



OCEAN PINES ASSOCIATION
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (EC) REPORT
2024 Board of Directors Election

SUBMITTED TO: The Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors

SUBMITTED BY: Steve, Chairperson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Name	Date Appointed	Term	Comments
Steve Ransdell	April 15, 2023	1	Appointed Chair June 2024
Cheryl Jacobs	June 15, 2024	1	
Ken Petrini	July 17, 2024	1	
Pat Lehnerd	June 15, 2024	1	
Fred Robinson	May 18, 2024	1	

Board Liaison: Secretary John Latham

1. Detailed results of the voting: in ballot order (see attached statistics):

	Paper	Online	Total
Richard Farr	1416	517	1933
Jeff Heavner	1374	494	1868
Amy Peck	908	362	1270
Sherrie Clifford	648	288	936
Jerry Murphy	211	82	293
Blank or Abstentions	1	18	19
Invalid	13	0	13
Total Votes Cast	4557	1743	6300

The candidates re-elected to serve three-year terms on the Ocean Pines Board of Directors are Richard Farr and Jeff Heavner.

2. 2024 Election Statistics

Ballot Types	1
Ballots Printed on 06/19/24 10:57 AM	7487
Voter added during election	296
Ballots returned by USPS as undeliverable	122
Voters that were mailed replacement ballots	37
Total number of replacement ballots	38
Number of Receipts	3286
Receipts from Authenticating Mailed Ballots	2359
Receipts from online voting	927
Replacement ballots that were receipted	14
Voters who voted both online and returned paper ballots	33
Duplicate voters online ballot received first and counted	22
Duplicate voters paper ballot received first and counted	11
Voters who returned ballots with no ID (not counted)	15
Multiple ballots with one credential (not counted)	4
Receipted envelopes with no ballot in them	3
Ballots that were counted	3283

3. Election Recap

The Elections Committee conducted an extensive search for a new Election Vendor. Requests for proposals were sent to _____ potential vendors. At a special Board Meeting on _____ the committee recommended _____ with a secondary recommendation that if the Board wanted an observable count, the committee recommended MK Elections as the vendor of choice. The Board voted to contract with MK Elections.

Election season in Ocean Pines began with the Committee under the leadership of Mr. Tom Piatti. The Committee had four members. At that time Mr. Piatti was in the process of selling his home in Ocean Pines, so contingency plans were implemented to maintain continuity of the Election process. Prior to beginning the election activities, two committee members resigned due to personal reasons. With the planned transition, that left only one member. The Board of Directors appointed the remaining member to fill the chair position and issued a call for additional volunteers. Four new volunteers stepped forward and the committee is now back at full status.

The Candidate Draw was conducted on May 31, 2024 and the Candidate Forum scheduled for June 13, 2024. Other key milestones were:

- Initial Ballot Packages mailed onJune 18, 2024
- Eligibility close and final eligible list sent to contractor onJuly 09, 2024
- Voting closed onAugust 06, 2024
- Tabulating and observable countAugust 08, 2024
- Adjudication of discrepant ballots and Results announcedAugust 09, 2024
- Certification of resultsAugust 12, 2024

4. Conduct of the Election/Communications

One Association member shared their personal voting link of social media causing one mis-vote. The member was immediately contacted and asked to remove the information from social media. The situation was addressed by granting the poster a new voting link.

7487 ballot packages were issued in the initial mailing on 6/19
290 additional ballot packages were issued at the cutoff for eligibility.
A total of 7777 ballots issued.

A total of 122 mailed ballots were returned as undeliverable.
38 ballots were reprinted and sent to voters due to either bad or missing email on file with OPA or bad or missing email on file with OPA.

5. Communications

A total of 40 incoming communications, either voicemail or email were received by the committee from OPA members regarding the election process. Communications type and number:

Complaints (Electronic ballot preceded paper ballot, unsolicited email, sings).....	4
Questions about drop box	4
Other (eligibility).....	2
Request for replacement ballot	30

6. Lessons Learned

- Electronic email of election materials should be sent after paper ballots have begun to be delivered in OP
- Electronic materials must include a link to Candidate photos, bios and statements.
- Materials must explicitly state the drop box location, and deadline.
- Clarify packaging requirements for dropped off ballots.
- Remove MK Elections contact info from ballots
- Need better clarity of voting information: drop-box location and deadline, only vote one way; ways to contact elections committee, etc.
- Coordinate deadlines with MK deadline for online voting, deadline for paper voting
- Desperately need a campaign to educate voters to update OPA records.
- Move drop-box cut-off at least a week earlier to all time to ship to MK
- Final UPS drop-off at Staples is 4:00 PM
- Review reminder emails with MK. (mixed messages, discrepant closing times, etc.)
- Secret ballot envelope said to place all ballots in the envelope.

