



**Orange County Registrar of Voters**  
**COMMUNITY ELECTION WORKING GROUP**  
**JULY 16, 2020**  
**SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA**

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Present:

CEW Vice-Chair, Lucinda Williams, City Clerk, City of Fullerton  
Mike Chen, Chairman, South Coast Chinese Cultural Association to the Asian Community  
Tim Cheng, Co-President, Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center  
CEW Chair, Ruben Alvarez, Jr., Publisher, Stay Connected OC  
Debra Marsteller, Executive Director, Project Independence  
Paul Spencer, Attorney, Disability Rights California  
Gabriel Taylor, Voting Rights Advocate  
Judith Barnes, Senior Community Representative  
Anna Jimenez Plank, Poll Worker Representative  
Randall Avila, Executive Director, Republican Party of Orange County  
Wanda Shaffer, Representative, League of Women Voters of OC  
Alexander Williams, Youth Representative  
Lyle Brakob, Veterans Affairs Representative  
Steven W. Spillman, Mission Viejo Community Services Commissioner  
Justin Berardino, Operations Manager, Registrar of Voters  
Jackie Wu, Community Outreach Manager, Registrar of Voters  
Imelda Carrillo, Election Services Manager, Registrar of Voters  
CEW Secretary, Marcia Nielsen, Candidate and Voter Services Manager,  
Registrar of Voters  
Neal Kelley, Registrar of Voters

**WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 23, 2020 CEW MEETING MINUTES;  
WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS; CONSIDERATION OF BYLAWS CHANGE; OTHER  
HOUSEKEEPING**

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. greeted the group, followed by self-introductions. He thanked the CEW group for their help during these turbulent times. He welcomed Mike Chen as a new member from the South Coast Chinese Cultural Association to the Asian Community. CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. then called for review and approval of the meeting minutes from January 23, 2020. Judith Barnes made a MOTION to approve, which was seconded by Randall Avila. The minutes were APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. Neal Kelley stated that there was a MOTION to modify the by-laws to change the membership category of "Poll Worker" to "Vote Center Customer Service Representatives". Debra Marsteller made a MOTION to approve, which was seconded by Tim Chen and APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **OVERVIEW OF NOVEMBER 2020 ELECTION PLANS UNDER COVID-19 (INCLUDING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS; COVID PLANNING; MAJOR CHANGES); CEW SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Neal Kelley has been a part of a statewide task force discussion of the impact of the November General Election under COVID-19 conditions. This discussion included an in-person option and statewide vote-by-mail voting. He reviewed the Governor's Orders that included voting for a minimum of four days. This was set in statute with AB 860, which requires all voters to receive a vote-by-mail ballot, limited in-person voting (SB 423) and an expanded RAVBM solution. These processes were put into place by our office when we transitioned to a Vote Center model. This Bill also extends the time that an elections office can begin processing, from 10 business days to 29 days before Election Day. This provides additional time to begin extracting and scanning ballots.

The expanded RAVBM solution will allow all voters to access their ballots electronically – not just military, overseas and voters with disabilities. For these ballots, voters will access, mark and print their ballots. The ballots must be returned in an envelope with the identification template affixed. Neal Kelley asked for feedback on whether he should mail an additional envelope to the voter. This would be challenging with time constraints. He noted that these ballots cannot be transmitted back to our office electronically.

The in-person component for November 3, 2020 will reflect physical distancing, have a larger footprint in Vote Centers, with an anticipation for longer voting times due to physical distancing.

Neal Kelley stated that candidate filing has also been modified due to COVID-19. We are encouraging candidates to use our online filing system. We will be utilizing an appointment system featuring a Zoom platform which allows candidates to complete the process remotely. Candidates will still be required to submit the nomination paperwork with original signatures by the deadline, August 7, 2020 5:00 p.m. Candidates are also able to schedule in-person appointments from our website. There is a secure drop box positioned in the Registrar of Voters' courtyard for nomination documents. He added that there will not be a charge for this service.

Neal Kelley stated that there will be approximately 112 ballot drop boxes for the November 3, 2020 Presidential General Election, with additions at UCI and in the City of Santa Ana.

