



Minutes

A MEETING of the CENTRAL ELECTIONS AND SEARCH COMMITTEE was held on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

- Present: A. Bergeron, P.Eng., Chair
T. Chong, P.Eng., President
J. D. Adams, P.Eng., Past President [via teleconference]
A. Mukama, P.Eng. [via teleconference]
Z. Liu, P.Eng.
- Staff: R. Martin, Manager, Secretariat
G. McDonald, P.Eng., Registrar
C. Mucklestone, Director, Communications
D. Power, staff support
- Guests: A. Elliot, Chief Elections Officer
D. Brown, P.Eng., Chair, Regional Search and Election Committee (Eastern Region) [via teleconference]
C. Sadr, P.Eng., Chair, Regional Search and Election Committee (East Central Region)
- Regrets: S.W. Clark, LL.B. Chief Administrative Officer
and General Secretary
E. Kuczera, P.Eng., Chair, Regional Search and Election Committee (Western Region)
D. Preley, P.Eng., Chair, Regional Search and Election Committee (Northern Region)
W. Turnbull, P.Eng., Chair, Regional Search and Election Committee (West Central Region)

CALL TO ORDER

Notice having been given and a quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented with the addition of an email from Councillor Colucci dated March 22, 2016 regarding Election recommendations.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 21, 2016 MEETING

Moved by Mr. Liu, seconded by Past President Adams:

That the January 21, 2016 minutes of the Central Elections and Search Committee be approved as amended.

CARRIED

The committee reviewed Appendix A – Issues from the January 2016 CESC meeting that was included in the agenda package. Further to the first item in which the committee requested a tally of candidate numbers for the last three Council elections Ms. Bergeron asked that the following information be added:

- Zero women ran in the 2016 election

- One woman ran in the 2015 election
- Two women ran in the 2014 election

REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR COUNCIL ELECTION

Councillor Sadr advised that he heard from a number of members about their lack of awareness about electronic voting only. Many members were waiting for their package in the mail. When he advised members to look for the February 22, 2016 email some indicated that this email had gone to the junk mail inbox. Informing members on a regular basis is very important. Ms. Mucklestone advised that the voting procedures were published in the November/December edition of *Engineering Dimensions*, which the majority of members would have received as the digital edition. Ms. Mucklestone also noted that six of the eight eblasts of candidate messages and election reminders mentioned the electronic voting method, when PIN and ID numbers were emailed to voters, and where to get PIN and ID numbers if voters could not locate them.

Past President Adams felt that members were better informed in the past when candidate bios were sent along with the paper ballots.

Registrar McDonald stated that members could link directly to candidate material from the voting page. He further noted that PEO staff went to great lengths investigating member claims that they did not receive the email with the voting information and in virtually every case the email had, in fact, been delivered. PEO's official elections agent will be asked if it is possible to send out a weekly reminder to voters with the pertinent information. Once a member votes they would not receive further reminders. Mr. Martin confirmed that Everyone Counts has confirmed that this is possible.

Councillor Sadr suggested that the PEO home page have a message to members to watch for the email with the voting information. He also suggested greater visibility in *Engineering Dimensions* prior to the beginning of elections as well as one or two email communications, via eBlasts, prior to the election to let members know that they should expect an email rather than a hard copy of the election package.

Ms. Bergeron advised that all members received a Robocall from her on the first day of voting (January 23, 2016) informing them that they should be expecting an email with voting information and that this should be measured for success. Mr. Martin advised that this is in the Issues Report. It was noted that the Robocall came up as a "1 800" number which some members may have thought was a telemarketer. Mr. Martin replied that a "1 800" toll free number was chosen for the benefit of out of town members. Registrar McDonald asked about a caller ID that says "PEO" so that members will know who the call is from and would therefore be likely to answer the call.

Action: Mr. Martin will ask the provider if they can program a Robocall with a caller ID that says “PEO”.

Ms. Bergeron suggested an informal poll of Chapter members by the RESC Chairs regarding their thoughts on the Robocall, i.e. did they receive the Robocall, did they think it was a good idea, etc.

Action: RESC Chairs will conduct an informal poll of Chapter members on their opinion of the Robocall to members.

In response to a query regarding the number of voters who opted to vote by phone Mr. Martin advised that it was appropriately 200.

