Orange County Registrar of Voters

COMMUNITY ELECTION WORKING GROUP
OCTOBER 10, 2013
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA

Neal Kelley, Registrar of Voters called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Present:

Karen Hamman, City Clerk, City of Mission Viejo
CEW Vice-Chair, Linda Andal, City Clerk, City of Anaheim
Lucinda Williams, City Clerk, City of Fullerton
Carl Petersen, Deputy City Clerk, City of Irvine
Zeke Hernandez, President Santa Ana Chapter, LULAC
Debra Marsteller, Executive Director, Project Independence
Judith Barnes, Senior Community Representative
Anna Jimenez Plank, Poll Worker Representative
Suzanne Narducy, Poll Worker Representative
Wanda Shaffer, President League of Women Voters of North Orange County
Adam Joseph Ross, Student, California State University, Fullerton
Lyle Brakob, Veterans Affairs Representative
Steven Spillman, Chairman, Mission Viejo Planning and Transportation Commission
Ben Hamatake, Community Outreach Manager, Registrar of Voters
Imelda Carrillo, Election Services Manager, Registrar of Voters
Brandy Miller, Community Engagement Manager, Registrar of Voters
CEW Secretary, Marcia Nielsen, Candidate and Voter Services Lead, Registrar of Voters
Neal Kelley, Registrar of Voters

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF APRIL 18, 2013 CEW MEETING MINUTES / OTHER HOUSEKEEPING

Neal Kelley welcomed the group, followed by self-introductions.

Vice Chair Linda Andal reviewed membership terms that are up at the end of this year. The term ends for Eddie Marquez, Richard Ibarra, Chairman Eugene Lee, Mary Ann Foo, Lucinda Williams, Karen Hamman, Andy Arias, Steven Spillman, Suzanne Narducy, Judith Barnes, Wanda Shaffer, Lyle Brakob and herself. Vice Chair Linda Andal stated that Neal Kelley will reach out to members to verify interest in serving before the next meeting. If a member is not able to continue service, he/she will be asked to assist Neal Kelley in determining a suitable replacement.

Vice Chair Linda Andal asked for approval of the minutes from the April 18, 2013 meeting. Marcia Nielsen pointed out the next meeting date noted in the minutes should be amended to reflect a future date not yet determined. Judith Barnes made a MOTION to approve the

revised minutes. The MOTION was seconded by Karen Hamman and APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Vice Chair Linda Andal welcomed new member Adam Joseph Ross, a Political Science major and graduating senior from California State University, Fullerton. Zeke Hernandez made a MOTION to approve his membership. The MOTION was seconded by Anna Jimenez and APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPEAKING PROGRAM; OUTREACH UPDATE; PERFORMANCE METRICS; INPUT FROM CEW MEMBERS

Ben Hamatake provided an update on our speaking engagements. He stated that we present information on our agency and promote participation in the electoral process by networking with community organizations. He added that we have speaking engagements at senior centers, community groups, disabled student centers, public agencies, high school classes and clubs in addition to our MyBallot program. He stated that we adapt our presentation to fit the situation and noted that we chart our monthly engagements on our website.

Ben Hamatake asked for the group's help in connecting with established relationships. He appreciates the lists that have been provided from many of this group, adding that an inside contact makes our outreach efforts more successful. Neal Kelley asked if anyone had observed a benefit from a particular program and/or what changes should be made. There was a discussion detailing contacts that will be presented by several CEW members.

Karen Hamman asked if it would be helpful to partner with City Clerks' offices, as they have great contacts in their communities. Neal Kelley responded that these partnerships would be greatly appreciated. Vice Chair Linda Andal indicated that this is an opportune time to create partnerships, as Anaheim is currently considering major organizational changes. Neal Kelley stated that our office would help with brochures and outreach activities. Vice Chair Linda Andal stated that she would like our office to attend outreach events so she knows our approach. She would like there to be one partnership – not two separate groups. Zeke Hernandez volunteered to assist in partnering to reach established Latino groups.

Lyle Brakob and Neal Kelley said it would be helpful if CEW members' contacts could be utilized. Steven Spillman stated he has contacts with the Elks in Anaheim. He will try to obtain references for similar organizations from his contacts. He added that he has contacts at the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit research and educational group comprised of 1500 members in Orange County. Ben Hamatake thanked the group for their input. Neal Kelley said he is willing to meet with the Real Estate Association, law classes at California State University, Fullerton, and the Water Association of Orange County. There was a discussion detailing other organizations such as schools, churches and professional sports organization.

Neal Kelley is a member of the Irvine Foundation, a group of statewide advocates that have established the Future of California Elections group. This group has been working on the Plain Language Initiative for the Statewide Voter Guide. Their goal of providing plain language for voters may not happen because of statutory requirements.

OVERVIEW OF 1% POST ELECTION AUDIT CHANGES / IMPLEMENTATION; DEMONSTRATION OF ELECTRONIC SYSTEM

Justin Berardino discussed the 1% audit process, indicating that the Post Election audit process is required by law. A hand tally is done for every contest on ballot, and is compared to the machine results. In large elections, it is difficult to get this last part of the canvass completed quickly. The EAC provided a grant to improve this process and selected Orange County as one of only 12 agencies. In 2011, we conducted a risk limiting audit, which successfully allowed us to audit less ballots and increased statistical confidence in the vote. This system, however, would require major changes to voting systems. Also, our office has developed a method to track canvass board progress and display results by using handheld computers. Visual displays are used by the Registrar, the public and the boards to review progress. This new system was tested in the Cypress election. A detailed report can be found in the Election Library. A brief demonstration followed.

