Documenting and Reflecting on Boston Ujima Project's Committee Standards Committee Election Process

Nathan Arnosti, Rhett James, Emma González Roberts, Sean Sutherland
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Executive Summary

Boston Ujima Project is a coalition of community members, small business owners, workers, grassroots activists, impact investors, unions, faith-based institutions, and civic organizations that is creating a community-controlled local economy led by working class residents of color in Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and other neighborhoods in Boston. In this report, we document Boston Ujima Project's first democratic election, the Community Standards Committee election of April 2018, to understand the efforts undertaken by staff and volunteers to organize this process, as well as distill lessons for Ujima and organizations interested in Ujima's model. In Parts I and II of this report, we offer a brief overview of Boston Ujima Project's history and our research process. We provide a timeline of significant events before, during, and after the election in Part III. Part IV shares feedback we heard through interviews with ten stakeholders in the Ujima community about the successes and limitations of the election. We conclude by offering ideas based on our research that Ujima staff and volunteers might consider in order to improve the organization's democratic processes in the years to come.

Part I: Institutional Context

Boston Ujima Project (Ujima) was founded in 2015 as a grassroots-level response to persistent and systemic disenfranchisement of Boston's communities of color and the racial disparities in net worth that have arisen as a result. According to a report released by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston that same year, the average net worth of a white family is $247,500, whereas Boston's Dominican and U.S.-born black households have a median wealth of close to zero[1]. As shown in **Exhibit 1: Boston Demographic Map,** Boston's residents of color are heavily concentrated in its Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan neighborhoods, three of the city's largest communities by both geography and population. Due to decades of redlining and other racist lending practices and zoning policies, residents of color in these three neighborhoods and beyond have been denied opportunities to build their net worth. The need for new forms of economic opportunity is particularly acute in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan: roughly 40% of Boston's population living in poverty live in these three neighborhoods.[2]
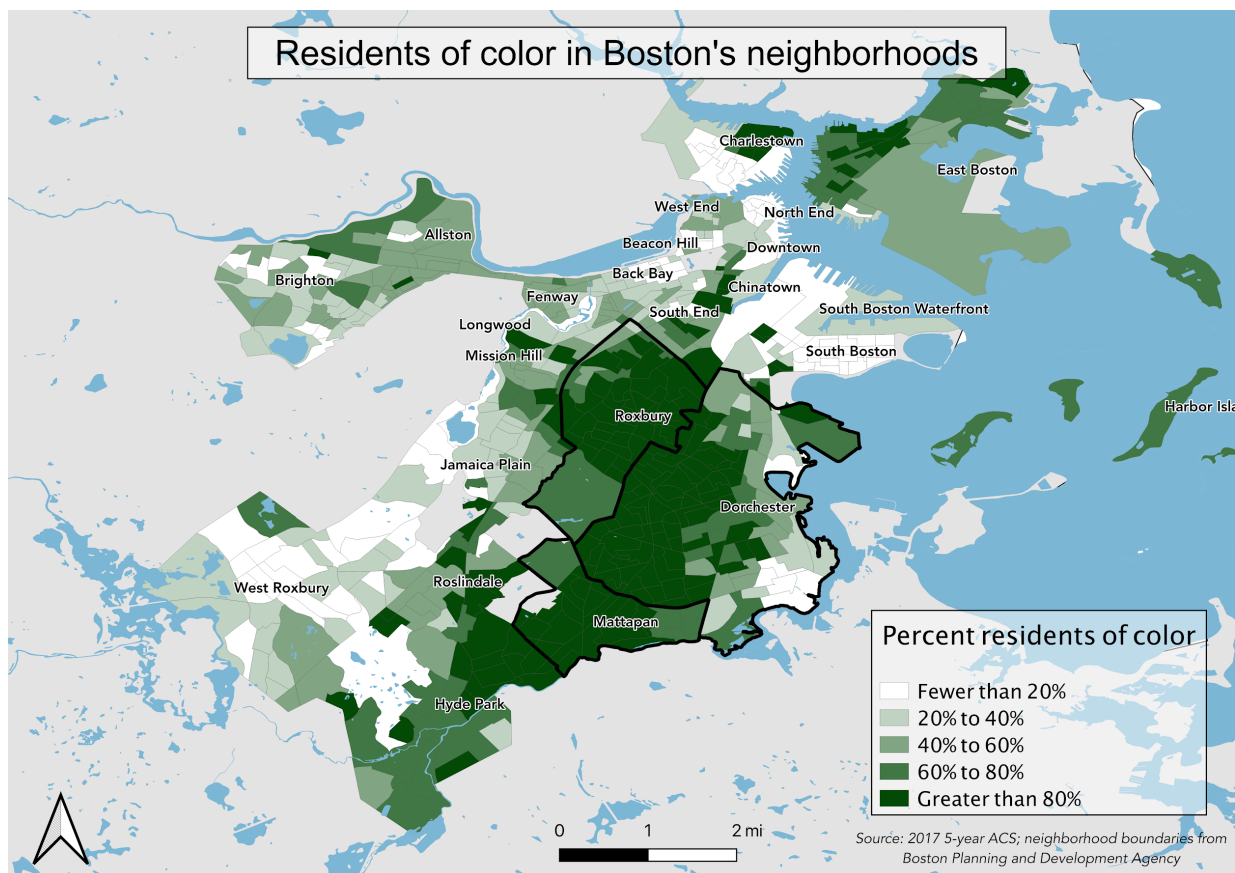

Exhibit 1: Boston Demographic Map | Credit: Nathan Arnosti

Named for the Kwanzaa principle of collective work and responsibility, Ujima seeks to empower working class people of color in Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan and other neighborhoods in Boston by building a solidarity economy in which its members can create opportunities for wealth accumulation through

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[1] Muñoz, Ana et al. 2015. The Color of Wealth in Boston. Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/one-time-pubs/color-of-wealth.aspx

[2] Boston Planning and Development Agency. Boston in Context: Neighborhoods. Based on 2013-2017 American Community Survey data. January 2019. http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/8349ada7-6cc4-4d0a-a5d8-d2fb966ea4fe

collective control of capital. With early and ongoing support from City Life / Vida Urbana, the Center for Economic Democracy, and the Boston Impact Initiative, Ujima has recruited over 500 members[3] as of November 2019 and established formal partnerships with over 60 small businesses, nonprofits, faith institutions, and investors seeking to further the project's mission. Beyond the financial literacy workshops and weekly forums for community organizing and planning that it currently provides to its members, Ujima's primary mechanism for growing a locally-controlled and collaborative economy is a $5 million democratic investment fund that it began raising in December 2018.

Part II: Process

The purpose of this report is to document the election and voting processes that Ujima used to create a governance structure for sourcing its fund's deal flow and guiding future investment decisions. The report recounts the actions taken by Ujima staff and volunteers before, during, and after the vote in which voting members elected representatives to serve on its Community Standards Committee. The interview questions were developed in partnership with Ujima leadership (see **Appendix A: Interview Questions**). To inform our understanding of the election processes, we interviewed the following ten individuals:

1. Aaron Tanaka, Co-Founder
2. Nia Evans, Executive Director
3. Sarah Jacqz, Communications Organizer
4. Nadav David, Voting Member
5. Neenah Estrella-Luna, Voting Member
6. Biplaw Rai, Business Alliance Member
7. Chuck Turner, Standards Committee Member
8. Jill Kimmel, Solidarity Member and Standards Committee Member
9. Suntae Kim, Solidarity Member
10. Andy Nash, Solidarity Member

For the complete transcripts from each conversation, please see **Appendix B: Interview Transcripts.** We analyzed the interviewees' responses to identify key themes and takeaways. We also reviewed election-related communications and materials that were distributed to members before, during, and after the voting period. Please see **Exhibit 2: Interviewees** for a visual representation of the interviewees' relationships to Ujima.

