

**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 Valentine asked if the motion could be withdrawn and replaced.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.