Ms. Mucklestone advised that there were eight election-related eblasts (six of which included links to the webcast and reminding people to obtain their voter ID information and associated links for that); 20 Tweets on PEO’s Twitter account; there are two sites on LinkedIn (a group page (with three posts) and a company page (with five posts)); there were 16 posts on Facebook during the election period. The election results were also posted to each of the social media accounts. There were election banners in rotation on the PEO website during the entire election period with links to the PEOvote election site, with three or four of the five available spots devoted to the elections. A link to the PEOvote site was also featured in the homepage Latest Updates box during the entire election period.

Registrar McDonald suggested that in future an elections banner on the cover of Engineering Dimensions for the January/February edition be considered in order to remind members that it is election time.

Ms. Bergeron suggested the subject line for the initial election email to members be very specific to the election, i.e. “VOTE NOW”.

Action: The subject line for the initial email regarding the election should specifically indicate that the email relates to PEO elections. Additional information on the subject line could mention something about the Pin and ID number. This will be included in the Issues Report.

Ms. Bergeron suggested a review of the Ipsos Reid survey to determine if the quality of candidate platforms were a reason members did not vote.

Action: Mr. Martin will review the Ipsos Reid survey regarding reasons that members did not vote.

Councillor Sadr suggested that “Elections” be placed on the agenda

for the fall Regional Congress meetings so that the Chapter Chairs and Vice-Chairs can remind members that voting is electronic only. He also suggested this be on the CLC agenda in November to confirm same with the delegates.

NEW ELECTRONIC PACKAGE FEEDBACK

Registrar McDonald stated that having the appropriate email addresses of members is very important. Although it is the responsibility of each and every member to ensure that their contact information is up to date it would be helpful to have a system that requires members to go into the portal to confirm their email address. Ms. Bergeron noted that PEO has a 30 day requirement for members to update their contact information, etc.

ELECTION RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCILLOR COLUCCI

Ms. Bergeron read the email from President-elect candidate Councillor Colucci dated March 22, 2016 in which he noted the following concerns:

1. The lack of interest in the live broadcast of the election debates (both live and archived) which is a waste of members' money.
2. Inconsistent formatting of the email broadcasts and web postings (his was smaller).
3. Feedback from members unaware that voting was fully electronic.

Ms. Mucklestone advised that Communications does not format material submitted by candidates, as per the election publicity procedures approved by Council. The picture that was published on the candidates section of the election website was the same photo Councillor Colucci embedded in his half-page submission for Engineering Dimensions. He did not provide a separate photo file, although candidates are asked not to embed photos in their Word submissions. The photo was, in fact, no smaller than the other candidates, but was taken from farther away and distorted to fit into the Engineering Dimensions submission, making it appear smaller. Councillor Colucci did provide another photo in his 1000-word submission for the PEO website, which was switched with the other photo on the candidate landing page at Councillor Colucci's request. As for the eblast font size issue, Ms. Mucklestone noted that research revealed that it had to do with the email application of those receiving the eblast. After the issue surfaced, trials were conducted with four different email programs, the font issue appearing in relation to two of the four programs. It was also discovered that the issue can be avoided if all formatting is stripped from candidates' submitted text before the text is dropped into the PEO email template, after which the formatting can be reapplied as per the candidates' submissions. This is a time-consuming process for staff.

Councillor Sadr noted that some of the candidate profiles in *Engineering Dimensions* had borders while others did not. He suggested that all candidates submit their material with borders and that the font size for published material be standardized. Ms. Mucklestone replied that the approved election publicity procedures specify that candidates are to have complete control of the look and content of their submissions, so long as their submission fits within the specified half page, and are silent on whether the submission must have a border. She said the publicity procedures for the 2017 elections can be rewritten to specify a border and the allowable fonts for eblast messages, for the committee's approval and recommendation to Council.

Action: Ms. Mucklestone will send a response to Councillor Colucci regarding item two in his email and Ms. Bergeron will respond to him regarding his item three based on discussion at the March 23, 2016 CESC meeting.

President Chong advised that he had suggested a reminder email be sent out to all members based on a discussion he had with Mr. Allen, Engineers Canada, who had indicated that Engineers Nova Scotia, with the highest voter turnout in Canada, sends weekly reminders to its members. President Chong noted that when PEO sent out a reminder email the voting participation rate did increase. Registrar McDonald noted that while voter participation did increase it is difficult to determine for certain whether or not the reminder that was sent was the reason for increased voter participation. This is the first year that information regarding "real time" tracking of the vote was available so voting patterns have not yet been established.