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[3] The Boston Ujima Project draws distinctions between Voting Members who are eligible to vote in all elections and Solidarity Members who are not eligible to vote. Voting Members must live in Boston and identify as either i) working class and/or as a person of color or ii) as a working class and/or person of color who has been displaced from the city. All others who live outside of Boston or are Boston residents who do not identify as working class and/or person of color are eligible to become Solidarity Members. Ujima defines "working class" as individuals making less than $50,000 annually. As of November 2019, there are approximately 250 Voting Members and 250 Solidarity Members of the Boston Ujima Project.
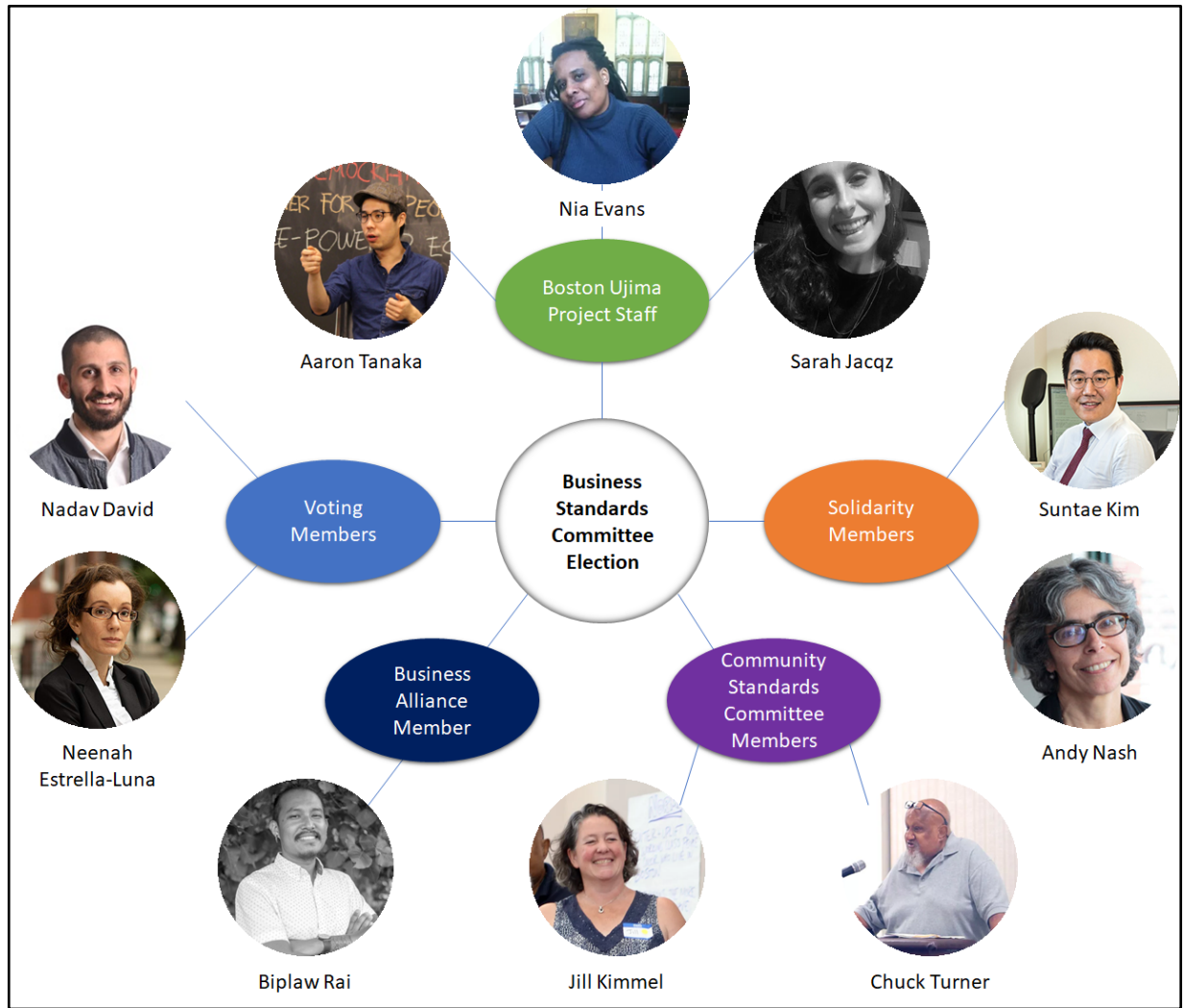
Exhibit 2: Interviewees

Part III: Community Standards Committee Election

In 2018, after several years of establishing the initiative, building relationships, and conducting research, Ujima decided they were in need of a formal, standing committee to support the process of creating and maintaining community business standards. As an economic democracy project, it was important for members of the community to play an essential role in determining how Ujima investments are made and for the selection of the committee to be democratic. Members of the Community Standards Committee would support the process of developing, implementing, and monitoring Ujima's Good Business Standards, which included paying a living wage, reinvesting profits into the community, and hiring staff that reflect the demographics of their neighborhoods. It was the organization's first election and took place in April 2018. Please see **Appendix C: Community Standards Committee Election Overview** for the one-page summary that was shared with voting members.

The Committee was originally intended to be made up six democratically elected members and representatives appointed by the Ujima Business Alliance, the Grassroots Partner Committee, and the Investment Committee. Members received information about the committee's responsibilities and expectations and were encouraged to nominate themselves and/or others who met the outlined

candidate eligibility. A total of 20 individuals were nominated and ten chose to accept the nomination and appear on the ballot. Please see **Appendix D: Member Memo and Role Description** for the complete list of committee responsibilities, candidate eligibility, criteria, and expectations. Ultimately, six candidates were elected democratically and three were appointed by the committees.

The voting period began on April 4, 2018 and was originally intended to last one week. At the time, Ujima had 186 voting members and was aiming for a 100% participation rate. Information on who the candidates were and how to vote was shared via Ujima's e-newsletter, on social media, on Ujima's website, at the candidate forum, and during in-person weekly meetings. There were originally two ways of voting: online using the Voatz app or in person at one of four locations (please see **Appendix E: In-Person Voting Locations**). Within the first few days of the election, members experienced difficulty accessing and using the Voatz app. In response, Ujima created a Google Form that could be used as an alternative. For more information regarding the decision to use Voatz, the challenges that arose, and what the ballot looked like please see **Appendix F: Voatz**. To see the ballot that was used at the in-person voting locations, please see **Appendix G: Paper Ballot**.

One day before the original voting deadline, 30 of the 186 voting members had cast a ballot. Ujima leadership decided to extend the election by two weeks and to do everything they could to reach a 50% + 1 turnout (94 votes). This effort included reaching out to candidates, solidarity members, and partner organizations to encourage voting member participation through social media, one round of phone banking, and in-person conversations. Two mass texts were sent through the Voatz platform and individual texts were sent by Ujima staff. By the extended voting deadline of April 27, 101 voting members had cast a ballot, resulting in a 54% voter turnout rate. Of the 87 voters who indicated race on their member application, 57 identified as a person of color, meaning that between 56-70% percent of voters in this election were people of color. For more information regarding who was elected, please see **Appendix H: Election Results**. The timeline below (**Exhibit 3: Election Timeline)** highlights key moments from the election.
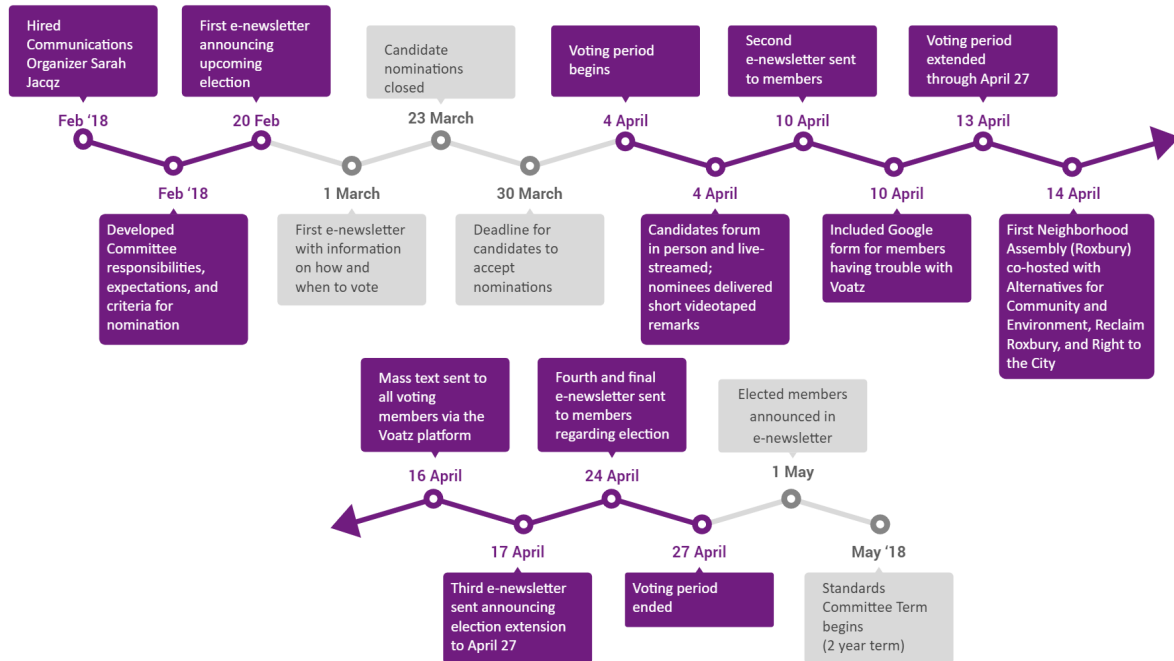
Exhibit 3: Election Timeline

Part IV: Reflections

Ujima Staff

What went well*:* The three Ujima staff members we interviewed—Nia, Aaron, and Sarah—identified some common strengths of the Community Standards Committee election process. All three praised the quality of the nominated candidates. Aaron stated that "the members of the committee are impressive and very committed. Committee members take their role seriously," which he attributed in part to the formal selection process. Sarah observed, "I liked that the candidates were reflective of the community." In short, from the perspective of Ujima staff, the outcome of the election was highly successful.

