

BOARD OF ELECTIONS
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

42 Broadway - 6th floor
Commissioners' Hearing Room

New York, NY 10004

May 11, 2021

1:30 p.m. - 2:27 p.m.

May 11, 2021

PRESENT:

President Frederic Umane
Secretary Miguelina Camilo
Commissioner Jose Araujo
Commissioner Michael Michel
Commissioner Gino Marmorato
Commissioner Simon Shamoun
Commissioner Rodney L. Pepe-Souvenir
Commissioner Patricia Ann Taylor
Commissioner Tiffany Townsend
Commissioner John Wm. Zaccone

Dawn Sandow, Deputy Executive Director
Pamela Perkins, Administrative Manager
Georgea Kontzamanis, Operations Manager
Kenneth Moltner, Counsel to the Commissioners
Steven Denkberg, Counsel to the Commissioners
Hemalee Patel, General Counsel
Raphael Savino, Deputy General Counsel
Valerie Diaz, Communications Director

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2 (The meeting commenced at 1:31 p.m.)

3 MS. DAWN SANDOW: Good afternoon, today
4 is Tuesday, May 11, 2021 and this is the
5 commissioners' meeting of the Board of Elections
6 in the city of New York. My name is Dawn Sandow
7 and I am the deputy executive director of the
8 Board of Elections. I will begin today's meeting
9 with the commissioners' roll call. President
10 Umane?

11 PRESIDENT FREDERIC UMANE: Present.

12 MS. SANDOW: Secretary Camilo?

13 SECRETARY MIGUELINA CAMILO: Present.

14 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Araujo?

15 COMMISSIONER JOSE ARAUJO: Present, and
16 good afternoon, everyone.

17 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Marmorato?

18 COMMISSIONER GINO MARMORATO: Good
19 afternoon, present.

20 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Michel?

21 COMMISSIONER MICHAEL MICHEL: Good
22 afternoon, present.

23 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Pepe-Souvenir?

24 COMMISSIONER RODNEY L. PEPE-SOUVENIR:

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2 Good afternoon everyone, present.

3 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Shamoun?

4 COMMISSIONER SIMON SHAMOUN: Present,
5 thank you.

6 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Taylor?

7 COMMISSIONER PATRICIA ANNE TAYLOR:
8 Present, good afternoon.

9 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Townsend?

10 COMMISSIONER TIFFANY TOWNSEND: Good
11 afternoon, present.

12 MS. SANDOW: Commissioner Zaccone?

13 COMMISSIONER JOHN WM. ZACCONE: Good
14 afternoon, everyone, present.

15 MS. SANDOW: Also joining us today from
16 executive management is Pamela Perkins,
17 administrative manager, Georgea Kontazmanis,
18 director of operations. Ken Moltner and Steven
19 Denkberg, counsel to the commissioners have
20 joined us, as well as counsel Hemalee Patel,
21 general counsel, deputy general counsel Raphael
22 Savino. Before we begin with today's agenda, is
23 there a need to add legal or personnel to the
24 calendar?

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2 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Yes, personnel.

3 COMMISSIONER ZACCONE: Personnel matter.

4 MS. SANDOW: Let us begin today's
5 agenda. Item one on the agenda, ratification of
6 the early voting sites for the June primary.
7 Commissioners, following up to the increase of
8 early voting hours approved by this board last
9 week, the most amount of early voting hours in
10 the state, I am pleased to present today, for the
11 full board ratification, the early voting sites
12 approved on Friday by borough commissioners, a
13 total of 104 sites, 21 sites in Manhattan, 22 in
14 the Bronx, 32 in Brooklyn, 19 in Queens and 10 in
15 Staten Island. This is an increase of 16 sites
16 across the city from the last election. The sites
17 have been published to our website and poll site
18 locator is live with updated information. As the
19 election day ballots are finished this week, the
20 sample ballots will be loaded to the poll site
21 locator as well.

22 Before I pass off item two on the agenda
23 to our communications team, I would like to
24 provide two quick updates for the full board.

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2 Ranked-choice voting, our operations team, as you
3 know, is in constant communication with the state
4 board. As of this morning, the state board has
5 received the preliminary testing reports from
6 their testing partners. They are working with the
7 RCV Resource Center for some additional
8 information required in the report, as well as
9 with our internal team to finalize any
10 potentially needed procedures for incorporating
11 use of the software.

12 Again, we are assured that we are going
13 at a good pace, and we're almost at the end. We
14 still see no issues thus far with the state board
15 taking action at their May meeting, which has
16 been set for May 25th.

