

Let's Have a Fair Election

Most of us recognize the urgency and importance of safeguarding the electoral process by ensuring ALL voters have the ability to vote safely in the November national and state elections. A scuttled WOW Hall board election Sunday August 9th brought too close to home a lesson on painful consequences of allowing election interference by those with conflicts of interest. The current WOW board allowed WOW Hall staffers with a potential financial stake in the election outcome to disrupt it.

EZVoteOnline, a company not affiliated with any WOW Hall staff or members, allows for a transparent online voting process with confidentiality and protections from vote manipulation. Use of this company was intended to provide confidence in the vote process and tabulation. The election process, which included the use of EZVoteOnline, was mutually agreed upon by representatives from WOW Board, WOW staff, and Friends of WOW Hall (FOWH). At the last minute and in violation of prior agreements, the WOW staff took control of the election and removed all the measures that were put in place to protect the integrity of the election. FOWH is an ad hoc group of WOW Hall members, many for decades, who are concerned with the Hall's financial instability and diminishing accessibility to the community.

Thanks in no small part to the outreach of FOWH, over 150 members attended one of the largest WOW Hall member meetings ever. Most waited patiently to vote despite many interruptions and emotional outbursts by those clearly hostile to any discussion of reform. One staffer, during his report, went so far as to declare that FOWH candidates should withdraw from running because of their disagreement with the way the WOW Hall has been managed under the current Board. He basically implied that anyone who was critical of the status quo should not participate. Such behavior worked in the past to deter reformers concerned the WOW Hall has been drifting away from its 501-(c)(3) mission to operate "as a multipurpose community center providing cultural arts and educational opportunities for all ages and income levels"

After almost five hours, two FOWH volunteers left the Hall after it became clear that they would not be allowed to help staff launch the on-line voting process previously agreed upon. Staff members ended up telling the meeting facilitator

the election could not be held surprising him and 130 members still waiting to hear the candidates and vote. With no access to EZVoteOnline, members had no choice but to pass a motion to postpone the board election.

Those of us who value the WOW Hall as one of our most treasured community owned resources must look beyond past and present divisions. We must come together to elect a competent WOW board to represent us. That board must be capable of meeting difficult challenges the Hall faces like the COVID 19 shutdown and the negative income trajectory that the Hall has been on for several years. To ensure a fair election is held, the current WOW board needs to be held accountable. It is required to schedule a membership meeting for electing a new board by September 8th.

The WOW board should work with FOWH to mutually ensure that the meeting is effectively and fairly facilitated, and an election held that is safe, fair, and transparent to all. The election process must both provide protection from all possible manipulation and interference and the appearance of any such misconduct. Given the partisan statements by staff members, their interference in the prior agreed upon process and financial interest in the outcome, staff should not be involved in the election process. **Community members are encouraged to participate and support FOWH at the next online WOW Board meeting on Sunday 8/16 at 7:00 pm and to vote as a member at the eventual election next month.**

Become a member at <http://www.wowhall.org/donate-or-become-member>

Stay informed at <https://friendsofowowhall.org>

Friends of W.O.W. Hall recommends these candidates for the Board of Directors.

Check back for updates as new candidates may emerge.

+ [Camas Banks](#)

+ [Mike Meyer](#)

+ [Trisha Driscoll](#)

+ [Djanelle Krinsky](#)

+ [Chico Schwall](#)

+ [Karen Stingle](#)

+ [David Zupan](#)