



# Wisconsin Elections Commission

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## Wisconsin Elections Commission

Special Teleconference Meeting

Board Room

Madison, Wisconsin

9:00 a.m. August 13, 2019

### Open Session Minutes

Present: Commissioner Dean Knudson, Commissioner Marge Bostelmann, Commissioner Julie Glancey, Commissioner Ann Jacobs, Commissioner Jodi Jensen and Commissioner Mark Thomsen

Staff present: Meagan Wolfe, Richard Rydecki, Michael Haas, Sharrie Hauge, Reid Magney, Nathan Judnic, and Tony Bridges

#### **A. Call to Order**

Commission Chair Dean Knudson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and called the roll. All Commissioners were present. He welcomed new Commissioner Marge Bostelmann.

#### **B. Administrator's Report of Appropriate Meeting Notice**

Administrator Meagan Wolfe informed the Commissioners that proper notice was given for the meeting.

#### **C. Election Security Update**

Administrator Wolfe said the staff would be presenting two items that are part of Commission's comprehensive election security plan, and that more information about the plan would be coming at the September 24, 2019 meeting.

##### **I. Managed Hardware Proposal**

Security Lead Tony Bridges gave a presentation based on a memorandum starting on page 2 of the August 13 Commission meeting materials regarding an updated proposal for a managed hardware program. At its June 2019 meeting, commissioners asked staff for more information about the original proposal to purchase inexpensive notebook computers that could be provided to municipal clerks who have difficulty obtaining current, secure equipment.

Mr. Bridges discussed staff's efforts to determine what computer operating systems clerks are using to access the WisVote system. Five users out of approximately 2,000 tested have out-of-date operating systems, while just under 600 use Windows 7, which will reach the end of its free

*Wisconsin Elections Commissioners*

Dean Knudson, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Julie M. Glancey | Ann S. Jacobs | Jodi Jensen | Mark L. Thomsen

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Administrator  
Meagan Wolfe

support from Microsoft in January 2020. He discussed staff's request for authorization to purchase endpoint testing software that will give the Commission more detailed information about the security status of computers that local election officials use to access the system.

Commissioners and staff discussed the endpoint testing program and the numbers of users with different operating systems. They also discussed efforts to help local clerks obtain updated systems. Mr. Bridges discussed plans to assist users identified by endpoint testing come into compliance with security requirements.

Mr. Bridges discussed the staff's recommendation for a program to lend managed hardware devices to clerks who are unable to come into compliance. Commissioners expressed concerns about the proposed scope of the proposal, what devices are available from vendors, the cost of supporting loaner devices, whether the Commission could charge a rental fee for the device and whether a program would adequately address the needs of clerks.

Ms. Wolfe discussed whether staff can implement endpoint testing fully before the September 24 WEC meeting and provide the Commission with more information about the potential need for a managed hardware loaner program.

Mr. Bridges discussed staff's proposal to add a new staff position to manage the loaner device program.

Chair Knudson suggested scaling back the loaner program to a pilot program with fewer devices initially.

**MOTION:** Direct staff to procure software, at a cost not to exceed \$69,000, capable of monitoring end-user devices for security posture, to work with localities to achieve compliance with minimum security standards, and to conditionally prevent access to WisVote for noncompliance. Further direct staff to complete as much of all the items as possible by September 24 and report on the compliance and data. Moved by Commissioner Thomsen, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. Motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** To table the managed hardware loan program. Moved by Commissioner Jacobs, seconded by Commissioner Thomsen.

The Chair called for a roll-call vote:

Bostelman, no; Glancey, yes; Jacobs, yes; Jensen, no; Thomsen, yes; Knudson, no.

Motion fails 3-3.

Commissioners discussed the reasons for their votes, including whether they should wait to receive more information at the September 24 meeting or move forward with a more limited proposal. Chair Knudson said there is consensus that staff needs to keep working on the proposal for the next meeting, with more information about who needs the program and what the costs will be.

Ms. Wolfe suggested the Commission consider approving a scaled-back proposal that would provide staff with a smaller pool of computers that could be loaned to clerks in emergencies while staff explores rental options and additional research requested by Commissioners.

Discussion.