17 Absentee ballots, I'm pleased to report
18 that we met the Friday, May 7th deadline and
19 mailed out all military and UOCAVA ballots, as
20 well as successfully transferring the absentee
21 ballots to the state board for uploading into
22 their NYS ballot system. As you know, the state
23 board handled through their New York State ballot
24 system all federal, military and UOCAVA ballots

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2 where a voter has indicated their preference is
3 to receive their ballot via email.

4 Unfortunately, the state board
5 mistakenly sent emails to a little over 2,500
6 federal voters statewide that are not eligible to
7 vote in this election. The state board did send
8 out a correction email to all those affected
9 voters before the end of the day explaining their
10 mistake. Over 60 percent of those voters affected
11 were New York City voters, specifically 61 in the
12 Bronx, 429 in Queens, 833 in Manhattan, 274 in
13 Queens. I'm sorry, 429 were in Kings, 833 in
14 Manhattan, 274 in Queens and 34 in Richmond, for
15 a total of 1,631 New York City voters.

16 Our borough offices have all been
17 notified and are handling any voter concerns. In
18 addition, all permanent and temporary absentee
19 ballot applications received up to and including
20 Wednesday, May 5th. They've all been processed
21 and mailed as of yesterday, May 10th, for a total
22 of 73,615 ballots across the five boroughs.

23 COMMISSIONER ZACCONE: Ms. Sandow?

24 MS. SANDOW: Since that date, we have

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2 received an additional 4,105 absentee ballot
3 requests that have been processed and sent to the
4 vendor as of last night to be mailed. We will
5 continue to send processed applications to the
6 vendor on a daily basis every day except for
7 Saturdays. The tracker is in the process of being
8 updated and all current data will be available on
9 the tracker by tomorrow. Now, for item two on the
10 agenda, I turn it over to Valerie Diaz, our
11 communications --

12 PRESIDENT UMANE: [unintelligible]
13 [00:06:55] to that, I think we should ratify by
14 vote the list if that's okay. And I would move we
15 adopt the list as generated on Friday of the
16 early voting sites. Is there a second?

17 COMMISSIONER ZACCONE: Second.

18 PRESIDENT UMANE: All in favor?

19 MULTIPLE: Aye.

20 PRESIDENT UMANE: All opposed? All
21 abstentions? So, we've now ratified it and made
22 it official. Now, Ms. Sandow, we should go to the
23 second item.

24 MS. SANDOW: Item two on the agenda, I'm

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2 going to turn it over to Valerie Diaz, our
3 communications director.

4 MS. VALERIE DIAZ: Good afternoon,
5 commissioners. I wanted to provide the board with
6 a campaign concept overview of our public
7 education campaign for rank choice voting and
8 overall awareness of early voting. Ultimately,
9 our objective was to prepare New York City voters
10 for the upcoming primary election with an
11 education on availability of ranked-choice voting
12 for select offices.

13 What we did was we took, we evolved the
14 campaign that we used for the specials that
15 occurred using ranked-choice voting and using the
16 feedback that we received, we developed not only
17 a recognizable visual identity that supports our
18 RCV, but we also simplified and shortened the
19 copy whenever possible.

20 We are focusing on introducing ranked-
21 choice voting as new, which is something that was
22 really recommended to us in consultation with the
23 Center for Civic Design and Rank the Vote.
24 Antonio is going to share his screen with the

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2 board.

3 So this basically is essentially the
4 same [unintelligible] [00:08:53] graphic that
5 we'll be using throughout our campaign on ranked-
6 choice voting, using the filled in ovals as a way
7 to just continually using the ovals, the multiple
8 ovals throughout our campaign for ranked-choice
9 voting.

10 This is one of our main graphics that we
11 have been sharing already on social media as well
12 as digital and print. Our comprehensive public
13 education campaign includes citywide community
14 based local newspapers and required language
15 publication. We're also of course on all of the
16 messaging that we have. We are amplifying it on
17 social media. As you will see, we are introducing
18 ranked-choice voting as new, highlighting the
19 office that voters can use ranked-choice voting
20 for. It includes some instructional information.
21 We use the space to also reiterate to them the
22 dates of early voting and the election date, and
23 always pushing them to our website where they can
24 find frequently asked questions as well as the

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2 video which we'll touch upon later.

3 This, what you see here is actually a
4 palm card. Now, throughout the special elections
5 that occurred in the Bronx and Queens, we did
6 pilot this palm card to gauge effectiveness. We
7 found that it was useful not only to the voter,
8 but also to the poll worker. So again, using our
9 consistent branding, providing some three steps
10 on marking their ballot and also using the space,
11 this was something that was very important that
12 came out of the public education, commissioners
13 public education campaign, was to leverage our
14 space to make sure we educate voters on the
15 possibility for some voters, of the two-sheet
16 ballot. So again, using our space as effectively
17 as possible, this one will also have the dates
18 and the hours of early voting since it will be at
19 poll sites available for voters that they can
20 take as a palm card and take it back home if
21 they need to share it with family or friends.