REVIEW OF GET OUT THE VOTE EFFORTS

Past President suggested that the candidate meetings would be much more effective if candidates did not share their platforms until the actual candidate meetings. A. Bergeron advised that typically in elections candidates do have published access to the election platforms of the other candidates but that this would be added to the Issues Report.

Mr. Martin confirmed that research concerning voting strategies for other organizations would be available for the next CESC meeting.

Past President Adams noted that the accessibility of candidate information on the website should be as user friendly as possible. Ms. Bergeron asked that a snapshot of the email that was sent to members on February 2, 2016 be provided at the next meeting so that members can discuss improvements in accessing candidate information.

Action: A snapshot of the email that was sent to members on February 2, 2016 advising how to access candidate voting

information (ID and PIN numbers) will be provided at the next meeting.

FINAL VOTER TURNOUT REVIEW

Ms. Bergeron provided the following voting stats:

	Eligible Voters	Total Votes Cast	Vote Percentage
2015	78,504	8,995	11.46%
2014	77,243	9,493	12.29%
2013	75,979	6,534	8.60%
2012	74,905	11,585	15.47%
2011	73,927	11,576	15.66%
2010	72,880	10,659	14.63%

Registrar McDonald stated that reviewing the best practices used by other engineering associations would be helpful. Councillor Brown commented on the possible link of voter participation to CPD and that he would like to see what organizations have mandatory CPD and how this might have impacted participation. Voter participation tends to increase when members are unhappy about something.

Councillor Sadr advised that some members he has spoken to have suggested incentives such as a reduction in membership fees would encourage greater voter participation.

Action: Research best practices used by other engineering associations to encourage voter turnout.

CANDIDATE SURVEY RESULTS

Seven candidates completed the survey, copies of which were included in the agenda package. There were a number of candidates who questioned the cost of the candidates meetings vs. the number of viewers.

Action: Ms. Mucklestone will provide number of hits for the candidate webcast views (both live and post) to the committee for the next meeting.

Some candidates felt that sending out three candidate eBlasts was unnecessary.

Action: Mr. Martin will provide the view rates for the three candidate eBlasts that were sent.

The requirement to obtain 15 signatures was noted as a barrier to some. This has been included in the Issues Report.

Mr. Martin advised that to date only four expense forms have been submitted by candidates. One candidate has requested that the reimbursement amount for campaigning expenses be increased

from \$1,000 to \$2,000. This item has been included in the Issues Report.

Ms. Bergeron noted that several candidates thanked the Central Elections and Search Committee for the opportunity to provide feedback.

ELECTION RESULT DISPUTES

Ms. Bergeron advised that there were four candidates who were not satisfied with the election process. Emails regarding issues identified by some of the candidates regarding this were included in the meeting package. She advised that she did have a face to face discussion with one of the candidates on this matter. Ms. Bergeron indicated that a teleconference meeting will be scheduled with Mr. Saghezchi along with herself, Mr. Martin and Ms. Elliot (CEO) regarding his concerns.

Ms. Elliot noted that there seems to be a mistrust of the voting system itself. Some candidates are looking at ways to verify the election results. She stated that the Returning Officers met electronically with Everyone Counts. Voting results are entirely encrypted. The Returning Officers being thoroughly satisfied with the answers provided to them by Everyone Counts signed off on the official election results. As Chief Elections Officer Ms. Elliot stated that the process was very thorough and that all the criteria had been met. Everyone Counts follows a very rigid auditing process and has some very high profile clients. Ms. Bergeron noted that the March 11, 2016 email sent to some of the candidates explaining the election process was excellent.

Ms. Elliot briefly discussed the request from one of the candidates that the voting results by each Chapter be made available. Registrar McDonald advised that while this data is not available for the 2016 election since it was not part of the contract but that this request can be added as part of the contract going forward if Council provides this direction.

Ms. Bergeron pointed out that some people believe that PEO has access to the voting data in-house but this is not the case. The entire voting process was managed entirely by Everyone Counts, the Chief Elections Agent.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR THE ISSUES REPORT

Acclamations, particularly from the north, continue to be an issue. Ms. Bergeron noted that the 2016 election is the first time that the RESC Chairs have been involved. Perhaps the RCC could take this on as a special project.

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Martin will send out a doodle poll to determine the best date for the next meeting which will be to discuss the Issues Report. Potential dates are April 25, 26, or 27, 2016.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded.

These minutes consist of eight pages.

A. Bergeron, P.Eng., Chair

G. McDonald, P.Eng., Registrar