**MOTION:** Direct staff to develop a managed hardware loan or rental program for users who are unable to achieve compliance or have an emergency need. Authorize staff to request bids for 25 devices capable of meeting election official business needs that can be centrally managed by agency staff for security posture and application installation, including the administration of delivery, onboarding, offboarding, device technical support and training services. Total procurement and support costs combined shall not exceed \$30,000. Moved by Commissioner Knudson, seconded by Commissioner Jensen.

Discussion.

The Chair called for a roll-call vote.

Bostelman, yes; Glancey, yes; Jacobs, no; Jensen, yes; Thomsen, no; Knudson, yes.

Motion carried 4-2.

Commissioners Thomsen and Jacobs discussed concerns about the staff's proposal and information they want for the September 24 meeting. These include the cost of proposed hardware managed support by a vendor, options for a rental program, more information about forecasted need for devices, and opportunities for lower cost purchases that municipalities could make on their own.

**MOTION:** Direct staff to develop a comprehensive proposal answering all the concerns voiced by Commissioners Jacobs and Thomsen for the next Commission meeting. Moved by Knudson, seconded by Bostelmann.

Motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** To table the proposal regarding a new federally-funded staff position. Moved by Commissioner Jacobs.

Hearing no second, the Chair called for another motion.

**MOTION:** Direct staff to submit one additional \$16.54 request to create a federally funded position and create a position description and determine the appropriate classification based on immediate security needs as well as future needs as identified through feedback collected from elections security partners, the cost of which is not to exceed \$100,000 annually for the duration of the grant. Direct staff to take preliminary steps but return to the Commission for approval on September 24 before posting the position. Moved by Commissioner Jensen, seconded by Commissioner Knudson.

Commissioners and staff discussed the process for hiring a new federal position. Ms. Wolfe said staff needs to consult with the Department of Administration about the hiring process, including

whether to submit a formal §16.54 request to create a federally funded position before we know whether the position is going to be filled. However, staff would not take any steps that would commit WEC to hiring the position.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair called a 10-minute recess. The Commission resumed at 11:25 a.m.

## **II. Public Outreach Initiative**

Administrator Wolfe and Public Information Officer Reid Magney gave a presentation based on a memorandum starting on page 8 of the August 13 Commission meeting materials regarding plans for a public outreach initiative. After soliciting information from and conducting interviews with several vendors, staff recommended hiring KW2 of Madison to conduct market research and assist the WEC and local election officials in communicating with the public about election security.

Jennifer Savino, co-owner of KW2, described the broad outline of the market research, as well as communications training for election officials and crisis communications services that KW2 would provide.

Administrator Wolfe said the goal of the initiative is to understand what is important to Wisconsin voters, where they get their information, who they trust, and how the WEC and local election officials can get them correct information about elections and election security.

Commissioners and staff discussed monitoring of traditional and social media. Chair Knudson expressed concerns about the amount of money being spent on the research prior to a campaign. Commissioner Jacobs said she supports a data-driven approach.

**MOTION:** Direct staff to engage the KW2 agency, using the existing state contract with UW-Madison, to conduct market research regarding election security and to develop training and communications tools to support state and local election officials as they communicate with voters and media about election security. Also based on the research, KW2 will develop proposals for a public information campaign to educate the public about Wisconsin election security, which will be subject to further approval by the Commission. The cost of the initial research, election official communication training, and campaign proposal development will not exceed \$341,400, and will be paid for from the 2018 HAVA grant for election security. Moved by Commissioner Jacobs, seconded by Commissioner Jensen.

Commissioners and staff discussed the timing of the research, including having the statewide quantitative research done by November. Data should be available at the Commission's December meeting. They also discussed the dynamic nature of the training campaign.

Chair Knudson discussed his intention to vote no on the motion because he felt the money could be better spent elsewhere. He called the question.

Motion carried 5-1.

Commissioner Thomsen said the Chair's point is well-taken that any campaign must enhance security.

**H. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Adjourn. Moved by Commissioner Thomsen, seconded by Commissioner Glancey. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commission adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

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The next meeting of the Wisconsin Elections Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, September 24, 2019, at the Wisconsin Elections Commission office in Madison, Wisconsin beginning at 10:00 a.m.

August 13, 2019 Wisconsin Elections Commission meeting minutes prepared by:

  
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Reid Magney, Public Information Officer

September 5, 2019

August 13, 2019 Wisconsin Elections Commission meeting minutes certified by:

  
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Julie Glancey, Commission Secretary

September 24, 2019