Nia, Aaron, and Sarah also noted that the Standards Committee vote was an accessible topic, especially compared to subsequent elections. Nia pointed out that this vote achieved a quorum of Ujima members in just three weeks, allowing the committee to form and move forward. Aaron told us "it was an appropriately-scaled decision. People are used to electing people." The simplicity and clarity of the decisions presented to members increased their confidence that the committee members were selected in a truly democratic way.

Additionally, Ujima staff expressed positive feelings about the organization's innovations in reaching out to voting members and navigating through technical challenges. Nia spoke of the candidate forum, and the recordings from it that Ujima staff produced and shared on their website, as effective ways to help members make informed choices. Nia and Sarah both discussed the in-person voting stations, including at Dudley Café, as an important alternative to voting through the app as well as a way to spread word of Ujima's activities with the broader community. They were proud of the effort they put in to helping

members vote, including through texting and individual assistance. Nia said that "texting got this vote past the finish line." Sarah reflected, "I was proud of the way that we adapted as we went, addressing technical difficulties, switching voting forms, and helping members vote."

What could be improved: Staff recommendations for improvements fell into three broad categories: voting technology, communications, and creating space for discussion.

The app Ujima used, Voatz, proved to be a sizable barrier for members. Aaron observed that Voatz "was too secure for our purposes. It was very hard to get people onboarded." Nia stated that "we didn't test the app before rolling it out...we could have held info sessions before voting or used other tools" to make voting easier. Please see **Appendix F: Voatz** for more observations about these challenges.

Regarding election-related communications, Nia reflected that "we recognize that about half of our members read Ujima's email newsletters, so we need to keep thinking about how to reach the other half." Sarah expressed her interest in finding ways "to work more deeply with our grassroots partners" such as City Life / Vida Urbana so that Ujima voting becomes integrated with ongoing base-building work.

Lastly, Aaron brought up the importance of creating spaces for deeper deliberation. As he described, "the vote didn't create space for people to disagree, discuss, or do more than register their opinions. Going forward, I'd like to see Ujima find ways to create space for discussion, rather than rely on members to do so organically."

Ujima Members

What went well: Many of the seven volunteers we interviewed spoke highly of Ujima's effort to communicate with their membership. Andy, Neenah, and Suntae all specifically mentioned the videos that Ujima shared as a smart way to inform the community. Nadav observed that Ujima "had a great explanation of why this vote is happening and how it's connected to its larger mission." Neenah noted that Ujima's use of videos, newsletters, and livestreams made it easier for people to stay involved even when they couldn't attend meetings in person. Biplaw, whose Dudley Café hosted Ujima's best-attended in-person voting station, described the in-person voting process as "seamless" and said that Dudley Café would be happy to host more Ujima votes.

What could be improved: Ujima volunteers offered many ideas for how to improve Ujima's voting process, centering around making voting easier, making voting exciting, and putting more staff time towards outreach.

Many of the volunteers we interviewed expressed concerns about the time commitments associated with voting and participating in the Ujima community. Jill observed, "I want to look through the materials they share, but it's time-consuming," and suggested that ten minutes per vote was a reasonable amount of time to ask of members. Neenah shared that "there are parts of the semester when I'm running around and I get an email from Ujima and … I don't have the time to be a thoughtful participant."

Several people interviewed suggested that not everyone within Ujima was equally interested in voting, and that many decisions don't require a formal vote. Andy explained: "I don't feel the same way about each vote. For the technical votes, I don't think we need everyone to vote—we just need people to say

'yes, keep going.' But for questions about the direction of the organization, I would hope we get more than 50 percent of members." Neenah mentioned that her husband was someone who didn't feel compelled to vote, but was happy to contribute financially to Ujima. Jill noted that some Ujima members joined early on, then lost interest, which made it difficult to reach a quorum. She said, "there should be some sort of filter for members who don't participate, like an annual renewal" to reduce the burden on volunteers and staff to encourage voting.

Andy and Nadav suggested that voting should be seen as a way to energize the Ujima community. Andy noted, "Ujima organizers need to figure out: how are we going to get people excited about voting?" Considering recent votes, Nadav observed that the most successful ones have been integrated into larger events, and suggested: "what if everyone gets together in Roxbury and has a vote night?" Suntae, Andy, and Neenah spoke of the challenges of relying on volunteers to do outreach, given their inconsistent availability, and recommended that Ujima hire more organizers, canvassers, and communicators to reach voting members.

Part V: Synthesis & Conclusion

Overall, the Ujima Standards Committee election resulted in a successful outcome: the selection of experienced and qualified committee members who represented the Ujima community. This success can be attributed to many factors, including a clear rationale for an election, the availability of election-related information, and the commitment of Ujima staff and volunteers to help members vote despite technical difficulties.

Our interviews also revealed a number of opportunities to improve and strengthen Ujima's current approach to voting. To inform further discussion amongst Ujima staff and volunteers on how to improve Ujima's democratic processes, we offer the following ten ideas to consider.

1. **Prioritize accessibility and ease of use when selecting voting technology.** Continue to simplify the voting processes through apps, online forms, or in-person ballots so that members do not need to spend time recovering forgotten passwords or navigating non-intuitive online forms.

2. **Add predictability to the timing of votes.** Schedule votes for every quarter, every month, or another interval and share a voting calendar with members. Communicate to members the approximate number of votes Ujima asks them to participate in annually.

3. **Simplify voting decisions for members to encourage more widespread participation.** Consider the time commitment required to understand various election-related materials, such as newsletters, reports, and videos, and establish limits on how much information is shared. To the extent possible, use votes to ask simple, direct questions about issues that members have an existing interest in and understanding of. To elevate the prominence of voting for Ujima members, consider sending out stand-alone election-related communications.

4. **Consider supporting more nuanced forms of democratic engagement by creating multiple voting types.** "Traditional" voting, which requires extensive staff time to carry out, could be reserved for high-profile decisions, and could require a larger quorum from the Ujima membership (such as 75% participation). "Up/down" votes, in which members vote in favor or against a specific initiative, could be used to gather information about members' preferences

and require a smaller quorum (such as 50%+1). And "comment periods" could allow Ujima leadership to request feedback from members on proposals without requiring a formal vote.

5. **Rely on Ujima Advisory Board expertise to inform questions related to democratic voting.** Ujima's Advisory Board, or a "Democracy subcommittee" on the Board, can serve as a resource to Ujima staff as they determine when to hold a vote, what to vote on, and which voting type to use.

6. **Establish a process to maintain an active Ujima membership community.** To make achieving voting quora more feasible, Ujima staff could designate voting members who do not participate in Ujima activities for a pre-established length of time (such as six months) as "inactive," or recategorize these individuals as solidarity members. Allow inactive members to return at any time, and regularly survey active and inactive members to understand their motivations.

7. **Create more spaces for dialogue and community for each Ujima vote.** Consider organizing in-person voting gatherings (or "voting celebrations") for each vote, which could create an energizing and constructive space for extended discussion. Livestreaming and video clips could make these gatherings accessible for members unable to attend. Voting gatherings could be integrated within regular meetings by Ujima or grassroots partners.

8. **Have a voter outreach strategy in place for each election.** Set out a clear outreach timeline for each vote that includes all newsletter e-blasts, text reminders, and other communications related to the vote. Communicate this timeline and roles to staff, relevant committees, and volunteers at the beginning of each election.

9. **Reimagine in-person voting stations as opportunities to expand Ujima's reach and visibility.** In-person voting stations in community gathering places can be used to share news about Ujima's recent work, offer information about becoming a member, and present election-related content to voters, in addition to serving as alternative voting locations.

10. **Conceptualize voting as one part of Ujima's democratic decision-making ecosystem.** Explore ways to solicit democratic engagement from members in every Ujima activity. MIT Professor Ceasar McDowell describes six types of public dialogue, which could be used to create a common language for the democratic objectives of any Ujima activity. These are: Framing, Ideation, Prioritizing, Selection, Implementing, and Monitoring.[4] [5]

    Ujima staff could articulate intended democratic goals for Ujima's ongoing activities, including official votes, voting gatherings, weekly community meetings, committee meetings, annual meetings, and newsletters. Staff could adjust existing organizational activities to create space for all six forms of public dialogue.

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[4] The Six Essential Dialogues. Circle Forward. 2016. https://www.circleforward.us/what-is-circle-forward/

[5] Ceasar McDowell - "Crisis or Opportunity? A Dialogue on Democracy, Inclusion, and Community." 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1009&v=OKXzJ8hwjlI&feature=emb_title

We recognize that sustainable democratic processes require continual adaptation to existing needs and new realities. These ideas, identified through our research process, are intended to encourage discussion among the Ujima community to that end. Our belief is that if adopted, these ideas could contribute to Ujima's democratic processes and support Ujima's mission to pioneer its model of economic democracy.

Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. <u>Introduction</u>
   a. Introduce yourself and why we're doing this project
   b. What's your relationship to Ujima?
      i. How did you originally get involved?
      ii. When?
2. <u>Voting Process</u>
   a. What was the initial motivation for holding an election, from your perspective?
      i. Why was an election needed, in your opinion?
      ii. What was your role, if any, in developing /planning for the election?
   b. Walk me through the voting process.
      i. What voting technologies did you use? How long did it take you to vote?
      ii. What role did you play, if any, in implementing the processes around the election?
      iii. What information was presented to voters, and how was it presented?
   c. How did you learn about the results of the election?
      i. What role, if any, did you play in communicating or implementing the results of the election? What was your reaction?
3. <u>Reflection</u>
   a. What went well?
      i. Why? Who? Ask follow up q's to learn more detail
   b. What could have gone better?
      i. What were the biggest challenges?
      ii. Why? Who? Ask follow up q's to learn more detail (e.g. Could it have been better organized? What could have sped up the voting process? What could have helped get more people to vote? Voting schedule?)
   c. Do you feel confident that the results of this election accurately reflect the needs and preferences of Ujima's members?
      i. Do you think 50% + 1 is the right threshold?
   d. Voting sustainability
      i. In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
      ii. How many votes do you think Ujima should ask its members to participate in each year?

4. <u>Big Picture</u>
   a. How did this election compare with subsequent Ujima elections?
   b. How was this different from other democratic processes you have observed or have participated in?
      i. This can include federal/state/local elections, public committees, caucuses, votes within your workplace or community, and more.
   c. How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
   d. Is there anything else that we have not covered yet in this conversation?

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

Aaron Tanaka
Co-Founder, Ujima

Introduction
- Director of the Center for Economic Democracy
- Co-founder of Boston Ujima Project
- Formerly co-founder and director of the Boston Workers Alliance (BWA). Worked on 5-year Ban the Box campaign → get rid of "Have you been convicted of a crime?" question on job applications 5 year campaign -- a victory but the issue is so much larger. Criminal record discrimination are a front for racism in hiring and prisons are a place for surplus labor
- Can we create our own businesses as opposed to begging people to do things for us? How to get capital to start a business?
- Helped city do youth participatory planning -- youth got to have a say in where $1M of city budget went
- Idea to start place-based impact investment fund

Voting Process
What was the initial motivation for holding an election, from your perspective? Why was an election needed, in your opinion?
- This is a values-based project. Was personally informed by what was going on in the B-Corp movement. Thought it made a lot of sense to anchor the whole ecosystem on criteria of who would be involved. Trying to bring in relationships with community organizing sector in Boston.
- A lot of people have hesitation about engaging with finance. It was important for leadership to know that the project was not going to invest in something that would be harmful or at cross purposes.
- Had a vision for the structure; practically speaking, needed someone to have the job of reviewing and approving businesses.
- Had an ongoing functional need--speaks to why they needed a committee in the long term. Standards committee was something where anyone could contribute (unlike Investment Committee, which requires technical knowledge).
- There was a need to move from ideation to action, to narrow down ideas. From past experience running participatory budget process, knew it was important to narrow down ideas.
- The power to decide what would go on the ballot for voting was not transparent nor accountable to anyone with the budgeting process, so had a desire to incorporate this transparency and accountability into Ujima through Standards Committee.

What role did you play, if any, in implementing the processes around the election?
- Came up with general frameworks, but was missing health and wellness category. In weekly meetings, they had info presented around worker power, wages, percentage of women representation, etc.
- Members would come look at a bunch of ideas, add on additional ideas in the category, then they would ask questions or give feedback on what they thought was important.
- The whole half of the first year was dedicated to community standards development.
- Encouraged people to nominate others during member meetings, of the 20 who were nominated, not all accepted.
- 10 people ended up running for 8 seats. Was a meaningful election.
- Candidates that were running came into a weekly meeting, they filled candidates talking, made their case for why they were good candidates.
- Had online Voatz, but also had paper ballot voting at City Life, also partnered with some businesses (e.g. Dudley Cafe) to host ballots, had a voting booth where members could go vote.
- Is currently a voting member, but will probably move to a solidarity member.

What voting technologies did you use?
- Decision to use Voatz was fairly arbitrary. Looked at other software - Mentimeter, Poll Everywhere has good functionality, but cant do unique user tracking, so they abandoned.
- If they vote using those systems, people would need to state their name. Whereas on Voatz, could exert better control over who was voting, ensure one vote, etc.

Did Ujima have guidelines for the makeup of committee (e.g. demographics, skills)?
- It was not predetermined. At founding assembly, they did a member poll on membership composition of leadership bodies (more around board formation, not specifically standards committee) - questions around what % of body would be women of color, what would the demographic slide look like.
- Did not specify the number of seats for reps from specific neighborhoods, ethnic groups, residents, etc. Not sure if they explicitly said who should run when they asked for nominations, but a lot of context and consciousness was already there around equity.

Reflection
What went well?
- Happy that people nominated folks, high quality of people nominated and who ended up on the committee. The members of the committee are impressive and busy, but very committed. People take their role very seriously (another benefit of having a vote).
- The fact that they got people to vote, that they reached the quota around participation rates, and that it was a relatively easy vote. People are used to electing people.
- Thought the election was an appropriately scaled size of decision, unlike recent ballots where people needed more education on topics. People were primed to jump in and tackle hard questions.

What could have gone better?
- Voatz is designed for absentee voting for real elections (has capacity for biometric ID) - was too secure. Was very hard to get people on boarded onto app.
- Once they had it and knew how to do it, it was simple, don't need to punch in any codes.
- Interface was not great - e.g. couldn't watch candidate videos without leaving the app.

- Voatz was also a startup, didn't have capacity on their end to provide needed level of support.

What do you think were the reasons people did not participate in the vote?
- Have not thought much about the people who didn't vote, but this is a good question. Would be good to survey folks who didn't vote, would be curious to know how many people didn't know an election was happening.
- Most forms of communication are online, social media, or email, but no more than 50% of membership open emails on a regular basis.
- People were surprised to know that if they didn't vote, then Ujima couldn't close the ballot - people are conditioned to think their vote doesn't matter.
- Did not create space for people to disagree, discuss, do more than register their opinions.
- Evolve practices to include phone banking and text banking for bigger ballots.

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
- Habit has been to err on the side of participation. Have talked about forming a values committee where members can raise issues about conflicts of interest, give people an opportunity to give feedback. Future board may play this function.
- Still in the process of trying to form structure for board. Not sure if board will play the role of what does and does not get voted on. This process would still rely on staff nominating ideas for votes.
- Also need to think more about how they use assemblies, there are benefits in and of themselves to having larger assemblies. But there are tradeoffs - don't want to force decisions through a limited timeframe. Assemblies can also be exclusive, prevent people from engaging in conversation.
- Need to think about other ways that people can engage with questions. Want to understand how to do more decentralized planning and decision-making - talk about on text threads?
- Would help better integrate decision-making at a scale that is more organic to day-to-day lives. Need to slot decision-making in the right place.

Big Picture
How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
- Would be good to diversify channels for spreading awareness, communicating. As they try to get more rigorous about decision-making, they want to make elections, voting to be less of a popularity contest.
- Want to create structure to make sure people are actually engaging with info they need to make an informed vote. Want to create space for discussion and debate among voters.
- For the most part, people had to do this on their own organically. Could maybe have voter forums, where people come debate topics. Do some analysis around who didn't vote because they didn't care, didn't know, or didn't want to vote. q
- Adding debates between candidates probably wouldn't be appropriate for Ujima, but could find room for debates of ideas.

Nia Evans
Executive Director, Ujima

Introduction

- Director of Ujima
- Before Ujima served as Executive Director of the Boston NAACP
- Met Erin Tanaka in 2015 and started volunteering with Ujima

Voting Process
What was the initial motivation for holding an election, from your perspective?
- Community derived standards as part of the process, wanted a minimum tier of operating standards
- Committee to act as liaisons between membership and take input gathered over weekly meetings about different areas
- Standards committee (SC) to take input and combine with expertise and grassroots partners to put together a proposal of minimum non-negotiable standards that businesses have to meet
- Ujima seeking not only in POC run businesses but also businesses with social impact

What was your role, if any, in developing /planning for the election?
- Drew up a role description of what it means for a member to be on the CSC. The nomination process is detailed and involves thinking about qualities members should exhibit. Not a rigorous standard but a serious undertaking; wanted committed members to see it through April 2018 – Feb 2019.
- Community organizer Sarah Jacqz hired in Feb
- Call for nominations and getting the word out was difficult
- Initially had to nominate people to get the ball rolling. Ended-up with 10 nominees for 6 roles.
- Slate of candidates in April. A month from nomination to election.
- Jan-April held weekly meetings prior to elections
- Nia cannot vote as a Cambridge resident
- Initially thought election would take a week.

