



CITY COMMISSIONERS OFFICE

Testimony of the Office of the City Commissioners FY 2020 Operating Budget May 7, 2019

Good Afternoon President Clarke and Members of City Council. I am Deputy City Commissioner Nick Custodio. Joining me today are Deputy Commissioner Seth Bluestein, and Budget Officer Valarie Crawford-Keith. We are pleased to provide testimony on The Office of the City Commissioners' Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2020 General Fund budget totals \$ 12,216,911, a decrease of \$1,536,566 from Fiscal Year 2019 estimated obligation levels.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2020 General Fund budget includes:

- \$ 6,633,233 in Class 100, for employee compensation;
- \$ 5,011,061 in Class 200, for professional services contracts, election board payroll, and polling place rentals;
- \$ 462,772 in Class 300, for election materials and office supplies; and
- \$ 109,845 in Class 400, for computers, furniture, and equipment.

Thanks to your action last year we were able to increase the stipend for Election Board workers. This was the first pay raise that the board workers had received in at least 30 years. Members of our Election Boards frequently thank us and the Commissioners for the raise and we wanted to make sure to pass those thanks on to you all. We hope this goes a long way to improving our board worker retention rates. Election Board shortages are a national problem, but we are striving to fill every position on the Election Boards. To help accomplish this goal and to train the next generation of board workers, we launched our student poll worker pilot program "Involved at 17". We have 3 schools participating in the program and about 85 students who signed up. After they are trained, staff in our Election Board Unit will assign them to divisions to work. Student poll workers will also be eligible to receive an individual Governor's Civic Engagement Award, which are given out each spring.

Our employee demographics as of December 2018 are: 51 white, 43 African American, 3 Hispanic, 1 Asian, and 2 Other. The demographics of our recent hires are: 4 African American, and 2 white. Our department's OEO goal for M/W/DBE contracts is 30%. Our department's current level is 48%.

During Fiscal Year 2019, the Office of the City Commissioners oversaw the 2018 General Election and will oversee the 2019 Primary Election, which is coming up on May 21st. The 565,124 voters who cast ballots in the 2018 General Election represents a 46.4% increase in voter turnout from the comparable election cycle four years prior.

Efforts to modernize the department, increase efficiencies, and ensure that the election process is open to everyone, will continue to be at the forefront of our department's efforts for FY20. In FY19 we made a major step in modernization by working with the Office of Innovation and Technology and the Board of Ethics to create a new online campaign finance filing system which will allow candidates and committees to fulfil their filing requirements to both the Board of Elections and the Board of Ethics at the same time. Our goal was to have it up and running for the 2019 Primary Election and I am happy to say that we met that goal, launching it for the 2019 Cycle 1 reporting period. The cycle 2 reporting period closed yesterday, and reports are due this Friday. Committees and the public can find our Online Campaign filing system at Philadelphia campaign finance dot com. Also, in FY19 we started working with OIT to develop a GIS based system for inspecting and storing our polling place data. This exciting work will allow us to replace the current paper-based system for inspecting polling places. It will link to the Polling Place App on our website to more quickly provide voters with updates to polling place changes.

The biggest modernization effort this fiscal year was the procurement of a new voting system. Our department was forced into a 2019 procurement timeline as opposed to our original 2021 timeline because the Department of State is requiring all 67 of Pennsylvania's counties to replace their current voting systems with new systems that have a voter-verifiable paper ballot. Philadelphia must have a new system in place in time for the 2020 Primary Election or risk voters using decertified equipment. The selected system provides all registered voters the ability to cast their voter-verified paper ballot on the same, secure equipment.

At the same time, we moved to replace our paper pollbooks with electronic pollbooks, a technology that many jurisdictions have used successfully for years. The electronic pollbooks will allow for faster and more efficient voter check-in at polling places and for voters to look up their correct polling place if they are in the wrong location.

We had been operating under a Notice to Proceed with both vendors since April 25th. Last Thursday, the Procurement Department issued an Intent to Contract to both vendors. We are on track to implement the new system in the 2019 General Election which will allow voters and Election Board workers a chance to adapt to the change before they cast their ballots for President in 2020.

So that voters are familiar with the new voting system and know how to vote successfully in the November 2019 General Election, we are planning an aggressive outreach effort to educate voters in communities across Philadelphia. Our goal is to conduct hundreds of demos, including one in each council district that will be conducted by the vendors' staff. We sent a letter to each District Councilmember and our office will be following up in the next month to get them scheduled. The city also plans a robust training program for our Election Board workers who will serve voters on Election Day. Beginning this summer, we will be holding additional hands-on training for the Election Board workers that will be taught by employees of the vendors. Election Board workers will then receive their normal training in the fall. In June, we will be launching a new section of our website that will have videos and information on the new voting system and the electronic pollbook. We look forward to partnering with you this summer and fall in helping Philadelphians transition to the new voting system.

We appreciate this opportunity to present our testimony and are happy to answer any questions you have at this time.