciamilla asked what everyone thought of the new voting equipment. Several members noted that the ballot-marking devices were easy to use. Willie Robinson added that some voters seemed reluctant to use the new marking device feature, while Renee Zeimer added she had heard from a couple poll workers that there was a learning curve in equipment setup.

- b. Scanning ballots at polling place: Renee said that people expressed frustration at the amount of time it took to scan their ballots. Joe replied that the scanner takes a digital picture of each page and needs a couple of seconds to process each page of the ballot. Scott Konopasek added that the machines are the “Gold Standard” and the Elections Division staff is working with the vendor to reduce the time it takes to scan ballots.
- c. Provisionals and polling place rosters: After a question about provisional ballots and names not being on the polling place rosters, Scott talked about provisional voting being a “safeguard” to ensure all can vote.
- Provisional ballots are part of the 2002 American Voting Act. The goal is to make sure every person who is eligible to vote can vote.
  - When a voter’s name or address cannot be determined at the polling place, they are given a provisional ballot.
  - Their eligibility will be checked and determined after the fact by election staff.
  - After 2000 man hours by election staff this past June, it was determined that:
    - ✓ 80% of the provisional ballots were cast by voters who had requested a vote by mail ballot;
    - ✓ 90 % of all provisional envelopes were counted.
- d. Ballot inventory: Theresa Geringer asked how widespread was the issue of polling places running out of paper ballots in June. Scott reiterated that no polling place was ever out of ballots as the new ballot-marking device can be used. Six (6) polling places reported they were out of paper ballots.
- Scott attributed this to the earlier point that there was a large number of people who are permanent Vote-by-Mail voters and also choose to show up at the polling place and want a paper ballot. The number of paper ballots ordered is based on the amount of people who vote in-person, so there more voters then expected.
  - In response to what happened in June, letters have been sent to those who are Vote-By-Mail and voted provisionally at the polling place in June. It states they have been changed back to an in-person voting designation and they can contact us to change back to Vote-By-Mail.
  - Also, if the voter still has the Voter Information Guide, there is a blue ballot inside that is a legal ballot. The voter is welcome to use it if necessary.
  - The Elections office will revise its ballot order formula for the November 2018 election to meet anticipated demand.
- e. Stubs as receipts: Carol Weed asked whether people are still given a receipt from a polling place to prove to their employer they voted? Scott replied that the stubs are not receipts, adding that receipts have not been given since 2005.
- f. Counting Write-In Votes: Renee and others asked about counting write-in votes, especially when they show an unopposed incumbent receiving 100 percent of the vote when they didn’t. Elections staff explained how individuals can qualify to be a write-in

candidate. Write-ins used to show as counted because of a limitation of the county's old voting system. It used to take hundreds of man hours to go through and find the qualified write-in candidates.

Joe added that in reality those votes are just protest votes and that adding a "None of the Above" category as some group members suggested would have to be done by the state legislature.

- g. Martinez Permanent Vote-By-Mail precincts: Renee said she was contacted by some Martinez residents who were upset about being placed in permanent Vote-By-Mail precincts. Joe explained that it is a result of Martinez and Martinez Unified making "unusual and creative" district boundaries that splintered dozens of existing precincts, despite frequent meetings where we advised them about the situation. Our office established the Vote-By-Mail precincts to avoid confusion at polling places among other reasons. The office shared a post explaining various drop-off and early voting options for voters on social media Tuesday morning.
- h. Inactive voters: Renee asked about what does it mean when a voter is listed as "Inactive" on a polling place roster. Scott explained that this happens when the DMV or the Post Office give us reason to believe the voter has moved, they are designated as an "Inactive voter." Our staff sends them forwardable mail asking them to verify their address. Once the voter contacts the office with their address in Contra Costa County, the "inactive" is removed from their file.
- i. Voter Registration status: Scott requested that group stakeholders encourage all those they interact with to check their voter registration status; the elections website is updated every night. The Elections Division is creating a campaign to remind people to check their status, which will begin in September. Campaign messaging will be sent to all members of the campaign as it becomes more developed.
- j.

## 2) Election Update

- a. Election Highlights: Sara Brady shared of the pertinent statistics from the June election.
  - 171,000 Vote by mail voters
  - 34,000 ballots were dropped off at the 26 sites around the county.
  - 34,722 were dropped off at polling places on election day.

Scott mentioned that there continues to be a shift in voter patterns. Most were dropped off on either Monday or on election day rather than earlier. In past election cycles, about 75 percent of the Vote-By-Mail ballot came in early; but over the last two elections, it's reversed. Now 25 percent come in early and 75 percent come in on the day before the election or Election Day.

- 115,000 ballots were counted after election day; these did not change the election results.

- In the 14 days before an election, a potential voter may come to the elections office and register as a “Conditional” voter; this year, there were 226 Conditional voters.
  - b. Candidate Workshop: Paul Burgarino discussed highlights of the Election Office’s first Candidate Workshop on May 12<sup>th</sup>. He said that approximately 80 people attended, some for the entire program, some for just parts. The event was well received and we have seen some names that attended now on the ballot. We will be planning more of these workshops in mid-2020 before the filing period for the general election opens.
  - c. Election Preview Candidate Programming: Paul announced that the tapings will be held from September 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> and will start airing on October 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be 24 races and 2 measures covered and all tapings will be on the website and *YouTube*. The elections office will forward the air dates for all the forum to the group.
  - d. Grand Jury: Scott shared that the Elections Division recently reviewed a favorable report from the Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury on how we keep items secure. They spent a year with this office and reported 9 findings and offered 2 recommendations; all were minor and have been dealt with. The report was also updated to reflect the new voting system.
  - e. Poll Worker Recruitment: Sophie Lehman reported that while the Elections Division have a robust list of experienced poll workers, we will need a total of 1600 for the November election. Those interested in volunteering can apply online on our website. She added that we particularly need people who speak Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese as poll workers and that eligible high school students can also assist on election day. PEEP member asked what is the stipend amount (\$125), isn’t this below minimum wage (It’s a volunteer position and a stipend for their service) and is it possible to work half-day (No. It creates myriad issues.)
  - f. National Voter Registration Day: Sophie shared that this will be celebrated on September 25<sup>th</sup> this year; it is always the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of September. The group was encouraged to let us know what they were planning as we will put it on the website. Last year, over 700 teenagers were registered to vote via hosting their own NVRD events on campuses.
- 3) Meeting wrap-up:
- a. When anyone in the group hears of an issue that needs addressing, please report it to us and we will respond.
  - b. The Regional Early Voting sites numbers have diminished; as a result, there will be only 3 sites for the November election; however, they will be open on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Monday before the election.

- c. In June there were 27 different ballot styles; in November, there will be 197.
- d. Joan Carpenter said that the League of Women Voters West Contra Costa sent the Elections Division a list of the forums they are holding and announced several candidates for state offices candidates will be at the Richmond Auditorium on September 11<sup>th</sup> and all are invited to hear them.

4) Next meeting: Mid-January, 2019

Attachments:

Grand Jury link

June, 2018 election numbers

Candidates who attended May 12<sup>th</sup> event

District maps of Martinez and Concord