

**COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ELECTIONS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, March 20, 2025

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Location: Via Zoom/In person
San Lorenzo Library Greenhouse Community Room
395 Paseo Grande
San Lorenzo, CA 94580

1. Call To Order / Roll Call

The Elections Commission meeting of March 20, 2025, convened at 4:02 p.m. in the San Lorenzo Library Greenhouse Community Room. The president, James R. Lindsay, called to order the meeting.

Present:

Commission Members: Judy Belcher, Karen A. Butter, Irene Dieter, Susan R. Henderson, James R. Lindsay, Alexander Ramon, Karl I. Seabrook (arrived late), and Zabrae Valentine (arrived late);

Staff: City Clerk: Kelly Clancy; ROV: Cynthia Cornejo, Noe Lucio, Shaheer Siddiqui, and Charles Smithline; County Counsel: Jason Allen.

Absent:

Commission Members: Alissa Moore and Allie Whitehurst

Registrar of Voters: Tim Dupuis

2. Swearing-In of New Commissioners

There were no new commissioners to swear-in.

3. Approval of Agenda

No modifications were made to the agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes of February 20, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Ramon, seconded by Commissioner Belcher, and passed 6 to 0.

5. Announcements and Communications

(a) From staff

Deputy Registrar of Voters Cynthia Cornejo said the postings of the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee quarterly meeting agendas and minutes to the Registrar of Voters web page is partially completed.

Ms. Cornejo reported that one possible meeting site for a June 19th meeting is smaller, but it is available.

(b) From commissioners

- **Commissioner Belcher encouraged commissioners to print and read the Rosenberg's Rules of Order. Ms. Belcher asked whether the CVRs will be released for this election. Ms. Cornejo replied that the registrar, with the approval of the Secretary of State, plans to release CVRs on Fridays, and once only on election night.**
- **Vice President Dieter asked that the commission's rules and procedures with Rosenberg's Rules of Order be posted on the commission's webpage.**
- **President Lindsay announced that Benita Tsao's term on the commission ended and she decided not to reapply, so her seat needs to be filled, and that the letter from the commission regarding cast vote records was sent to the board of supervisors. Mr. Lindsay also said that the process for getting commission candidates Wagner and Pham appointed has not yet been completed but should be ready in April.**

6. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Public comments were made on agenda items.

7. Monthly Update from Registrar of Voters Office

- **Ms. Cornejo provided an update on April 15, 2025 City of Oakland Special Election processes, including the media campaign, direct mailers, and the voter information guide. She noted that the 11-day vote centers will open on April 5, and the 4-day vote centers will open on April 12. Additionally, the 18 drop boxes are already open.**
- **Commissioner Valentine inquired whether the Registrar of Voters could implement AB-626 in time for the election. Ms. Cornejo responded that there was not enough time to research and test the process in a pilot.**

8. Business Items

a. Old Business

- **The commission had no old business.**

b. Ongoing Items from Committees

(1) Structure of the ROV position.

Ms. Valentine noted that the commission invited the ROV to read the report and comment on it.

(2) Dedicated Staff Support to the Elections Commission

- **The possibility of having an ad hoc committee of one was discussed. County counsel will research. Ms. Belcher asked whether the extra staff support would be able help ad hoc committees with research or reports, and Ms. Cornejo explained that they could gather only available information. She introduced Shaheer Siddiqui as the commission meeting clerk, replacing Noe Lucio. Mr. Lindsay reminded everyone that commissioner**

requests should still go through the president and vice-president.

- A motion was made to dissolve the Dedicated Staff Support ad hoc committee by Commissioner Ramon, seconded by Ms. Dieter, and passed 8 to 0.

(3) 2024 Post-election Assessment

- Commissioner Belcher summarized the purpose and format of the post-election assessment reports. Commissioner Butter explained that the short summary at the beginning of the assessment was meant to be an alternate assessment for the commission to consider. Butter suggested that the remaining longer version and the city clerks' letter be used as action items for the commission to work on.
- A motion to submit the assessment of the November 2024 general election as an attachment to the short letter to the board of supervisors was made by Ms. Belcher, seconded by Ms. Butter. Discussion ensued. Ms. Belcher amended her motion to include a notation in the assessment that the registrar of voters' response may follow at a later date. Ms. Cornejo said the ROV is midway through the assessment. Discussion continued.
- A substitute motion was made to combine the two versions and bring back an edited assessment in April by Ms. Dieter, seconded by Commissioner Seabrook. Ms. Dieter volunteered to edit it and to seek feedback from the ROV, particularly on any inaccurate statements. Mr. Lindsay volunteered to help Ms. Dieter.
- The substitute motion passed 7 to 0 with one abstention.

(4) Voting Participation

The committee met and is working on getting data on voter participation. They plan to meet about every other week.

(5) Nominations Committee

Mr. Seabrook volunteered to join the committee and was approved by acclamation.

c. New Business

(1) Responsiveness and Communications

Item was not discussed.

(2) Election Observation Issues

- Mr. Lindsay invited Jackie Cota of the Election Integrity Project of Alameda County to present her viewpoints on citizen observation and the notice requirements under Elections Code § 15104(c). Ms. Cota said that, because the ROV provided a general notice of when it would start processing vote-by-mail ballots and that it would continue processing ballots until complete during the November 2024 election, the ROV failed to meet its obligation under Elections Code § 15104(c) to provide public notice "at least 48 hours in advance of the dates, times, and places where vote by mail ballots will be processed and counted." She added that section 15104(c) requires the ROV to provide specific dates, times, and locations for each specific elections activity.
- Senior Deputy County Counsel Jason Allen responded to the legal issues raised in

Ms. Cota's presentation. He stated the ROV's compliance with Elections Code § 15104(c)'s 48-hour notice requirement was litigated during the November 2024 election. In that case, a judge on the Superior Court of Alameda County dismissed the petition on the pleadings, holding that the general notice the ROV provides was sufficient. Mr. Allen further noted that, in another case addressing this issue, the California Court of Appeal recently issued a published opinion holding: "Nothing in section 15104, subdivision (c) requires notice of the time and place for each individual step in the process. A general notice of the dates, times, and places where the vote by mail ballots will be processed and counted is all the subdivision requires." Mr. Allen said the ROV is complying with law and disagrees with some of the statements made in the presentation.

9. Special Report from the ROV -- none this month

No report was requested this month.

10. Public Comment on Agenda or Non-Agenda Items

By acclamation, this item was heard before election observation issues (item 8c2). Public comments were made.

11. Requests for Future Agenda Items

No requests were made for future agenda items.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m. The next meeting will be held on April 17, 2025.