

Alameda County Elections Commission

Approved Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2026

4:00 PM

1225 Fallon Street, Room G-1
Oakland CA 94612

1 **Call to Order / Roll Call**

The Elections Commission meeting convened at 4:08 p.m. with President Dieter presiding as chair.

Present

Commission Members: Karen Butter, Irene Dieter, Susan Henderson, James Lindsay, Alissa Moore, Alexandra Ritzie-Hernandez, Tiega Varlack, David Wagner, and ex officio Thai Nam Pham (participated via teleconference at 34009 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City, CA pursuant to Gov. Code § 54953(b)(3)).

Registrar of Voters: Cynthia Cornejo, Noe Lucio, Shaheer Siddiqui, and Charles Smithline.
County Counsel: Jason Allen

Absent

Commission Members: Judy Belcher, Alexander Ramon, Karl Seabrook, and Allie Whitehurst.

2 **Swearing-in of New Commissioners**

There were no new commissioners to swear-in.

3 **Approval of Agenda**

No changes were made to the agenda.

4 **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the April 16, 2026 Elections Commission meeting minutes by Commissioner Lindsay, seconded by Commissioner Varlack, and was approved unanimously.

5 **Announcements and Communications on non-agenda items**

a. From staff

Interim Registrar Cornejo demonstrated the new interactive touchscreen kiosks for observers, noting that the procedures for processes performed in the room are also posted on the wall in the observer area.

b. From commissioners

President Dieter reminded commissioners about the importance of attending the commission meetings so that we can meet our quorum.

6 **Public Comment on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments.

7 **Monthly Update from Registrar of Voters Office** (video time 4:50)

Interim Registrar Cornejo reviewed the calendars of election events and deadlines for the June 2 statewide primary elections and the June 16 special 14th congressional district primary election and how the two election material sets are differentiated. She explained how the recently enacted border redistricting affects the 14th congressional district voters in the two June elections and the maps available on the ROV's website. Ms. Cornejo also explained how the Vote on the Go program works in practice. Comments, scenarios, and more discussion ensued.

8 Regular Agenda Items

8-A Ongoing Items from Ad Hoc Committees (video time 32:40)

8-A(1) **Voting Participation**

Commissioner Lindsay reported that the committee met with a consultant to generate basic data by district to answer their questions about population, number of registered voters and turnout by ethnicity, age, etc. Commissioner Ritzie-Hernandez explained that the committee needs to do more research to understand what the numbers mean and how it impacts participation, which could show what partner organizations to contact. Commissioner Moore added that the committee wants to identify more data such as education and other cultural components. Commissioners discussed this initial information.

8-A(2) **Youth Participation**

Commissioner Varlack reported that she would like to get an updated list of schools the ROV Outreach team has visited over this year and would like to piggyback on the Voting Participation Committee's data so that they can study why certain youth are not engaging in voting. A motion was made for Commissioner Ritzie-Hernandez to join the committee by Commissioner Varlack, seconded by Commissioner Butter, and passed unanimously.

8-A(3) **Budgeting for Elections**

Commissioner Lindsay noted that the committee met with the registrar and staff who explained in detail the billing methodology used to distribute actual election costs to the jurisdictions, and they liked the wording. The ROV said that the information be made available on the website and the election billing, and that the ROV will meet with the city clerks possibly in July.

8-A(4) **Rules and Procedures**

President Dieter announced that feedback was being sought on changes to the commission rules regarding public comment procedures, the frequency of meetings, and Brown Act scenarios as described in the agenda packet.

Commissioners Lindsay and Pham said they had no problem with removing the language about public comments being heard collectively. Commissioner Pham added that he prefers hearing non-agenda items at the beginning of the meeting and that the chair should have the discretion on how to handle the number of speakers on any item. Commissioner Henderson said it could be harder for the public to know when to show up to speak on a particular item, and the chair would need to know how many speakers are lined up to speak on each item. Commissioner Lindsay suggested making the default speaking time two minutes and that written public comments be added to the agenda packet. President Dieter described the value of having correspondence posted with the agenda.

A discussion ensued on removing the language in the rules that states the commission does not meet in August and December. President Dieter explained that the ordinance states that the commission shall meet monthly but no less than ten times per year, allowing for when a meeting might be cancelled for unforeseen circumstances. Commissioner Pham said he didn't see how the commission could get around "shall" meet monthly, but that the commission could consider adopting a calendar annually for the following calendar year. President Dieter reported that the author of the ordinance said the commission was to meet monthly. Jason Allen said the language of the ordinance is not clear because it says the commission shall meet monthly and it says the commission will meet at least 10 times a year. It is not clear who the author of the ordinance was, and that the ordinance's legislative history is limited to the Board's public discussion—so comments by a purported author of the ordinance after the ordinance has passed are not relevant when interpreting the ordinance—but that the ordinance says that the commission will meet no less than ten times a year. Commissioner Wagner said he supported removing the language to allow for flexibility. Commissioners Lindsay and Henderson said that the ordinance language allows planning meetings only 10 times a year.

Some commissioners said they found the appendix with the Brown Act Scenarios helpful or didn't care either way.

8-B Scheduling Another Commission Meeting (video time 1:26)

President Dieter explained that because the commission did not meet in January due to a lack of quorum and the ordinance states the commission must meet 10 times a year, the commission had to schedule another meeting to make up for the one that was missed. A discussion ensued. A motion to hold an additional meeting in August that will be held on August 27 was made by Commissioner Butter, seconded by Commissioner Varlack, and passed unanimously.

8-C Voter Information Guides (video time 1:34)

President Dieter described the impetus for the discussion. Ms. Cornejo explained the differences between the state and the county voter information guides— including the mail protocols, who publishes it, the offices, candidate statement requirements, and what is mandated versus discretionary. Ms. Cornejo explained that voters can opt out of getting paper guides. Questions were asked and feedback and recommendations were given by commissioners, including adding a table of contents, page numbers, and an explanation of what is and what is not in each guide.

8-D General Administration (video time 1:58)

Ms. Cornejo explained the two reimbursement agreements approved by the Board of Supervisors, and the approval process required by the supervisors.

9 Special Report from the ROV (video time 1:59:45)

Ms. Betty David presented the Registrar of Voters' outreach efforts to empower students to become future voters and civic leaders in the AC Youth Voice Leadership Program Plan, including becoming a student poll worker. Youth leaders are deputized to engage their peers at the schools and hold their own registration drives, and the ROV is working with teachers for an incentive program. The outreach team also partners with stakeholder groups and organizations.

Commissioners voiced their questions and comments during the presentation. Commissioner Lindsay suggested that the ROV send out a lesson plan to school government teachers.

10 Public Comment on Agenda or Non-agenda Items

No public comments were made.

11 Adjournment

The meeting ended at 6:38 p.m.