

**County of Alameda
Elections Commission
Agenda**

Location: Via Zoom/In person
Alameda County Training & Education Center
125 – 12th Street, 4th Floor
Suite 400 Hayward/Union City Rooms
Oakland, CA 94612

Date: February 15, 2024

Time: 4:00PM

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85810054726>

1 -- Call To Order / Roll Call at 4pm (5 minutes)

2 -- Swearing In of New Commissioners (3 minutes)

3 -- Approval of Minutes of January 18, 2024 (2 minutes)

See attachment

4 -- Announcements (5 minutes)

No discussion on these items.

(a) From staff

(b) From commissioners

5 -- Public Comment on Agenda Items (20 minutes)

6 -- Presentations and Reports

Discussion is allowed, but no action, on these items.

(a) Report from Registrar of Voters Office (15 minutes)

Current department priorities, future plans, potential bottlenecks.

(b) Presentation of the [Alameda County Election Administration Plan](#) (15 minutes)

URL: <https://www.acvote.org/acvote->

[assets/03_voting/PDFs/vca/Adopted%20Renewal%20Election%20Administration%20Plan_508.pdf](https://www.acvote.org/assets/03_voting/PDFs/vca/Adopted%20Renewal%20Election%20Administration%20Plan_508.pdf)

(c) Questions and answers about the Brown Act. (15 minutes)

Commissioners were sent a link to an explanatory video, so no initial presentation is necessary.

That video is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_4copyoRCq&t=31s.

7 -- Action Items

- (a) Report from sub-committee on nominations [Ramon, Singer] and consideration of nominating Benita Tsao, Judy Belcher, and Lila Hensler as at-large commission members from impacted groups. (10 minutes)
See Attachment
- (b) Consideration of recommending to the Board of Supervisors that the ROV be a full-time position.(15 minutes)
- (c) Discussion and possible action on Election Department appropriate responsiveness to questions and comments from commissioners, government staff, the press, and the public. (15 minutes)

7 -- Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items (20 minutes)

8 -- Requests for Future Agenda Items (5 minutes)

Commissioners and Staff may suggest future agenda items

9 -- Adjournment

**County of Alameda
Elections Commission
Minutes**

Location: Via Zoom/In person
Alameda County Training & Education Center
125 – 12th Street, 4th Floor
Suite 400 Hayward/Union City Rooms
Oakland, CA 94612

Date: January 18, 2024
Time: 4:00PM – 6:00PM

Minutes

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

The monthly Elections Commission meeting of January 18, 2024 convened at 4:00 p.m. in the Hayward/Union City Rooms. The clerk, Charles Smithline, ROV, called to order the meeting.

Present

Commission Members: Karen A. Butter, James R. Lindsay, Alexander H. Ramon, Stephanie F. Singer, Susan R. Henderson, Zabrae Valentine; *City Clerk:* Anna Brown, *Registrar of Voters:* Tim Dupuis, Lolita Francisco, Charles Smithline, Alice Liu; *County Counsel:* Ray Lara.

Not Present

Commission Member: Avni Desai.

B. Accept minutes from last meeting

James R. Lindsay requested the minutes be amended to record the vote on the substitute amendment.

A motion was made to accept the meeting minutes, Item C, as corrected by Stephanie Singer and seconded by Zabrae Valentine, approved with a 5-1 vote (one abstention).

C. Public comment on agenda items

Public comment was allowed for all agenda items.

D. Swearing in of commission members in public

The commissioners were sworn in in public.

E. Elect a President and Vice President of the Elections Commission

Zabrae Valentine volunteered for the position of president. Karen Butter nominated James Lindsay for the position of president.

A motion was made to nominate Zabrae Valentine for the position of Commission President by Alexander Ramon, seconded by Jim Lindsay. No vote was taken, but discussion ensued. Mr. Lindsay discussed his willingness to serve as either president or vice president. Mr. Ramon noted that to date the commission has spent much time on procedure, and requested that the vote be taken. Ms. Valentine asked if the motion could be withdrawn and replaced. Mr. Ramon withdrew his motion.

A motion was made to nominate Jim Lindsay as president and Zabrae Valentine as vice president by Ms. Singer, seconded by Mr. Ramon. The motion passed unanimously.

The clerk handed over the meeting to the new president and vice president.

F. Report from the Sub-Committee on “Impacted Communities”

Commissioner Ramon noted that the sub-committee’s task was to find four people to fill the at-large seats, members of the impacted communities as delineated in the ordinance. Commissioners Singer and Ramon reviewed applications previously received. Three applicants stood out: Benita Tsao, Leela Hensler, and Judith Belcher. Ms. Hensler and Belcher spoke during the public comment period, and Mr. Ramon outlined Ms. Tsao’s qualifications.

Ray Lara noted that the ordinance requires that every committee member be registered to vote, so that Ms. Hensler could not be voted upon by the board. Ms. Hensler noted that she is preregistered to vote and will become a registered voter on March 15, 2024.

President Lindsay asked for full commission discussion of the two currently eligible nominees.

The subcommittee reviewed the applications received in the first call and found the three candidates they recommended to be well-qualified to serve, including involvement with election processes, collaborative and thoughtful service on similar bodies, and membership in impacted communities. Rather than recommend a fourth candidate, they considered the (generally busy) time of year and decided that, in order to open the opportunity for service to individuals required by the ordinance, they would await a new call for applicants later in the new year.

There were about 40 applications and Amy Shrago, Chief of Staff, Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carlson, District 5, would repost the opening through the Board’s channels.

A motion to nominate Benita Tsao and Judy Belcher as members of the commission was made by Mr. Lindsay and seconded by Ms. Valentine. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made to nominate Ms. Hensler to the commission as soon as she is a registered voter by Ms. Singer and seconded by Mr. Ramon. Mr. Lara noted that if the board waits until Ms. Hensler is registered voter, there should be no legal issue.

G. Public comment on non-agenda items

Members of the public made comments.

H. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Ramon and seconded by Ms. Valentine. The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Elections Commission Subcommittee Candidate Recommendation Report

The subcommittee recommends the following candidates for consideration to be referred to the Board of Supervisors for appointment to the Alameda Election Commission for the presently vacant at-large seats:

(1) Benita Tsao

An immigrant who became a U.S. citizen as an adult, Benita Tsao has volunteered as a non-partisan poll monitor with Asian Americans Advancing Justice in three elections in 2018 and 2022, visiting poll stations in Fresno, Stockton, and in Alameda County. She also previously volunteered as a certified HIV Test Counselor with the San Francisco Community Health Center and a Ride Leader for Bay Area Velo Girls

(2) Leela Hensler

An Albany High School student, Leela Hensler's volunteer experience includes work as: (1) a research Intern at the Stanford Law School International Human Rights Clinic; (2) Government Engagement Coordinator for the Uyghur American Association; (3) Team Member with students at Boston University's Mailbox Project; (4) Youth Outreach Intern for United 4 Iran, in which she organized a walkathon to support advocacy efforts for women's rights protestors in Iran; (5) Director, Letters for Niloofar, in which she worked to raise awareness about the disappearance of Iranian journalist Niloofar Hamedi; (6) and Co-President, Albany High School Consider The Homeless through which she ran food and clothing drives for unhoused families.

(3) Judith Belcher

A life-long resident of Oakland, Judith Belcher seeks to promote increased trust in the electoral process by fostering better communication between the community, including underrepresented communities, the Registrar of Votes, and the Board of Supervisors. Judith has been involved in Alameda County elections for 30 years in various capacities including poll worker, poll watching, and educating the public about elections.