Report of the Elections Committee on the Ocean Pines Association 2022 Board of Directors 2022 Election and Referendum

September 7, 2022

Submitted by

Carol Ludwig, Chairperson

Joe Peloso, Member

Jeannie Pennington, Member

Mary Anne Whitcomb, Member

Bob Windsor, Member

Overview

The 2022 Referendum was completed on May 19, 2022 in accordance with the Ocean Pines Association By-Laws and Resolution M-06 and a report was submitted to the Board in May 2022. (Attachment 1)

The 2022 Ocean Pines Association (OPA) Directors election was completed in accordance with the By-Laws and Resolution M-06 Elections and Referendums. (Attachment 2)

Activities

The committee held 10 scheduled meetings/work sessions from February 2022 through September 2022. Actions included:

   *Creation of a timeline for the election process and conduct of monthly meetings with
      committee staff, Board Liaison and OPA staff.
   *Submission of Meeting agendas and minutes to OPA who posted, as appropriate on
      the OPA website.
   *Participation by EC Chair in Academy Video about Elections Committee
   * Participation by EC Chair in Executive Council Meeting
   *Development of a detailed proposal on electronic voting and
      presented it to the Board in February 2022 for consideration for 2022 Board
      Elections. At that time the Board declined using electronic voting for this election
      and considered using it for the Short-Term Rental vote. Another request along with
      revisions to M06 for adjustments to electronic voting and it was submitted in May,
      approved in June.
      Vote HOA Now and Ace Printing were contracted for a hybrid balloting process
      (paper and electronic)
   *Completion of a Candidate draw for ballot position and workshop.
   *Completion of two candidate forums
   * Conducted Check in/registration for Hybrid Annual Meeting – processed in-person
      and online,

attained and verified a quorum. 29 members online, 71 in person.

Voting Results for 2022 Board Election:

Return percentage = 37%
7458 ballots mailed – representing 7723 eligible member votes
2028 ballots (including 18 Duplicates) were scanned/counted.
811 Votes were received online, representing 764 Members (includes owners of multiple lots)
17 Members requested a paper ballot per property – 8 voted online after explanation of weighting
42 ballots were declared invalid due to marks, writing, bad copying, wrong or no envelope,
5 Members requested an extra ballot due to household disagreements regarding choices-denied

For the first time in years, there were no late ballots. Last check was 9/1/22. We attribute this to late voters having access to online voting, many more members used the ballot box, and possible improvements by the postal service has improved. (Late ballots – 2021 referendum = 112; 2021 Elections = 290; 2022 Referendum = 89)
Between 8/1/22 and 8/10/22 we received 37 requests for online voting registration codes.

Election overview

Ballot Report
The vote tabulating system performed slowly due to the crashing of reports several times.
The new scanner had great speed. The finalization of tallies and review of questioned or unreadable ballots was completed in about 6 hours. Three hours were taken for opening and separating paper ballots from return envelopes.

Remedies:
Request for new calculation software with suggestions from IT
Follow M06 Resolution of Print/Mail Contractor opening and separating ballots from envelopes.

Support Provided by OPA Staff

The five members of the Election Committee could not complete the administration of the election without the assistance of OPA staff and we greatly appreciate their assistance. As part of the annual report, the committee prepared a list of support requirements. The support requirements are listed in Attachment 3.
Issues Encountered and Recommendations to Board of Directors:

Issue: The Elections Committee and Membership Manager had quite a few cases where ineligible members requested ballots/registration codes and were found ineligible.

Recommendation: The Election Committee encourages the Board to communicate to Association Members what constitutes voter eligibility and how to ensure their account is in good standing and contains the correct mailing information in advance of referendums and elections.

Issue: While 37% was a good <u>inaugural</u> total for online voting we hope to increase this amount as well as to increase total voting. We hope to increase the online voting as well as the overall participation in elections.

Recommendation: Contract an online provider that offers the additional feature for phone-in voting.To help with this effort, EC will also explore PR/Marketing tools to increase the knowledge regarding the ease and security of online voting (additional Academy video, present at Town Hall, etc.)and the success of the inaugural use in 2022.**Issue**: There were 17 requests from owners of multiple properties for duplicate ballots, eight of which voted online after the weighting process was explained. **Recommendation**:   If OPA continues to use paper ballots we will explore providing advance notification to owners of multiple properties that they can request additional ballot(s) for these properties and to inform them that electronic voting weights their votes by the number of properties owned.

Issue: There was some confusion among online participants at the hybrid annual meeting on how to register.

Recommendation: The Elections Committee encourages the Board to provide additional information for the online registration process for a Hybrid Annual Meeting. To be considered registered and allowed to enter the meeting, members MUST use their Ocean Pines Address to login, then show ID with owner name to be counted towards a quorum. In order to complete the process smoothly, a staff member needs to be dedicated to assisting the Elections Committee member in the process.

Issue: The Bylaws provide a very tight timeline for Board of Directors elections when the application date is extended to meet the minimum requirements for the number of candidates. We recommend that the extended date be within 30 days from the original deadline.

