

MINUTES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
RE: ELECTION IMPROVEMENTS/TRANSPARENCY
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER – 3RD FLOOR MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
1115 TRUXTUN AVE. 3rd FLOOR
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

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Monday, December 16, 2024, at 3:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY SUPERVISOR COUCH AT 3:35 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: SUPERVISOR DAVID COUCH AND SUPERVISOR LETICIA PEREZ

COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT: ERIC NISBETT AND SABA HAILEMICHAEL (COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE), JENNIFER FEIGE AND KATHLEEN RIVERA (OFFICE OF COUNTY COUNSEL)

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address Committee Members on any matter not on this agenda, but under the jurisdiction of the Committee. Committee Members may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed. They may ask a question for clarification, make a referral to staff for factual information or request staff to report back to the Committee at a later meeting. Also, the Committee may take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda. **SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME BEFORE MAKING YOUR PRESENTATION –**

CHARLES SHINN MADE A REQUEST TO PRESENT A POWERPOINT TO THE COMMITTEE AT THE FOLLOWING MEETING

4. INTRODUCTIONS (Fiscal Impact: None) –

SUPERVISOR DAVID COUCH REQUESTED THAT THOSE PRESENT INTRODUCE THEMSELVES. PRESENT WERE:

DENNIS MCLEAN, JIM ROBINSON, CHARLES SHINN, NATALIE FEINBERG, JEANETTE BEESON, JEANINE ADAMS, ANN GALLON, PAUL LINFESTY, KYLE HOLMES, LINDA WELCH, SHEILA ROTH, PAMELA REECE, MERCY PENA

- 5. MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 21, 2024 MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION, RE: ELECTION IMPROVEMENTS/TRANSPARENCY – APPROVED, PEREZ-COUCH**
- 6. REPORT ON REFERRAL FROM COMMITTEE REGARDING SCHEDULE OF COLLECTIONS AT BALLOT DROP BOXES – RECEIVED AND FILED, PEREZ-COUCH**
- 7. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FOR ITEMS UNDER THE JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY OF 1) KERN COUNTY AUDITOR-CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK/REGISTRAR OF VOTERS, 2) CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE, AND 3) FEDERAL AGENCIES AFFECTING LOCAL ELECTIONS** – PUBLIC COMMENT FROM NATALIE FEINBERG STATED THAT RECOMMENDATIONS WERE NOT COMPLETE AND SHOULD INCLUDE TRAINING FOR ELECTIONS STAFF, DESCRIBED QUESTIONS ABOUT DATA SUPPLIED BY THE ELECTIONS OFFICE INCLUDING UNDELIVERABLE MAIL, VOTERS REMOVED FROM THE ROLL, NUMBER OF CURES AND CONDITIONAL VOTERS, MAINTENANCE OF VOTER ROLLS, INCORRECT DATES, LACK OF IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTING, INSTANCES OF INEFFICIENCY, INCOMPETENCY, AND MISTAKES, STATED COUNTY POPULATION HAS INCREASED SINCE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER’S OFFICE WAS COMBINED WITH COUNTY CLERK IN 1994, STATED THERE SHOULD BE A DISCUSSION ABOUT SPLITTING THE OFFICES; SUPERVISOR COUCH STATED THAT SEPARATING OFFICES MAY NOT BE BETTER AND IF THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS FUNCTION REPORTED TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, THE BOARD WOULD THEN HAVE TO MAKE DECISIONS ON POLITICAL QUESTIONS, THERE WERE POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES OF DIFFERENT OPTIONS BUT MAKING CHANGES MAY NOT ADDRESS THE ISSUES BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE PUBLIC; JIM ROBINSON STATED THAT ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS SHOULD BE REMOVED AND ELIMINATE MAIL BALLOTS, THAT INDIVIDUALS SHOULD VISIT POLLING SITES TO VOTE; DENNIS MCLEAN STATED THAT THE ELECTIONS DIVISION HAD EMPLOYEE PROBLEMS AND EMPLOYEE MORALE WAS AN ISSUE; SUPERVISOR COUCH STATED THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DID NOT HAVE AUTHORITY TO MANAGE OPERATIONS OF AN ELECTED DEPARTMENT HEAD ONLY AT THE LEVEL OF THE BUDGET, STATED EMPLOYEE ISSUES CAN BE COMPLICATED AND NOT ALWAYS A MANAGEMENT PROBLEM; SUPERVISOR PEREZ REITERATED THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DID NOT HAVE AUTHORITY OVER THE TEN ELECTED OFFICES, STATED HER OFFICE HAD PREVIOUSLY MET WITH ELECTIONS STAFF AND ISSUES WERE SIMILAR TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS, PAY WAS PART OF THE PROBLEM; MERCY PENA STATED THAT THE ELECTIONS OFFICE NEEDED TO GET THINGS RIGHT, THAT SHE HAD RAN FOR THE GREENFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD, WAS FIGHTING FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR SUCCESS, DID NOT HAVE A LOT OF MONEY TO DEAL WITH LEGAL ISSUES AND MAY HAVE TO HIRE AN ATTORNEY, THAT ELECTION MAPS NEEDED TO BE CORRECT AND WAS NOT DIFFICULT, THAT STAFF SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE; SUPERVISOR COUCH REITERATED THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DID NOT SUPERVISE ELECTIONS STAFF, IT IS AN ELECTED DEPARTMENT HEAD; SHEILA ROTH STATED THAT DROP BOXES DID NOT HAVE LIGHTING, NOTHING WAS DONE, JEANINE ADAMS STATED THAT STAFF HAD REPORTED DROP BOX LIGHTING AT HOLLOWAY-GONZALES