22 This is again, this is very similar,
23 using our, leveraging that same design, and this
24 is actually a mockup of what will be at all early

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2 voting and election day poll sites. This is a
3 five foot poster. So, essentially the palm card
4 in a large format where it will be placed
5 strategically in the poll site for most
6 visibility.

7 And I would be remiss if I didn't say
8 that this will all be in the covered languages
9 according to the borough requirements.

10 This is just some examples of the Tweets
11 that we have been sharing. We have been getting a
12 good amount of traffic and activity and
13 engagement throughout working with some of our
14 partners in government and community based
15 organizations that have been assisting us in
16 amplifying our messaging.

17 Again, a few more examples of some of
18 the social media ads that we will be placing in
19 digital as well, playing with the colors, but
20 keeping that consistent look. Again, the ovals as
21 you'll see the placement of, in the left hand one
22 with the teal color, you'll see that was an
23 intentional design to subliminally give that
24 additional public education on this marking the

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2 ballot, of the ranking.

3 Again, another social media, keeping it
4 very simple, always pushing them to our website.
5 More examples of our social messaging that we
6 have tested and has already been resonating with
7 voters. Now this is the campaign for, again,
8 keeping the branding and the look consistent, we
9 simultaneously are not only looking to educate
10 voters on obviously the ranked-choice voting, but
11 also to let them know the dates of the upcoming
12 elections.

13 Our next push will be towards early
14 voting education, the idea, the campaign theme is
15 really letting voters know that they can vote at
16 a time that's convenient to them. So thankfully,
17 to the commissioner's commitment to adding an
18 additional ten hours, voters can really now vote
19 at a time that works for them. So using this same
20 campaign concept, we have some digital and print
21 examples here for you.

22 That's an example of a Twitter ad, the
23 display ad, rather. And we brought back the
24 pigeon that has [unintelligible] [00:14:05]

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2 people love it on social media. So again, just
3 really trying to make it engaging, clean and to
4 the point, and always pushing to our website as a
5 source for all of the information where voters
6 can not only find information about ranked-choice
7 voting, they can apply for an absentee ballot,
8 track their absentee ballot, find out the hours
9 of early voting and their early voting site, as
10 well as view a sample ballot.

11 So I just wanted to present this to the
12 board. But we also wanted to show the PSA. I'm
13 not sure if everyone had an opportunity to see
14 the PSA, the public service announcement that we
15 have shared on our social media channels, again
16 has really, really resonated well. Antonio, if
17 you could go to the page.

18 I want to begin by saying that not only
19 do we have this video in English, but we have
20 translated it into all of our designated
21 languages, Spanish, Chinese, both Cantonese and
22 Mandarin, Korean, Bengali, Hindi and Punjabi. So
23 we've essentially met all of our designation
24 obligations. So Antonio, if you could just share

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2 the English version.

3 MS. SANDOW: Antonio --

4 MS. DIAZ: Antonio, there's no sound.

5 FEMALE: Mayor, public advocate,
6 comptroller, borough president and city council.
7 Ranked-choice voting gives New York voters more
8 choice than ever before. Rather than choosing
9 just one candidate, now you have the option to
10 rank up to five of your favorite candidates.
11 Here's how it works. Mark your ballot by order of
12 preference, ranking as many or as few candidates
13 as you like. In the first column, fill in the
14 oval next to your first choice candidate, your
15 second choice in the second column, followed by
16 your third, fourth and fifth choice.

17 At the close of election day, all first
18 choice votes are counted. The candidate to
19 receive over 50 percent of votes wins. If no
20 candidate receives over 50 percent of the first
21 choice votes, the race moves to round two. The
22 person with the least number of votes is
23 eliminated. If your first choice candidate does
24 not win, and they're eliminated, we then count

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2 your second choice vote and add it to the
3 candidate's total. This process continues until
4 we have a winner. Go to Vote.NYC to learn more
5 about New York City ranked-choice voting and
6 upcoming elections.

7 MS. DIAZ: Now, this is a larger PSA. We
8 also have learned that really based on the
9 feedback from the voters and some civic
10 organizations that people really like PSAs. They
11 really have resonated with our audience, so we
12 are now working on a PSA in terms of for
13 education on the two-sheet ballot. Once we have
14 that, I will share that as well.

15 And essentially that's my presentation.
16 I wanted to recap in terms of the board's
17 comprehensive public education campaign for
18 ranked-choice voting. We are doing digital,
19 print, citywide, community based local and
20 required language publications with a social
21 media application. We are placing some out of
22 home advertisements in all citywide LinkNYC
23 kiosks and we will have palm cards at each of the
24 early voting and election day sites for voters,

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2 as we as the popup posters. I wanted to thank the
3 commissioners for their leadership and
4 dedication. Although the board is not tasked with
5 the public education campaign for ranked choice
6 voting, it is something that is very important to
7 everyone at the board. And I think that the
8 voters really are educated, thanks to our efforts
9 when they walk into the polls on election day.