Lessons Learned—KRP PROCESS 1. Initial mailing should indicate 3 ways of voting: online, by mail or drop box. There was some internet chatter that the drop box was not publicized. 2. Consider whether we need to clarify “single mailing” means one mailing with ballot and biographies and that an e-mail as to online voting will be sent at the same time as mailing. The fact the email is received first is not in violation of our rules. 3. Add the biographies to the

email. 4. Make sure we have disclosed our processes to the Vendor. Our vendor May very well be used to elections where they do everything and disclose the results to the board (my condo is like that). This may have created confusion as to ballot adjudication. 5. Make sure vendor is aware who is on a video call. They can't be expected to guess whether or not it is public. 6. Clarify whether the certification process is public or an executive session. I don't think there was a public link to the second call we had scheduled to certify. It turned out we did it in one call because the results were known. 7. Process should be that no results are released to the Committee until AFTER adjudication of ballots. The margin this year made it irrelevant but we had a large number of defaced ballots. 8. Build more time into the schedule as to closing off the drop box and giving us time to adjudge and certify. Maybe announce results the following day rather than the same day, especially if number 6 is not a public meeting. 9. Make available on the website clear instructions if you did not receive a ballot, received a ballot missing something, did not receive an email etc. Include the contact voicemail and email and a reminder the owner is responsible for making sure OPA has the right address and email. It would be helpful to be able to point to this on the web when the inevitable questions come up on Facebook and Forums and such. **BALLOTS 1. Add a notation: "This barcode identifies this ballot as for the OPA Board of Directors. All ballots have the same bar code. It in no way identifies the person casting the ballot. Any physical alteration of this ballot (such as cutting off the code) will make it void." We counted them this year I think as an induced error but we should correct the misunderstanding going forward. 2. Add a notation "If you own multiple properties, you will have received a ballot for each property. If voting by mail or drop box, EACH ballot must be in a SEPARATE envelope." 3. Add a notation: "If you fill in a circle by error or change your mind before mailing or dropping off your ballot and then try to cross out or otherwise obscure a name, your vote may not be counted unless the Election Committee can ascertain your clear intent. You should consider requesting a replacement ballot by calling _____ or emailing _____ to be sure you are counted, or consider voting online rather than by paper ballot." 4. Add a notation: "You vote is final once received and cannot be changed. If duplicate votes are received, only the first is counted. The check for duplicates is done by the third-party vendor and duplicates removed without identifying the candidate voted for**

3. A summary of Committee activities during the reporting period and any recommendations for improving the election or referendum process.

The EC met four times from November 2022 through June 2023 and exchanged information via email and telephonically throughout the election process. Meanwhile, based on Board taskings, substantial independent research was conducted by EC members. Several after action reports with recommendations were submitted to the Board for consideration and approval and the Chair participated in several monthly/special Board meetings fielding questions from Board members. On June 17, the Board approved modifications to Resolution M-06 to clarify recount procedures and to allow a ballot count by an independent contractor.

4. Recommendations, if any, for the calendar of events for the next election if the balloting is for the election of directors.

The OPA Bylaws state that to be eligible to vote, a member must be in good standing 35 days prior to the Annual Meeting. For the 2023 election, that date was July 6 and the Annual Meeting was scheduled for August 11. The point here is that election materials cannot be mailed prior to the thirty-five-day cutoff. Thirty-five days may have been sufficient time in the past when the USPS was reliable and using a local printing contractor to print, mail and pick up envelopes from a local post office, besides volunteers to count ballots, but today, thirty-five days is insufficient. The EC recommends that our documents be revised to provide ample time to process election documents. Also, we find that the requirement for remote observation of the ballot count unnecessary because ballots are electronically machine read and disputed ballots are set aside and adjudicated by humans. Moreover, and as experienced during the 2022 election, there was no way to observe electronically submitted online ballots. Finally, the remote observation requirement shrinks the number of contractors that provide such a service.

5. Comments on the capabilities of the contractor used and a recommendation regarding future use of the contractor or suggested alternatives.