Wanda Shaffer asked if this process was determined by Debra Bowen; Neal Kelley said that the requirements for the 1% canvass are mandated in the California Elections Code. Laws would need to change to allow us to conduct the risk limiting audit for all elections. Steven Spillman asked if there is ever any discrepancy. Neal Kelley responded negatively, adding that we send a variance report to the Secretary of State's office each election explaining any discrepancies. Mostly, the differences are generated by how a vote was called by the boards. This new system would greatly improve this process, allowing us to focus on close contests.

PLAIN LANGUAGE SAMPLE BALLOT INITIATIVE (PLANS FOR 2014 JUNE SAMPLE BALLOT DESIGN); FEEDBACK NEEDED FROM CEW MEMBERS

Kristin Reed reviewed the Plain Language Initiative. She noted that 43% of the U.S. population is at or below basic literacy levels. This initiative would rely on words and images that are easy to understand. Text would be organized and formatted in intuitive ways. The plain language would help readers of all proficiency levels. Plain language is already used by other government groups and is written to match the average voters reading level, and uses familiar words and phrases in an active voice. This approach would require a redesign of the sample ballot pamphlet. Fewer words would be used in the non-election mandated sections.

Kristin Reed requested feedback from this group on this subject. She asked if members could see any downsides to establishing a plain language program. She noted that language translations work well with plain language, but asked about concerns with disabled voters. Zeke Hernandez asked if this could be done for state propositions; but laws mandate the language can't be changed. The plain language changes would be made in all languages to the instructions and explanations as to how or where to vote.

Neal Kelley discussed how this approach would affect disabled voters. Debra Marsteller thinks it would be good if larger fonts could be used. Steven Spillman thinks this would be very helpful, adding that graphics would be useful. Neal Kelley replied that the sample ballot pamphlet would contain significantly more graphics.

DISCUSSION REGARDING PLAN FOR NEW ORANGE COUNTY VOTING SYSTEM; REVIEW OF CURRENT SYSTEM STATUS; PLANS TO RELEASE RECOMMENDATIONS IN DECEMBER 2013

Neal Kelley discussed the end-of-life evaluation of our voting system. He added that the evaluation process began in August 2013 and included a cross-section of department personnel. This group is conducting a detailed analysis of our current voting system and will establish the end of life. This is an important project, as we have already exceeded the original expectations. Our goal is to create a report for the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation for pursuing a plan no later than December 2013. Our vision is to establish a plan and implement a voting system that will continue to provide accuracy and instills trust in the electorate that is user-friendly, intuitive, efficient, and accessible.

Orange County hasn't changed the fundamental way we vote, in spite of the growth of vote-by-mail voting and projected changes with the United States Postal Service. Our initial plan includes extensive research and surveys to determine the wants and needs of voters. We have scheduled four focus groups to obtain feedback from experienced poll workers and voters with disabilities. Three primary areas have been identified to include system analysis, including research and data, current system history, and evaluation and establishment of realistic end of life of our voting system. It has been determined that our system has been used in more than 42 elections.

Neal Kelley would like the CEW group to respond to these questions: 1) Is the outreach plan for the initial report adequate? 2) Are there additional data points that should be examined? 3) Are the three key points that have been outlined adequate? He asked what type of outreach we should conduct. Neal Kelley distributed the new voting system survey to the group. Zeke Hernandez asked what options we have in selecting a new voting system. Currently, voters are gravitating towards a hybrid paper system because they can take away a physical piece of paper or print/scan ballots themselves. These devices are similar to tablets and can be enlarged for voters with disabilities. This would decrease the number of voting booths at the polling place, reduce costs for distribution, and reduce the problems for staff distributing equipment. A new system could allow a change in ballot design. Vice Chair Linda Andal suggested including language minority groups in the focus groups. Neal Kelley responded by stating that they will be targeted in the focus groups.

Neal Kelley hopes to keep our current system working through 2016. He noted that there might be a small migration in the General Election of 2016 to test the system. Steven Spillman asked if the focus groups are interactive. Neal Kelley responded by saying that presentations are given in each focus group, but participant engagement is promoted. Steven Spillman suggested expanding the focus groups to include non-voters. Neal Kelley encouraged members of this group to contact him with input on the new voting system and stated that he wants the CEW members to preview a draft of our report before it is released.

Neal Kelley demonstrated a new function on our website. The Election Legislation Tracker allows a reader to review federal and/or state laws and bills. Also, there is a section that enables a reader to browse through the 20,000 statutes of the California Elections Code. He hopes that this resource is a useful tool. Debra Marsteller asked if Neal Kelley could distribute a web button to the group. Neal Kelley welcomed this idea, stating that he will email a web button and the presentation with the meeting minutes. This has been utilized

with other county websites, especially with voter registration. Lucinda Williams mentioned that this branding will communicate a positive relationship.

Neal Kelley provided an update on his involvement with the Presidential commission which began in May. He has informally testified and will be formally testifying on best practices in our office on several election-related topics. This group is producing a report by the end of December for the President.

Neal Kelley discussed the third session of the Election Academy. This session is well attended and well received. He has received positive feedback from the attendees of the group. Several cities have representatives in this session.

Zeke Hernandez thanked Neal Kelley for his efforts in voter registration in maintaining the infrastructure and opportunities to register to vote. Neal Kelley added that the one big factor that has changed voter registration is online registration. From September to the registration close on October 22, 2012, 68,000 voters utilized online registration. We are the only county that allows people to access voter registration from our Facebook page. Lyle Brakob inquired about the Grand Jury report on our office. Neal Kelley responded that the election process is such an important function that we are often investigated. For this past session, our office was the only office that was given a positive report. Wanda Shaffer, a past Grand Jury member, added that the report is online at OCGov.com/Grand Jury.

Vice Chair Linda Andal announced that our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 6, 2014 at 9:30. Lyle Brakob made a MOTION to adjourn, which was seconded by Zeke Hernandez and APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.