Walk me through the voting process.
- Primarily used a voting app Voatz. Liked this app because it utilized block-chain
- Voatz was not user friendly and security heavy (thumb-prints, ID card scans etc)
- Voatz didn't make sense for Ujima; they eventually had to ask for security standards to be relaxed
- Voatz Intended primarily as a mobile app which made it difficult; steered ppl to online desktop version which was simpler to use. The intent was for Voatz to be primary voting mechanism
- City life Vida Urbana, First Church of Roxbury, Include Innovation, (grove hall NDC) and Dudley Café intended to be physical voting locations for less tech savvy or members that Voatz was not working for.
- Created paper ballots for physical locations. About 10 people voted physically
    - 2- City Life
    - 0 - First Church
    - 0 - include innovation. Remained at Dudley café.
    - Remainder - Dudley
- Initially extended by 2 weeks to avoid second extension. Didn't meet the quorum but didn't want to have to extend it too many times. Had to consider meshing.
- Around 20-something percent of approx. 200 people
- Lots of troubleshooting with Voatz. At the last week of voting decided to issue a google form.
- Communications; member meetings used to kick off voting. 2 questions to answer;
    - What is your connection to the community

- ○ Tell us about yourself
- Celebration kickoff-meeting was different from usual meetings/ kick-off didn't have a lot of ppl
- Membership meeting for everyone- need to check on announcement emails, phone banking, texting got process passed finish line.
- Nia as the most familiar person to members; kept a spreadsheet of tracking phone banking and who voted. Members also helped with this (not just staff)
- Used Voatz to send out mass text. Mass text as a follow-up to the original text. Two rounds of texting, 1 round of phone banking.
- Candidate forum for kick-off meeting
- Info presented about candidates; 2 questions, photos, website page, video recording option, either prepared video or recorded at the forum (only one person didn't do a video recording). About the videos:
  - ○ Nicer presentation/public speaking ability
  - ○ Didn't want it to be "pitchy"
  - ○ Didn't want presentation to substitute for information or content
- Webpage that aggregated all this; photo, video, transcripts of questions. A way for members to know who is who
- Ballots just had names and directed ppl to website to find out more info
- Paper ballots front and back with names only. Directed ppl to information packet.
- Drastically different from most recent election and information. People didn't feel comfortable voting since they didn't know enough

Election Results
- Most people voted thru Voatz despite difficulty. Just looked at the back end and aggregated votes. Who were the top 6. Combined with paper ballots and google form
- Demographics – collected up front
- Kept track of who voted in CRM. Transferred from Voatz. (Customer service one guy – start-up)
- Running a report. Main thing was race; center around people of color and income
- Didn't have to worry about these disparities. 66-75% of voters people of color. Otherwise this would have triggered a concern
- Didn't run gender and age but could have
- 54% voting rate. Just above quorum. Reported demographics, final 6, voter report dated April 5th-27th 2018. Put out report on 3 days later on April 30th
- Didn't report on income – didn't have a definition of working class. Pegged as $50k and below.
- Didn't get feedback in any direction from candidates—experienced it as pretty straightforward, nervousness about video, election was the election.
- 5 candidates were voting members. Runner-ups received thank you. Not too much feedback or questions

Reflection
What went well?
- Effectiveness of texting even more than phone banking or emails; take into other efforts to move people.
- Voting locations were cool; Ujima voting station embeddedness/integration into community locations; think about how locations could serve dual purposes and possibility of community engagement. Physical voting station. Didn't carry forward and don't know why—for latest round.
- 3 ballots ; financial institutions approved to place undeployed capital

- 2nd has 3 decisions; businesses for investment (polled from neighbourhood assemblies), 2nd list of community standards and community leads (develop a proposal for city-wide assembly for vote) didn't have quorum in October
- 3rd – investment opportunity process. Approval of members about parallel chanel that Ujima could learn about new businesses not named in assemblies. How questions were framed led to a lot of consumer facing businesses vs B2B. Another lane of approval.
- 10 peers of can we have partners who can recommend business – boston impact initiative, lawyer community for civil rights ets. This Ballot still open mostly because most of the focus was on the first two; money to move and business need approval.
- Third less important

What could have gone better?
- Using Voatz. Voatz was fine. Not beta but early. Ujima did no testing—rushed it. Done ballots and rolled out. Didn't realize kinks like security. Had conversations with Voatz about making it easier. More could have been done on the tech support side to members to reduce issues that were frustrating. Did do a survey about what is happening tech wise, barriers to downloading the app. Didn't have uptake. Could have had info sessions prior to voting. Other tools could have been used.
- Fine that it was extended—communicated the importance of voting.
- Physical voting stations as a good idea—something could have been done to extend this concept. Easy yes and less burden. Interested to think of locations that were convenient for members.
- Do phone banking early. Start with phone banking then follow-up with text as a last resort to push people. See how participation changes. Also planning to do mailings—opportunity for people to engage at their leisure. 50% of members read emails. Emails as a solo communications—phone (most people aren't picking up calls), text. The assumption is the other 50% wont read.

Do you feel confident that the results of this election accurately reflect the needs and preferences of Ujima's members?
- Yes—did reflect the needs of Ujima members. At most 2-3 ppl who didn't know any of those people. No one complained that info was not enough. 1 person (prison abolitionist) had very specific questions about candidates; wanted to know stances on incarceration. Wanted more info than what was provided. As an organizer they had a higher bar.

Do you think 50% + 1 is the right threshold?
- Definitely plans to move it up. A questions. Up to 250 voting members. Generally what should be aiming for is representative.
- Throwing out 75% In lieu of setting on what that is at the very least should be able to say a majority of members voted as a low bar.
- When writing OM – details the notes being sold as part of the fund, attorneys recommended 10-20%. Holding up the process. Can't invest dry power; creating huge obstacle for investment. Ujima said no—community driven.
- SEC regulated—fund hosted by the Center for Economic Democracy. Get around SEC oversight/ regulation. Filed to sell in Connecticut, Maine, and Rhode Island. Filing in NY and want to in CA.

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?

- Community wide vs. not – don't know yet. Absolutely necessary when there is an investment decision. Still a question as to what this means. Posit list of business; could have simply presented the list and noted objections. Not worry about quorum. If no objections could be approved.
- Process stuff seems obvious but isn't -e.g. endorsements, political stances, because a membership body, ideologically diverse. (Can't have director unilaterally take organizational stances). Now don't endorse anyone but can impact relationships – text message of 24 hr endorsement. Knowing each other can create conflicts of interest
- Marty and Union – people charged with extortion, union affiliation for Boston Calling work. Case against them; list of organizations that endorsed. Couldn't signed on. Didn't have an endorsement process. Developing a process.
- Unintentionally how we feel about different things –what issues are actually important to the organization
- What financial institutions are approved; probably didn't have to put to members but members were asking so felt important. People want to know vs. I need to weigh in. Keeping members apprised vs having to weigh in.
- Only one decision members to make – which is investing

How many votes do you think Ujima should ask its members to participate in each year?
- Starting to feel like no more than 2 votes per year; difficult because the nature of votes matters. Maybe 3 votes of the nature of the community standard elections. Otherwise doesn't seem wise to do more than 2; time, fatigue etc. cannot do more than 2 of this kind.
- Clear than members should be making investment decisions and want to; need to make more straight forward; will have quite a few of these. Multiple decisions that become too big and too intricate vs. singular decisions of investments

Big Picture
How did this election compare with subsequent Ujima elections?
- CSC election was simple – one page paper ballot, front and back, ½ page info and names. Feedback. Most time figuring out how to use Voatz
  ○ No more than 10 mins to finish for CSC election
  ○ Longer for current election. On the shorter end min 8-10. Max 40.
  ○ Second ballot similar min 20 mins. Up to 40+ min
  ○ 3rd ballot – yes/no. 10 times. No more than 10 mins
- Actually time to sit as a biggest challenge—not useful to figure out a way to limit it to 5 mins as its not productive. Not everything should be oversimplified or easy and fast
- One lady was doing her homework of metrics such as interest rates
- Let people know it is going to take time. MentiMeter for current voting (Can't navigate backwards). Don't want it to be treated like work which is unusual.

How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
- Participation rate goes up; healthy 75-80% participation rate
- Best experience of your year—want people to feel great afterwards esp for people who didn't feel like this is the case. Less of a chore.
- Membership categories refined enough for the people who want to participate to be able to do so.
- Some ppl want to support by investing, coming to meetings but not necessarily voting
- People who could be passionate but aren't; want type of power but too hard currently

- More voting members.

Sarah Jacqz
Communications Organizer, Ujima

<u>Introduction</u>
Became involved as a student, undergrad, working on a student-run fossil fuel divestment campaign at UMASS Amherst. Through that, became involved in reinvestment movement - work to begin to build connections around reinvestment (moving university wealth into community solutions and grassroots organizing efforts). Connected with Ujima at the beginning, hadn't launched yet, but connected through UMASS Amherst. Met Aaron, brought him in for panels and events, then did a fellowship after graduating with Ujima, and then hired full time in Feb 2018. Title: Communications Organizer

<u>Voting Process</u>
What was the initial motivation for holding an election, from your perspective?
Motivation was to have a body of folks stewarding the process for drafting community standards receive member input on draft. Wanted the body to be a group of people with experience, grounded in the community and relevant issue areas. First democratically elected body, motivation was to lean into building out the deomcratic ecosystem, and to vet standards.