10 COMMISSIONER PEPE-SOUVENIR: Thank you
11 so much, Valerie. This is really, really great.
12 And I just love the PSA, it's amazing. I think
13 that's really great. I'm just curious and I think
14 I may have asked this question before. As far as
15 the palm cards, I know they're going to be
16 available at the early voting sites, but is there
17 any means of getting some of this information to
18 like maybe some of the community boards
19 beforehand? I'm concerned about the elderly
20 particularly, who does not have access to
21 computers, or don't even know how to use their
22 computers to get information and if there's some
23 way that they could get information beforehand to
24 prepare them.

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2 MS. DIAZ: That's a great question,
3 commissioner. We will have them at early voting
4 sites, but as well at all election day sites. And
5 once we have finalized the entire, all of the
6 campaign concepts, we will be putting a digital
7 toolkit on our website that will have the
8 documents available and we will encourage
9 community based organizations, senior centers and
10 the like to print them and provide them and have
11 them available for their constituency.

12 COMMISSIONER PEPE-SOUVENIR: Thank you
13 so much, I really appreciate it. Good job.

14 MS. SANDOW: Val, I just wanted to say,
15 thank you again for presenting this. I think it's
16 a really comprehensive campaign that you pulled
17 together, and as you, you know, had said, it's,
18 this is, the campaign I think, one, meets voters
19 where they are in terms of giving them the
20 information that they need. And I think also
21 helps support that the campaign finance board is
22 tasked with doing in terms of their
23 responsibility to educate voters. But I think
24 that this is, you know, aligns well with our

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2 brand and I think the voter outreach that we
3 continue to do across digital, across social,
4 etc., just keeps getting better with each
5 successive cycle and we should just continue to
6 build on this, so thank you.

7 MS. DIAZ: Thank you.

8 SECRETARY CAMILO: And I just want to
9 add, because I know personally from my borough
10 office, this materials have been made available
11 to our offices and just, we have in mind the
12 registration deadline coming up at the end of
13 this month, so I know our offices are working
14 each separately and jointly to deliver not only
15 registration materials, but the materials on RCV.
16 So, thank you Val, for facilitating that and with
17 executive management, our borough offices have
18 been receiving this information as it's been put
19 together, so thank you.

20 PRESIDENT UMANE: Have we coordinated it
21 at all with Campaign Finance on this, or is this
22 our, solely our --

23 MS. DIAZ: Yes, well this is our, the
24 board's public education campaign, but we have

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2 found that our efforts have been complimentary,
3 and we have been working with Campaign Finance
4 closely, not only in terms of them being aware of
5 our campaign concepts, but very important that we
6 keep the messaging consistent for both of us, for
7 the ease of use for the voter.

8 PRESIDENT UMANE: Anybody else have
9 anything on this? I think it looks pretty good,
10 generally. Thank you.

11 MS. DIAZ: Thank you, commissioners.

12 PRESIDENT UMANE: Is there anything else
13 for the agenda?

14 MS. SANDOW: No, this concludes the
15 agenda, President Umane. Would you like to set a
16 date for the next meeting before we go into
17 executive session?

18 PRESIDENT UMANE: Yeah, that's what I
19 was getting ready to do that. So I guess our next
20 meeting will be 1:30 on May 18th, next Tuesday at
21 1:30 and we look forward to seeing everybody from
22 the public there, and I guess I would move that
23 we go into executive session for personnel.

24 SECRETARY CAMILO: Second.

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PRESIDENT UMANE: All in favor?

MULTIPLE: Aye.

PRESIDENT UMANE: All opposed? All abstentions? Okay. So thank you all.

MS. SANDOW: Okay, commissioners, just give us a minute. Antonio, let us know when we're clear.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION]

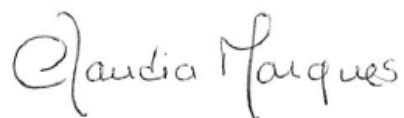
MS. SANDOW: This concludes the meeting for today. There is nothing to report out. Our next meeting is on May 18, 2021, and the governor's extension of the executive order 202.6, our next meeting will be done remotely. Thank you and everyone have a great afternoon.

(The meeting concluded at 2:27 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE OF ACCURACY

I, Claudia Marques, certify that the foregoing transcript of the Board of Elections in The City of New York on May 11, 2021 was prepared using the required transcription equipment and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Certified By



Date: November 30, 2021

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