Recommendation: Adjustment in Timeline: At this time, the extended date is the third Friday in June and the need for an extension is identified by May 10. Five to six weeks is not necessary and puts undo stress on timelines.

Fiscal Performance
The 2022 election was accomplished at a cost within the approved budget of $25,000.
Members who voted online saved the Association$1,238 (reply postage is $1.52 each-2028 mailed ballots = $3,084) Vote HOA Now = $2911.00.

Election Committee Membership and Terms

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Name   Date Appointed -   Term Expires

Carol Ludwig February 6, 2020   1 February 5, 2023
Bob Windsor February 16, 2022   2 February 16, 2024 Resigned 8/22/22
Mary Whitcomb March 10, 2020   1 March 7, 2023
Jean Pennington November 20, 2021   1 November, 2024
Joe Peloso November 20,2021   1 November, 2024
Mark Heintz September 2022   Pending

BOARD LIAISON: Alternating through Josette Wheatly, Larry Perrone, Rick Farr

Attachment 1-Final 2022 Referendum Report

Question	YES		Question	NO
1	1485		1	446
2	1508		2	359
3	1521		3	343
4	1485		4	371
5	1454		5	392
6	1466		6	383
7	1466		7	389
8	1377		8	488
9	1444		9	409
10	1428		10	432
11	1344		11	525
12	1416		12	451
13	1442		13	416
14	1540		14	324
15	1457		15	402
16	1422		16	441
17	1471		17	382
18	1393		18	468
19	1509		19	367
20	1417		20	444
21	1415		21	443
22	1453		22	411
23	1449		23	401
24	1531		24	335
25	1505		25	346
26	1529		26	326
27	1497		27	366
28	1523		28	310

Total of Ballots Returned – 1905
Total Invalid   44
Total Late 1 – 5 days   39

May 2022 Referendum Final Report
Elections Committee

Total of Ballots Returned – 1905
Total Invalid   44
Total Late   (as of 6/2/22)   93
Duplicates   3

Those deemed invalid due to writing and notes
on ballots and those returned in invalid reply
envelopes or no envelope were not tabulated..
Late and duplicate votes were not counted.

Counters:
Committee Members:
Carol Ludwig
Jean Pennington
Bob Windsor
Joe Peloso

Volunteers:
Barb Dau
Mary Costibile
Faye Jeffries
Char Vanvick
Jack Ludwig

OCEAN PINES ASSOCIATION

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION RESULTS

CANDIDATE	VOTES
Paula Gray	1027
Amy Peck	1451
Stuart Lakernick	1802
Monica Rakowski	1603
Josette Wheatley	1303
Steve Jacobs	1867

Attested:____*Carol E. Ludwig*_____ August 11, 2022
            Chairperson OPA Election Committee

Attachment 3 Elections Support Required/Received by OPA Staff

Public Relations and Marketing: After the candidates are established by the Association Secretary, advertising of candidate forums and publication of election information is needed. **Job well done in 2022**

Senior Executive Secretary: Once the Association Secretary determines the list of eligible candidates, the Elections Committee (EC) will provide a letter and define the attachments to the letter that must be mailed expeditiously to all candidates. The letter contains several deadline items required from all candidates. It is requested that the letters be mailed to each candidate using overnight delivery with tracking enabled. Additionally, each candidate should be sent their letter via email. **Job well done in 2022**

Membership Office: The EC will establish the member voting eligibility deadline. After COB on the established deadline, EC needs to have two Excel files prepared:
>   * A mailing list of eligible voters and
>   * A mailing list of ineligible voters.

These files are used for ongoing processes including establishing the print and mail quantities of the outgoing posts to all members and calculation of the cost of the outgoing mail and the vetting of eligible voters by EC Committee members. The pace of the election is dependent on the speed with which these two files are prepared. (EC will provide duplicate ballots and mailing envelopes for staff to assist with questions/requests received.)

The Finance Department When the required postage is determined, the Finance Department will have to issue a check for the requisite postage. Postage costs (both outgoing and incoming (using Business Reply Permit #32 at the Berlin Post Office)) are not included in the election print and mail support contact.

IT Department: Ballot counting uses a dedicated laptop and scanner which is maintained and provided by the IT Department. For hybrid Annual Meetings, one staff member with a laptop and Microsoft Teams knowledge needs to be dedicated to assist the EC with online registrations.

Annual Meeting: EC is required to ascertain if a quorum has been met at the Annual Meeting. The EC members check property owners in and maintain a count of properties represented. To accomplish that task, EC requires:
>   ● A file (in Excel or printed) from the Membership Department which lists all property owners with identification of ineligible members.
>   ●(optional) A set of four tablets or laptops for the EC members to use to check owners into the Annual Meeting.
>   ● Electrical power for each of the laptops or tablets used.

For hybrid Annual Meetings, one staff member with a laptop and Microsoft Teams knowledge needs to be dedicated to assist the EC with online registrations.