LIBRARY WAS FIXED; NATALIE FEINBERG RECOMMENDED THAT SINCE CAMERAS FOR DROP BOXES DID NOT HAVE RECORDINGS AVAILABLE FOR AUDIT, A COMPROMISE COULD BE FOR ELECTION OBSERVERS TO TRAVEL WITH ELECTIONS STAFF FOR DROPBOX COLLECTION; LINDA WELCH RECOMMENDED TRAINING FOR ENTIRE ELECTIONS DIVISION, SUPERVISOR COUCH STATED THAT THERE FIRST NEEDED TO BE A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT TRAINING IS PROVIDED; SUPERVISOR PEREZ SUGGESTED HOLDING A SPECIAL MEETING TO DISCUSS ISSUES; NATALIE FEINBERG SUGGESTED THE ELECTIONS OFFICE HOLD CITIZEN INPUT MEETINGS; CHARLES SHINN STATED THAT ELECTIONS OFFICE STAFF HAVE ADDITIONAL TRAINING ON MAPPING; SUPERVISOR COUCH RECOMMENDED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CONTACT THEIR LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES ON ITEMS OF CONCERN AS MANY ITEMS WERE UNDER STATE OR FEDERAL JURISDICTION; COMMITTEE DIRECTED STAFF TO ADD ITEMS ON THE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK INCLUDING TRAINING FOR ELECTIONS STAFF, REVIEW OF ELECTION MAPS, AND PUBLIC OBSERVERS TRAVELLING WITH ELECTIONS STAFF FOR DROP BOX COLLECTION, TO CHANGE QUESTIONS FOR AUDITOR-CONTROLLER-COUNTY CLERK TO REQUEST FOR PUBLIC PRESENTATION AND INCLUDE ITEMS ON PROCESS FOR UPDATING ELECTION MAPS AND TRAINING FOR ELECTIONS STAFF, TO INCLUDE STAFF REPORT ON PROCESS FOR UPDATING GIS MAPS FOR ELECTIONS, AND TO INCLUDE A DISCUSSION ITEM FOR THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING SEPARATING THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS FUNCTION; APPROVED; REFERRED TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, PEREZ-COUCH

8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 10, 2025, AT 3:30 P.M.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 5:00 P.M.
2 AYES (PEREZ, COUCH)

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(Government Code Section 54954.2)**

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