Neal Kelley stated that Orange County has received nearly \$500,000,000 through the CARES Act funding. This has provided us with the funds to purchase additional sorters, scanners, extractors, and voting equipment. This capital, combined with state grant funding, will assist in our preparations to conduct an election under COVID-19 conditions. There will also be an extensive inventory of hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, and disposable pens, ensuring the safety of the voters and Vote Center staff. In addition, we will receive funding for a \$3,000,000 outreach effort to inform voters that voting can be done safely and easily from home. Neal Kelley added that we will be releasing a report in the next few days that will detail our protocol for conducting an election under COVID-19 conditions. He added that the total CARES Act spending for COVID-19 will be approximately \$5,800,000. We will be giving some of that back to the General Funds with

the receipt of the funding. He continued to state that we will be spending an additional \$1,200,000 in additional voting and automated equipment and \$506,000 in facility and furniture rentals.

Imelda Carrillo next discussed the preparations for the COVID-19 Task Force. This group's mission was to provide a comprehensive review and research to develop a plan for in-person voting. This team has reviewed CDC documents, state guidelines, health and county department documents to plan for a safe election. This impacts Vote Center site selection, equipment and supplies, operations, and training/communication. She added that there will be approximately 167 Vote Centers for November, based upon voter registration on E-88, which is August 7, 2020. She explained protocols that will be in place for safety, including disinfecting the equipment and physical distancing of equipment. Parking and accessibility are other major considerations. Imelda Carrillo added that the City Clerks have been very helpful in providing larger sites for this purpose. She appreciates this positive response. She added that we will not be utilizing residential sites or care centers for Vote Centers for this election.

Imelda Carrillo discussed the significance of training and communication in developing a plan for in-person voting. She stated that Jackie Wu and her team are working on developing and updating training materials to ensure the Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) have the tools available to them, online and in-person training. There will be three days of online training and one day of hands-on in-person training. The job posting is available currently. CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. suggested flyers and additional communication.

Imelda Carrillo next reviewed Vote Center operations, including the layout, flow, communication, and processes. We have been utilizing the Vote Center Lab, setting up the equipment and practicing different scenarios to derive the best action plans. She added that we are analyzing the bottlenecks of check-in and scanning to determine the best responses to these challenges. She acknowledged that signage and communication with the voters is critical. We have been working on a proper plan, protocols and processes for Vote Center operations. Neal Kelley added that the Vote Center Lab is the ideal Vote Center and can be used by individuals interested in seeing an actual Vote Center.

Imelda Carrillo described the process for cleaning the voting equipment after each voter, including the stylus pen, the stanchions, and the voting booths. She added that masks will be available to all voters and that there are protocols for voters that are not able to wear masks because of medical conditions. Voters will not be required to wear latex gloves.

Justin Berardino next discussed curbside voting and other voting options that have been available in the past. We are working to achieve the balance between staff and voter safety and facilitating the voting process in an accessible manner. We continue to develop as many options as possible for voters, even voters that may identify as COVID-19 positive. He briefly described the RAVBM solution. Gabe Taylor provided input to make certain that adequate information is provided in the Voter Information Guide and is easy to access. He said it is helpful to provide as much information as possible. Neal Kelley explained that the RAVBM ballot is available to all voters and can be marked using a computer or assistive device, then printed out, and mailed back to our office.

Gabe Taylor stated that it would be beneficial to provide the return envelope with two holes for the voters with low-sight. Neal Kelley thanked him for his input.

### **WHAT MARCH 2020 DATA HAS TOLD US; RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATIONS; LESSONS LEARNED**

Justin Berardino reviewed data from the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election. He noted that the ballot drop boxes were utilized more as the election date approaches, and that in-person voting drastically increased during the last four days. This helped us determine the best dates for opening Vote Centers in November. He displayed the changes in voting habits by showing the significant increase in vote-by-mail voting since the November 2018 General Election.

Neal Kelley remarked that based on this data, we are considering opening Vote Centers five days prior to the Presidential General Election. CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. added that this timeline would give Vote Center staff the opportunity to prepare for the opening of Vote Centers. He also suggested that it would be beneficial to have more leads in the field. Neal Kelley stated that we will be recruiting directly for leads for the November Presidential General Election. Several members of the group agreed that five days would be an optimal time frame for in-person voting.

### **NOVEMBER 2020 COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH PLAN; OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS; DIRECT MAIL; MICROTARGETING; VIDEO PRODUCTION; SEEKING INPUT ON MEDIA BUYS, ETC.**

Neal Kelley stated that he feels the communication plan is critical to the success of the election. Educating voters at the appropriate time is important. We focused on specific information to micro-target voter information. We have increased our communication efforts to include 73 outdoor advertisements, 470 transit ads in multiple languages, and will increase targeted messages. Neal Kelley stated that we ran 4,747 times on 18 cable channels and had separate spots for Laguna Woods television.