What was your role, if any, in developing /planning for the election?
Role was flexible and emergent. Did a lot of comms work, Nia and she worked most on planning out the process (vote launch, voting implementation, etc.). Also did a lot of execution around comms (sending out emails, social media, website with videos from candidates)

Walk me through the voting process.
March 2018. With every key step, there would be an email blast that went out to members. Not sure where they asked for nominations - think they let solidarity members nominate candidates as well. Reached out to candidates.

What voting technologies did you use? How long did it take you to vote?
Between March and April, they received videos from candidates, had them answer questions around qualifications. Put candidate answers up on webpage. Included videos in emails, also encouraged people during Wednesday meetings to engage. Also did a mass text, which they thought was effective in getting votes. Also tried phone banking. Extended voting process through end of April. She personally did not vote b/c she is a solidarity member, but sat with voters. Favorite part of the process was forum, felt very grassroots.

What role did you play, if any, in implementing the processes around the election?
Created voting booths, sat with a friend and filled out paper ballot.
What role, if any, did you play in communicating or implementing the results of the election?
She and Nia tallied the ballots, used the Voatz app, and used a Google Form. Decided to switch to a google form to make it more accessible. Checked the tallies as they went, but did not tally who was winning during the process because they didn't want to bias it.

<u>Reflection</u>
What went well?

Happy with how many people voted within the time frame. Good to keep having it be a simple vote, people electing people, so it was a very simple, streamlined decision-making process. In-person voting was also good - didn't have too many people use in person voting stations, but great for building muscle for voter participation. Proud that they're able to adapt as they went - people aren't using Voatz, so let's switch to Google Forms. Appreciated Nia's and Ujima's overall commitment to achieving quorum. Had someone nominate themselves for the committee (a white man), and he ultimately ended up stepping back without having to be explicitly told - Sarah is happy that the folks who were nominated were reflective of the community, that there is a general consensus that they'd articulated the importance of leadership from folks of color, people from the community, since this was reflected in who ran and who was elected.

What could have gone better?
Strange technical challenges where some people filled out the Google Form twice - which one should they tally? When they got to counting, they wish they had been more deliberate (this has also come up in more recent elections). For future votes, need to eliminate room for error. Voatz is too burdensome for folks to use and hindered some of the early participation. Voatz needs people to log in each time, bad user interface. They have also talked about improving their voting system, especially for simple election.

Do you feel confident that the results of this election accurately reflect the needs and preferences of Ujima's members? Do you think 50% + 1 is the right threshold?
This feels appropriate right now. We need to be realistic about the resources and time that we have for these votes. Ideally it would be 100%, but that's not realistic. They held meetings to discuss the process with people from the community, but it was not as robust as they would've wanted it to be (in contrast to the election itself). Turnout and participation in member meetings has seemed like it was not representative of voting member demographic breakdown. The member meetings were predominantly white, majority solidarity members. Member meeting demographic makeup has changed, still skews towards more white people and new residents, but it has gotten better toward being more representative, increasing diversity. It takes time and energy to organize people and conduct outreach. Have been working to have staff spend more time engaging members who have not been coming to member meetings, hired someone temporarily to lead this effort.

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
This is a hard question. She asks herself this on a daily basis. How do we do democracy? Don't have the answer. This is an open question. They don't necessarily need fewer decisions, less decision-making; they need simpler voting decisions. Not "we only have 4 votes per year", but it's more of an integrated thing that involves simpler decisions. Make it easier for people to participate on a more ongoing basis, make the votes easier, accessible, and integrated into people's lives.

Big Picture
How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
Wants to work more deeply with grassroots partners, integrate decision-making into existing processes, parts of the community (e.g., 5 min window at City Life meeting for members to give input). Excited to figure out how Ujima continues to build more by working with those groups doing base building.

Nadav David
Voting Member | Financial Coaching Associate, Compass Working Capital

Introduction
- Got involved was about 3.5 years ago
- Was a student at Northeastern. Went to an Ujima meeting with a friend
- Launched faith network of about a dozen faith-based organizations: buying from local organizations, pilot action campaign
- Payment and low taxes program – Mayor Menino. Ways to encourage business to flag a portion of their revenue for social services. Because non-profits don't pay property taxes e.g. hospitals, universities. Bring more transparency into the process. Haven't reassessed property values since 2010. Lately have been focused on investing and purchasing side of it. Have been co-leading this work with Lucas.

Voting Process
- Was familiar with several people who were nominated
- Remembered viewing the list and seeing who they are, what their values are
- Business standards are around ownership—50% people of color, 50% women-- wanted business standard committee to reflect that too
- He is a voting member—decided to identify as a person of color. But lives in JP—not in Dorchester, Roxbury, or Mattapan.
- But decided to be a voting member because he's been involved for such a long time-- has been on the fence on that for a while-- may become a solidarity member
- Having the committee makes it possible to take the work forward
- Remembered reading the bios. What is their expertise. Remember using Voatz. Know they have a different system now.
- Think the bios came through on a newsletter. I tend to read the newsletter pretty closely. Bios may have been on the Voatz app itself too.
- Can't remember if I voted on the Voatz link or the Google form
- There is a challenge to get to the 50%
- Trying to make it as accessible as possible e.g. come to the office, come to the weekly meetings
- Would communicate how close they were; keep people up to date
- 18% of people voted in most recent Boston election. Values wise it is commendable
- It is exhausting for the staff-- for the vote that was going on recently. Felt like it was going on for a while

How did you learn about the results of the election?
- Email newsletter
- Also talked about it at weekly meetings

Reflection
What went well?
Explanation of why this vote is happening and how it's connected to larger mission felt good. Oh, I get why we're doing this. That was the case for me, I don't know about others. This connects to what we're trying to do. There was a certain transparency about it.

What could have gone better?

- The votes that have been most successful are the ones they've been able to integrate into some larger event or meeting. When it's just virtual that can be harder to capture people's energy and potential.
- I don't think there was a standalone event for it.
- Idea: video call
- Knew there were videos, but didnt know that there was an in person meeting with candidates speaking
- Out of the regular flow would have been more meaningful e.g a city-wide meeting. Meet the candidate events.

Do you feel confident that the results of this election accurately reflect the needs and preferences of Ujima's members? Do you think 50% + 1 is the right threshold?
- The group of people who were chosen are great
- City wide gathering last October-- they revisited who's on the committee--committee members are also on the website. Good to keep up the visibility
- Rank choice voting-- would that be useful or would it be confusing-- something to consider. Would that make people more compelled to vote or more connected to certain candidates
- Hitting 50% is the biggest challenge
- Trying more creative things to get there. Idea: everyone gets together in Roxbury and has a vote night
- Video calls: jump on this call for 30 min and learn about the voting process
- It's a hard line. Maybe when it's something that's going to be foundational to a longer process. E.g. the business committee
- There is vote fatigue that could happen-- more than every couple of months would be too much

Big Picture
How did this election compare with subsequent Ujima elections?
- A lot of the subsequent votes felt a lot more complicated and felt like a bigger ask of members
- Candidate vote felt more regular-- look at backgrounds and choose several
- Complex-- read proposals, answer all these questions
- Would like to see things being more simple

How was this different from other democratic processes you have observed or have participated in?
- Really like the nomination piece of it. That's a strong element.
- Could candidates respond to each other? Not in a debate way but more of a conversation with each other. Like a group interview as opposed to just a video. I don't like the way the national debates happen. But would answer questions about how their views relate to mine.

How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
- More of a role for the grassroots organizations
- Use them to help guide the vote because they also convene people
- Would like to see a vote on anchor institutions or faith based institutions become members of Ujima
- Or voting on a committee who works with anchors
- Prefers interactive in-person meetings as a way to communicate info

Neenah Estrella-Luna
Voting Member | Associate Professor, Salem University

Introduction
- Law professor. Studies race, whiteness, and white supremacy
- Have known Nia for a long time
- Pen Lo from Tufts and Aaron Tanaka-- knew people working on economic solidarity-- it is a small community -- ran into them -- was at an event were Nia was saying they're "starting to do this thing" -- I happened to be at the right place at the right time-- put my name on a list and started to get involved -- it's been a couple years
- Trying to become an investor

Voting Process
- My only role was voting. My memory is vague.
- Teaching schedule doesn't allow for me to go to weekly evening meetings
- I really appreciated that there were video recordings-- why they were running, what they brought to the table
- Must have gotten a link with videos and must have gotten a link to vote
- I believe there were bios
- I know some of them, but not others
- Man, I wish I could get more information about this people
- Would have been nice to have each candidate to have answered an FAQ-- something to compare the candidates to each other, because otherwise I was going off of how they presented themselves in the video and bio
- Me knowing them influenced my decision maybe more than it should
- I really appreciated that videos for everyone who couldn't be there

How did you learn about the results of the election?
- Results came in an email. I don't remember who I voted for.
- I looked at the names and said oh okay. Great and amazing that people ran in the first place.