Election Trust (ET) was the successful bidder for the 2023 election process. ET has an outstanding reputation and serves many public and private organizations and their Clear Ballot adjudication platform is Federally certified. Coordination meetings were successful and contractual agreed upon timelines were put in place. Unfortunately, there was a seven-day delay by ET getting the ballot envelopes in the mail to our Members, which in turn, caused the two-week extension of the ballot deadline, along with a delay in the Annual Meeting. Additionally, the early establishment and sustained use of the Police Dept. ballot drop box became critical. This delay caused a tremendous number of inquiries to the EC and angst among Members for selecting a contractor on the other side of the US. ET did not have a solid reason for the seven-day delay, other than a possible mix-up by their printing contractor in delivering the envelopes to the USPS Bulk facility and by not emphasizing these were election materials to be expedited. Additionally, we learned that during the same period seven Puget Sound counties were going through an election with millions of by-mail ballots streaming through and placing a heavy burden on the Seattle area USPS (Washington is an All Mail-in Voting State). Other than the delay in mail, ET's services were outstanding – the materials and ballot instructions were very clear, their periodic updates to the EC kept us informed of voting numbers. The live final tally and adjudication was extremely detailed and undisputable. Furthermore, ET provided a service never experienced in the past by OPA – after processing the ballot envelope, an email receipt was electronically sent to the voter for confirmation from vote@votegrity.net. Unfortunately, many OP Members do not have an email address on file with the Membership Office and a large percentage of those emails on file are obsolete which caused multiple bounceback emails.

6. Other remarks.

a. This year, the EC decided to not mail documents to eligible and ineligible members on the same day. 884 letters to ineligible members were mailed in advance. This action resulted in 108 Members resolving their ineligibility and who were later mailed ballot envelopes. This practice should remain in place.

b. The PD ballot drop box has been in use for years and worked very well for FedEx overnight delivery to our 2023 elections contractor. The EC should continue its use.

7. Fiscal performance.

The 2023 election was accomplished at the cost of: \$19,950.22.

8. Action Plan. Coordinate with the By-Laws and Resolutions Committee on a recommendation to: (1) adjust the 35-day eligibility date and/or date of the Annual Meeting, and (2) eliminate the observable count requirement.

Appendix A: Certification Letter



MK ELECTION SERVICES, LLC

441 42nd Street, Pittsburgh PA 15201

Steve Ransdell
Chair, Election Committee
Ocean Pines Association
RE: Ocean Pines Association

2024 Board of Directors Election

MK Elections #1972401

Completed August 8, 2024, 6:00PM

Dear Mr. Ransdell,

Attached please find true and correct final information concerning the Ocean Pines Association 2024 Board of Directors Election.

The ballot was conducted under the supervision of MK Elections using the Electionbuddy internet voting system and the MK Elections paper voting system. Voters opted whether to paper ballots or to receive login credentials for the internet system by email.

MK Elections mailed paper ballots on June 18, 2024, and sent internet voting credentials at 9:30AM on June 20, 2024, to all voters qualified as of that date. A second mailing of subsequently qualified voters was done on July 9, 2024. MK Elections tracked the return of undeliverable ballots and mailed replacement ballots or emailed replacement credentials to voters upon their request and/or the request of the organization.

MK Elections completed the ballot count at our office in Pittsburgh on August 8, 2024. During the open period, the paper ballots were returned to a post office box in Pittsburgh and remained in our custody. The scanning and counting processes were audited to ensure a correct final count. A crosscheck was performed to ensure that no voter voted on both paper and electronic systems.

Complete information about voters, undeliverables, replacement ballots sent, and other detailed information is attached to this letter and available in the electronic files that accompany this report.

We certify that the attached results and ballot information attached are true and correct, and that they properly reflect the paper record of the election which has been sealed and will be shipped to you for your custody.

Yours,

Kenneth Mostern

Appendix B: Final Report

**Principal Final Report:
Ocean Pines Association, Inc.:
Ocean Pines Association - 2024 Board Election**

MK Election Services, LLC: Election 1972401

Report Date: 08/08/24 05:39 PM

Total Ballots	Paper 2356	Online 927	Total 3283
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Results

Rick Farr	1416	517	1933
Jeff Heavner	1374	494	1868
Amy Peck	908	362	1270
Sherrie Clifford	648	288	936
Jerry Murphy	211	82	293
[Blank or abstain]	1	18	19
[Invalid]	13	0	13
Total votes cast	4557	1743	6300

End of Report