Based on feedback from the group, we increased our print ads to include multiple publications in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese. Neal Kelley asked for input on publications that would be beneficial. He also discussed the impact of social media and voter engagement. He stated that we will continue direct mail messaging describing the ease of voting safely and securely from home, and the options available to all voters.

Neal Kelley introduced Roy Behr and Matt Kagan from Behr Communications. They provided previews of messaging for November. Matt Kagan said that he would appreciate feedback from the group. The goal for the March Presidential Primary Election was to communicate how voting had changed from the polling place model to Vote Centers. For November, this messaging will change. He stated that they will do some message testing, and that they will be emphasizing voters' safety to encourage them to vote by mail. The messaging will detail how voters can ensure that their ballots will count and how in-person voting can be done safely.

Matt Kagan described the principal tactics of this campaign, which include print and newspaper ads, outdoor ads, digital campaigns (i.e., social media), and audio ads on

music streaming platforms. The entire campaign will air in the five languages – English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese. The print publications will be in all these languages, while the outdoor will focus on English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The digital and social ads will also be in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, as was done in March. The timeframe will be closer to the election since so much is changing with COVID.

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. provided feedback for publications that were selected for March. He stated that La Opinion was utilized for the Spanish publications, but that he recommended other publications such as Miniondas, El Aviso, and Para Todos to reach Santa Ana voters. Ruben Alvarez, Jr. asked for input from the Asian community representatives. Erica Yun recommended that we alternate publishing in the Korean Times and the Korea Daily. Matt Kagan stated that he appreciated the feedback. Tim Chen added that he feels radio and short videos are good ways to promote short messages to voters. Neal Kelley thanked the group for their feedback on this important topic and stated that he wants input on the messaging that will be sent to voters. Roy Behr discussed the timeline of the communication pieces and the challenges of the video production. Neal Kelley acknowledges that the message of securely voting at home is an important message to communicate to our voters. There was additional discussion on the security of ballots and voting. Randall Avila volunteered to assist with messaging voters that may be concerned about vote-by-mail voting. Roy Behr stated that there is a plan to produce an entire online video demonstrating the safety of the vote-by-mail process.

### **VOTE CENTER SITE SELECTION; UPDATES TO DATA ANALYSIS AND SELECTION TOOLS; CHALLENGES WITH COVID-19 AND IN-PERSON LOCATIONS**

Imelda Carrillo described Vote Center site selection process for November. She provided background and the extensive Vote Center data analysis on the sites used in March. This analysis included voter turnout, vote-by-mail ballot drop offs, accessibility, room sizes and parking. Imelda Carrillo's team reviewed feedback from calls, surveys, photos, and messages, providing the basis for determining the master list of Vote Centers for November. There was a focus on obtaining larger facilities and updating existing Vote Center diagrams to include layout and flow. Drive-thru sites may be expanded to accommodate the high number of ballots that are dropped off at Vote Centers. She announced that we are currently meeting with the Anaheim Ducks to host a large Vote Center. Imelda Carrillo added that we are updating our mapping tool to refine locations for Vote Centers.

Imelda Carrillo discussed the challenges of Vote Center processing under COVID-19 conditions. She acknowledged that we need larger rooms, additional space for parking, and additional space for line management and voting equipment. She stated we are having discussions with several sites such as the Anaheim Convention Center and Anaheim Stadium. We are also working with the Titan Center and UCI for larger rooms. There was discussion on providing outdoor Vote Centers. Steven Spillman suggested this as a possibility for large locations such as Saddleback Community College.

**VOTE CENTER STAFFING IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT; TRAINING DISCUSSION (DISTANCE LEARNING); OVERVIEW OF ON-BOARDING PROCEDURES**

Kim Hosler discussed hiring during COVID-19, which is very different than in past elections. We currently have implemented changes to recruitment, onboarding, and orientation. We have opened recruitment early and are conducting interviews utilizing physical distancing. As we move forward in recruitment for Customer Service Representatives, we will move to a Zoom/Skype platform to minimize large groups assembling at our site. She added that paperwork will be mailed out in advance and returned at physically distanced stations. In addition, there are protective measures for staff and prospective employees, including COVID-19 Safety Guidelines.

Neal Kelley stated that we will send out the subcommittee updates and training materials in the next couple of days. He suggested that the next scheduled meeting should be either September 17, 2020 or September 24, 2020 before vote-by-mail ballots go out.

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. thanked the group for their feedback during this meeting.

Steven Spillman made a MOTION to adjourn which was APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Nielsen, Secretary