Reflection
What went well?
- I was able to participate even though I couldn't be there. Often a challenge in social justice work-- decisions are made by people who are able to be at the table.
- I'm from a generation where you couldn't do any work unless you were at the table
- Ujima is the first generation who really took advantage of technology-- we're going to train people and support people even when they can't be there. That is really innovative. This is a step towards a challenge in organizing.
- Try to live stream all of their meetings and trainings-- it's taken a little while for them to get it down. They're doing a lot with a little resources.
- Really liked how they designed the business standards website
- There were some kinks with the website with what I'm supposed to do now, where do I make a comment
- I sit on a federal commission and they don't even do this. You have to spend a lot of people and fly people into D.C.
- Spending time and working with good UX developers. Still a work in process and still kinks. (e.g. send out a password and the password doesn't work)
- The fact that they are doing it is really innovative and it's pretty much voting.

What could have gone better?
- I suspect that there are people chronically not voting. People don't feel inclined to be involved in that way. There are always people like that. Let me give you money and let me go away. I don't want to be involved. I can be one of those people. There are parts of the semester when I'm losing my mind. I'm running around and I get an email from Ujima and I'm like oh, f***. I don't even have time to wash my hair. I don't have the time to be a thoughtful participant. I don't know how to overcome that.
- Maybe think of different tiers of membership-- people who want to vote and people who are good with whatever people go with
    - For example, I am like this with my retirement fund-- TIAA CREF-- I don't care whose on their board
    - Box you can check that says "whatever y'all want to do"
    - Not part of the denominator any longer to get to that 90%
    - Or reduce the threshold-- maybe it's not 50% but 33%
    - I came from poverty but now I am in a position of social and economic power-- maybe I should defer my vote to people who this impacts more
    - My husband is one of those people who doesn't want to be bothered
- Ujima is trying to resocialize people into greater engagement-- bucking up against a trend
- Immigration organizing world, I am seeing more and more around text messaging and Whatsapp voting
- In the research world, there has been a movement of text messaging as a way to get people to respond-- tends to get higher response rate than email
- People may not be on the web but they are on their phones

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
- They want to be a democratically organized institution. Voting on who's making decisions sounds right to me-- consistent with the republican government we have in the U.S.
- Voting on the standards seemed like a good idea
- Last vote: whether or not to invest in CERO -- I have to admit I felt a little bit uncomfortable because I don't know how to make these decisions. I am not an investor type. I have a background in finance, but it's non-profit finance and healthcare finance.
- Something that requires a level of expertise that a lot of us don't have. Would take a lot of education. I am not willing to put that time in.
- I really liked the education but...you know what the standards are. I am happy to leave it up to the Ujima folks.
- Maybe have an open period for objections rather than a member-wide vote
- I don't want to have to vote on individual investments. I am comfortable enough with my own ignorance to know that I am not comfortable to make a decision.
- I wouldn't know how to make a distinction between a good business plan vs. bad business plan
- Or people who put themselves up for a committee to learn more and make those decisions

<u>Big Picture</u>
How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
- Learn about what we need to know whether its candidates or voting standards-- they made that process very easy. And it was multi-model-- interactive thing, videos, PDF. I was looking on the website and then had to get on a plane. Was able to print out PDF which was great.

- I have hearing loss-- if individual speaker is not mic'd and/or the camera is pointed towards them, I can not hear. Have heard this from others.
- Would like to see closed captions on videos. Helpful for many reasons. Or transcripts.
- Maybe more lead time for community education so that people feel comfortable with voting.
- Latino civic engagement group in Boston-- face to face education-- works with our community. Involves an enormous amount of lead time. Will not be activated by a Facebook event. They will be activated by someone knocking on their door or calling their phone. More lead time and more identifying who influencing who-- and paying people to do that work. Might require slowing down. Sometimes you need to go slow to go fast. More face to face engagement.
- I think Ujima should charge for this report

Biplaw Rai
Voting Member | Co-Founder, Dudley Cafe

Introduction
- Biplaw is the co-founder of the Dudley Café
- Dudley Café is a member of the Business Alliance.
- He's been around since the beginning of Ujima; the Café functions as their second office, so he sees Ujima staff and members 3-4 times per week.
- Biplaw believes he's a solidarity member of Ujima, but isn't sure. He doesn't go to many meetings, but has attended some meetings, including a regular Wednesday meeting this week.
- Biplaw is a member of Ujima "because of the political climate; capitalism isn't working. The only alternative approach is local economy. I'm aligned with Ujima's mission and the way they do their work. I believe in local economy more than anything else. It's better to have local businesses than corporate chains that send money somewhere else. Those corporates are not helping the community."

Voting Process
- Dudley Café served as the spot for Ujima members to vote.
- Ujima reached out about a month beforehand to set up in-person voting station.
- Biplaw sees Nia 3-4 times per week, so it was an in-person conversation.
- Didn't vote. I'd hope to get more involved, but my time is crazy.
- Dudley Café definitely had some people come in, but not as many as you would think. I don't know the exact number.
- The voting process was really easy and straightforward for Dudley Cafe. Members would come in and ask the café staff for information. They picked up ballots, filled them out, and left them in a closed envelope at the cash register.
- To notify Dudley Café staff, Biplaw forwarded the email from Ujima to his staff, and put up a sign in the kitchen to tell them that the election was happening.

How did you learn about the results of the election?
- Ujima coordinated the ballot pickup via email and had a staffer stop by in person to pick them up. Very smooth and easy.
- Biplaw and Dudley Café heard the election results like everyone else, via email.

Reflection
What went well?

- It was seamless. Members knew to pick up the ballot, drop off the ballot. It wasn't a heavy burden on our part.
- We know members well. It would be rare to have someone we don't know come in. There aren't many Ujima members.

What could have gone better?
- We didn't have a way to verify who was voting. It would make sense to have Ujima create some sort of membership card, to figure out who is a voting member, who is a solidarity member, and so on.
- Common card is an alternative to cash and credit card, used by Ujima, started in Western Mass. Dudley Café is now using it. It seems like this could be used to verify identities.
- Better signage could be useful. In-person voting stations could be a good opportunity for Ujima to market their brand. The voting booth could highlight members' work, bring some life to the display.

How many votes do you think Ujima should ask its members to participate in each year?
- Dudley Café would be happy to host more Ujima votes, possibly as many as 2-3 times per year.
- Their podcasts and videos are good. It's a clever way to keep people informed if they can't make the meetings.
- It probably makes sense to keep voting to 30 minutes maximum.
- Adding key summaries after meetings could be an efficient way to keep people informed.
- Online voting could be useful. I see online voting as the future.
- Ujima hasn't approached us after that election. We would gladly do more in-person voting stations if they asked us

<u>**Big Picture**</u>
How was this different from other democratic processes you have observed or have participated in?
Ujima goes 2-3 steps deeper than typical democratic processes. They take time to make sure everyone is heard. It's clear that there's a lot of thought and effort put into the process. Ujima is made better because the staff really dig deep.

How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?

- I'm hoping that Ujima goes more online. Members could log in and vote via app. It could shorten the time frame, making it easy to access for more people.
- There's a beauty to having a polling station. But it's a dying breed.
- I'd like to help share more information on the candidates, such as which issues they're voting for. Information is currently online or shared in meetings, but there should be other spaces; Dudley Cafe can support more information sharing through newsletters or signs, which could inform members and bring in new members.

Is there anything else that we have not covered yet in this conversation?
- In Roxbury people know Ujima well, but they don't know exactly what they do. Ujima is a little complicated, not the usual non-profit."
- New business is planning to apply for a loan through Ujima.
- Dudley Café is all about human power, we don't spend many dollars on marketing. It makes sense to partner with Ujima. Aligns with our mission and vision.

Chuck Turner
Voting Member and Standards Committee Member | Community Activist and Former Boston City Councilor

Introduction
- Chuck is a member of the community standards committee at Ujima; he has been a longtime mentor to Aaron Tenaka and informal adviser to Ujima, but didn't have an official role before his election.
- Chuck was working on good jobs standards through the Boston Jobs Committee, along with the city of Boston. He thought that it would be interesting to see how Ujima was assessing good jobs.
- The backstory:
    - When Aaron Tanaka graduated from college, he raised money to work on community organizing. Chuck and Aaron met around then, when Chuck was a Boston City Councilmember.
    - Chuck encouraged Aaron to help organize the Greater Roxbury Workers Neighborhood Association (GRWNA) with him, focusing on worker cooperatives.
    - Aaron worked in the organization for 8 years, until a wealthy progressive donor, David Ludlow, donated money to bring activists together. Chuck was in prison at the time that this organization reorganized and renamed itself the Center for Economic Democracy. Under Aaron's leadership, CED began to try different experiments, and one of them was Ujima.
- Aaron started Ujima around the time that Chuck got out of prison. We started with an intern-mentor relationship, and became co-facilitators of the organization.
- Ujima became a conceptual framework; Aaron and Nia were very creative with taking ideas from activists and adding them to Ujima's mission. Activists raised issues about the need for culture, which led to the introduction of music at meetings.

