The Pima County Election Integrity Commission met in regular session on July 16, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the Herbert K. Abrams Building, 3rd Floor Conference Rooms 3108/3110 at 3950 S. Country Club Road, Tucson, Arizona.

ITEM 1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 2. ROLL CALL:


Also in Attendance: Pamela Franklin, Chief Deputy Pima County Recorder. Supervisor Steve Christy, Member of the Board of Supervisors, District 4. Beth Borozan, District 4. Kim Challender, District 1. David Higuera, District 2.

Absent: Ryan Maese.

ITEM 3. CALL TO PUBLIC

Supervisor Steve Christy (District 4) spoke regarding two topics. First was his objection to the adoption of Vote Centers in Pima County. He stated that Election Day voting outside of one’s residential neighborhood, outside of the review of neighborhood poll workers, (as would occur in a Voter Center environment) was an erosion of the integrity of the historic Election Day polling place. Secondly, he spoke in favor of expanding the Commission to include a representative from the Pima County Recorder and offered his services to facilitate that expansion.

There were no other public comments.

ITEM 4. INTRODUCTIONS

Each Commissioner introduced themselves and identified who had designated them as a Commission member.
ITEM 5. AGENDA ITEMS

5A. Comments from the Chair – Chair Bickel provided a brief history of the Commission, that the purpose of the commission is to provide advice to the Board of Supervisors and that the commission, and its members, are subject to the Open Meeting laws of the State of Arizona.

5B. Presentation by Michael Racy concerning new law(s) and the impact of the law(s) on Election Administration. – Mr. Racy, who serves as the lobbyist for Pima County at the AZ State Legislature, provided input regarding new election law that will affect election administration. Mr. Racy emphasized SB1485 that will remove voters from the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) if the voter fails to vote. Chair Bickel expressed his desire to know if failing to vote in municipal elections, not held concurrently with regular county elections, would be a factor in the removal of a voter from the PEVL. The gist of the discussion was that the law was in need of clarification regarding the effect of a PEVL voter not voting in a municipal election not held concurrently with a regular county election. Per the Chair, the subject (SB1485) is to be placed on a future agenda for further discussion. Commissioner Tellman asked Mr. Racy to elaborate on SB1819 that was a late arriving budget bill. Per Mr. Racy, the bill was not subject to discussion nor debate. Given the absence of discussion/debate, Mr. Racy was not able to elaborate on the bill. Tellman also inquired about a provision in the bill that provides that ballots must include some type of fraud prevention features. Director Nelson stated that within the bill, there is a provision that future ballots must incorporate a number of ballot fraud prevention features, such as watermarks, special inks, etc… Pima County will be reviewing the law and exploring how those ballot fraud prevention features can be implemented.

5C. Election of Officers – Per the Commission by-laws, the commission is to elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of each calendar year. Given the prolonged postponement of Commission meetings, due to the ongoing pandemic, the election of officers was conducted. The nominations for the position of Chair was opened. Commissioner Tellman nominated Brian Bickel – Benny White seconded the nomination. No other nominations for the position of Chair were received. The nominations were closed and Bickel was elected Chair by acclamation. The nominations for the position of Vice Chair was opened. Commissioner Tellman nominated Commissioner Benny White. Commissioner White stated that he declined to serve as vice Chair. Commissioner Tellman then nominated Commissioner Mike Coltrin – Levoy Hurley seconded the nomination. No other nominations for the position of Vice Chair were received. The nominations for the position for Vice Chair were closed and Commissioner Coltrin was elected Vice Chair by acclamation.

5D. SB1485 – Commissioner Bickel expressed his concern that the term “election cycle”, as expressed in the bill may or may not apply to municipal elections not held concurrently with a regular county election. Commissioner Tellman agrees that the wording, regarding election cycles is “muddy” and needs uniform definition for all jurisdictions in the State. Chief Deputy Recorder Pamela Franklin noted that all County Recorders and the Secretary of State are currently drafting a procedure for the State to utilize in future elections regarding this bill. Commissioner White asked the Chair to include this item for a future agenda and for Commissioners to draft possible wording to make clearer how counties are to implement the law. The Chair concurred.
5E. Commissioner Whites study of the 2020 general election – Per Commissioner White, he performed a study of the cast vote records of the 2020 general election from counties within the State of Arizona. A portion of that study focused on approximately 130 precincts (42 precincts from Pima and 91 precincts from Maricopa) here Republican voters predominated. In those precincts, the data reflected that “down ballot” Republican candidates prevailed but Trump lost. This trend (down ballot Republican candidates prevailing – but Trump losing) occurred in numerous precincts throughout Pima and Maricopa regardless of the party affiliation of the voters in those precincts. Commissioner White stated that his study is nearly final and that he would release it to the public soon.

5F. Establishment of election precincts for 2022 – Director Nelson informed the Commission that the Board of Supervisors are tasked, by law (ARS 16-411), to establish election precincts for 2022 by no later than October 1, 2021. Director Nelson stated that in advance of the August Commission meeting he would be providing the details of the Election Department’s proposed reduction in the number of precincts, which were last established in 2019. That detailed proposal would also be shared with the Pima County political parties, civic organizations, tribal governments and advocates for the disabled to solicit their comments/input. Chair Bickel asked what criteria would be used to determine if an existing precinct line needed alteration. Director Nelson stated that the law does not direct that a precinct contain no more than “X” number of registered voters. The law only directs that the Board of Supervisors establish a “convenient” number of precincts. For administrative purposes, the Election Department utilizes the number of voters that can be served efficiently during the thirteen hours that the polls are open on Election Day. It was also mentioned that the precinct lines, established by the Board by no later than October 1, would need to be amended at a later date once the process of Statewide redistricting was completed.

5G. Establishment of Vote Centers for 2022 and beyond – Director Nelson stated that the Election Department and the County Recorder, are exploring the concept of Vote Centers for use in the 2022 election cycle. For those unfamiliar with the term - In a Vote Center environment, an eligible voter can attend any one of the multiple vote centers on Election Day to cast a ballot. In a non-Vote Center environment, a voter must go to a single specific location to cast their vote on Election Day. - Commissioners White and Tellman voiced their observations relating to the use of Vote Centers in 2020 in Maricopa County. Commissioner White recalled problems with ballot on demand printers and paper stock weight used at Maricopa County Vote Centers. Commissioner Tellman recollected long lines at Maricopa Vote Centers on Election Day. Commissioner Tellman also expressed her concern that future Pima County Vote Centers might not be convenient for voters who may not have reliable transportation to Election Day Vote Centers.

ITEM 6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – Next meeting August 20

- SB1485 - clarify the process for removing a voter from the Early Voting List
- Define criteria used in establishing election precinct lines
- Possible formal inclusion of the County Recorder into the EIC
- Proposed changes to the State Election Procedures Manual and ability for the public and the EIC to provide input to the AZ Secretary of State
ITEM 7. NEXT MEETING DATE

August 20, 2021

ITEM 8. ADJOURNMENT