Voting Process
- It was announced that they were going to have an election. Someone nominated me, I'm not sure who. I wasn't a member, so I didn't have much information about what the process was like.
- I don't remember talking to the members about my candidacy. I do remember speaking with the group after we were formed. My first interaction as a Committee member was as a group. When I came to the first meeting, I learned that there would be several representatives from the business alliance too.
- I didn't have any involvement in the first election.
- Second election was meant to ratify business standards. Chuck played a role in laying out the information for this vote. It was a very professional, comprehensive process. My perspective was that this vote was a really interesting democratic process that set up. That was the election that I was involved in.
- I wasn't a member during the election, so I didn't vote. I haven't voted in other Ujima elections. My focus was my committee.
- It's a complicated question (as to whether I vote). I had some health issues, and thought it was best for me to stop working full-time (at the Boston Jobs Committee). It was hard to tell what my capacity would be. I'm pulling back from organizations.

- Ujima is good about expecting its members to do work around its issues, but my situation is different. What would make sense is for me to resign from the committee due to health complications, and the person who will replace me is going to work half-time. I'm rambling because I'm thinking it through.. my replacement will have a perspective that's informed by the Boston Jobs Committee membership, which would be good.
- I think I'll set December 31st as my official date to pull back from activities.
- Two and a half years is not a long time for prison, but it was enough time for me to reflect. It was the first time since 1963 that I hadn't been involved in organizing political struggles. It was a fascinating experience. We used to sit around asking why they were spending money on us. I worked for about an hour a day. I remember looking at my first paycheck, which was tiny. To be in a situation with no responsibilities for 2.5 years, with no tension, was new. It was a work camp, so we were basically slaves who would take care of more violent prisons, cooking when they weren't allowed to it for themselves. The experience of not having that stress of work… I thought it was interesting to just pull back from activities that were stressful. Starting in January, I'll be in a situation that I've never been outside of prison.
- Being a part of the Ujima community standards committee isn't a big time commitment. We have four or five projects that you're working on that would take about 4-5 hours. The stress is that you have to think about different activities. I leave meetings feeling underprepared, feeling like I need to do more, and I don't know if I want to do that.
- Was notified by Ujima about election results

Reflection
What went well?
- I wasn't there for the first vote, and have no sense of what went well. The other one (on the business standards) went well. The information was organized. We were standing in a circle, the information was discussed in that circle.
- The really interesting thing would be to interview businesses about the business standards. Businesses might have thought that they'd be able to get money out of this group.
- The committee has no idea what the businesses are thinking. And we're developing the process that will be used with them to make determinations. It's going to be work to figure out how to make decisions on what's appropriate and not appropriate to welcome businesses into the financial circle.

What could have gone better?
The big votes across a community are the easy ones. The big challenge is how to use the business standards and get it to work. The committee members are now focused on how the business are handling the criteria.

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
- With the business standards, you're getting into questions that businesses think they should be able to decide. Do the businesses feel that they can or should meet these goals?
- I think Ujima members should vote on whether to give money to businesses, because you're influencing their decisions, and raising awareness over how the community thinks businesses should act.
- It's hard to predict what questions are important to vote on. We don't know how the process of voting on business decisions yet.

Big Picture
How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
The biggest question is what are the business criteria. What are the standards that we set for participation by businesses? Are they too high, or too low? The big question is, what will the businesses be willing to do? That's a process that needs to be worked out with Ujima staff and the committee.

Jill Kimmel
Solidarity Member and Standards Committee Member | Director of Operations, Haley House

Introduction
- Jill is a member of Ujima's community standards committee as one of two business alliance representatives.
- She's been a part of the community standards committee since its kick-off meeting last spring (April 2018). She sees her role as focused on implementation. Are our business standards (such as a $15 minimum wage) feasible for small businesses and non-profits? These business standards can be overwhelming to businesses.
- Ujima asked members to generate a list of businesses (several hundred or more) and reach out to encourage them to become members of the business alliance. Membership to the business alliance is currently in flux, as Ujima wants all businesses to be evaluated against the business standards criteria first.
- My role was participating in the committee that put the business standards together. We would sit and talk through the decisions that were difficult, and then the staff would write up and communicate these draft standards.
- Jill got involved with Ujima through Aaron Tenaka, who she's known for 15 years. Met through Haley House, her current employer. Aaron pitched the idea to Jill and brought her in. Haley House is a bakery and coffee shop focused on social justice in Dudley Square; it tries to offer job opportunities to formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Jill has been CFO/operations person in social service non-profits in Boston for 20 years. Did a mid-career masters of public policy program at Tufts. Handles accounting for non-profit organizations.
- Jill participated in initial group of business alliance (via Haley House) for Ujima. She started going to business alliance meetings due to her personal interest in these topics.
- Haley House has been closed since January 2019, but hopes to reopen soon. It's been hard to pull off the financial model; they've spent the past 10 months improving their model.

Voting Process
I think it was simplified. I don't remember, as it has been months since I voted. Some of this voting was tedious.

How did you learn about the results of the election?
They were communicated by Ujima staff. Jill wasn't involved.

Reflection
What went well?
I think the community standards committee vote went more smoothly than the other ones.

What could have gone better?

- No one answered the banking vote. Nobody really wanted to engage. They had really clear directions, but nobody read them. People couldn't click backwards within the app during the banking vote, which was an issue.
- The outreach strategy from Ujima seemed similar for each vote… the content made the difference [in response time]. The people I talked to said that they didn't have the knowledge to contribute to the banking vote. They cared more about the business standards.

Do you feel confident that the results of this election accurately reflect the needs and preferences of Ujima's members?
- Yes. I don't know what happened with the financial institutions vote. I didn't feel strongly about that one. I don't remember.
- The online voting process worked for people who were online for their jobs. I know Ujima staff is interested in using apps on their phone.
- I haven't been to the Wednesday meetings [due to a weekly conflict], but my guess is that there aren't a majority of the membership who attends them.
- I don't remember [whether members rejected any specific business standards during the business standards vote]. I think people were more just trying to drill down into what the standards meant.
- We've talked about updating things on an annual basis as we gain information on what makes sense. I don't know what that could look like down the line.

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
- I think there should be acknowledgement of community standards, because they are core. I feel less sure that the banking vote should have gone out to the full community. The vote offered too many options. Some of my friends said 'oh, I didn't know you could do that' with banking, and [Ujima] needed to do a full lesson on it. I think they should have focused on one of them, rather than do all of them.
- When I clicked on the vote (for the current open vote), I had to watch a video, and so I put it aside. When they sent it out again, I got farther on the vote but gave up because I didn't have time for it. I still haven't completed it. It's not that there shouldn't be votes on these things. I tend to be a thorough person, and I want to look through the materials they share, but it's time-consuming.
- It would be easier if we did an up or down vote on some topics, which would allow members to say that we trust that Ujima has done their due diligence.

How many votes do you think Ujima should ask its members to participate in each year?
- I'd like to spend around 10 minutes on voting each time. If it's just 10 minutes, I could do more votes per year.
- In my opinion, the committee should do the work to make sure a business meets the standards. Then the membership should just give a thumbs-up or thumbs down vote on the committee's progress.
- This most recent vote required you to download a report, and I didn't have time for it.

Big Picture
How did this election compare with subsequent Ujima elections?

- The business standards meeting wasn't a rubber stamp; we did a lot of work beforehand to give updates to the membership on what we're working on. I think it was a transparent process, from my perspective.
- Some votes went for four months when they wanted them to go for a week. I was mostly a voter, but I have some insight, as Ujima asked me to reach out to people [to encourage them to vote].

How was this different from other democratic processes you have observed or have participated in?
- Email is seen as what the old people use. People are texting. I find it somewhat annoying, but it's what people are using. I don't know if Ujima used texting [to get out the vote].

How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
- Theoretically, it's a great idea to include members, but there should be some sort of attrition for members who don't participate. Maybe an annual renewal.
- Ujima is already doing a lot to educate people with a written report, a video, and more. I don't know if they should be doing more. At some point it's about members' trust that Ujima leadership knows what they're doing, and that they support it.

Is there anything else that we have not covered yet in this conversation?
- The model that Ujima is trying to promote is one of cooperative leadership. It's great in theory, but it's time-consuming.
- It took months to get these votes. My guess is that there were all of these people who signed up for Ujima and then didn't participate… so they have more members than active members.
- The community standards committee meetings are some of my favorites to go to. It's a great group of people. It felt like we did a good job. It was a thoughtful process. I also would have been open if people came back and said they didn't like them, but they did.
- Ujima shares everything. Wednesday meetings are recorded and interactive.
- I feel like I'm learning so much by being a part of this network. Ujima's work is a lot of educating.
- I love that Ujima does weekly updates. They're time-consuming, but very useful. But I often wonder if I have time to read them.

Suntae Kim
Solidarity Member | Assistant Professor, Boston College Carroll School of Management

Introduction
- Professor at BC; organizational management
- Planning to do research on Ujima but hasn't yet-- personal circumstances have prevented it
- What was the research topic? Still hopeful to do it when I have more capacity → interested in the process of developing business alternatives → really innovative and still interested in digging into it
- Self-nominated for the committee
- Had just joined and was looking for ways to be helpful-- January 2018
- Has done research on certified B-Corps-- thought that would be helpful
- Looking back, I don't think I had a lot of understanding about the org and the neighborhood
- Had just moved to Boston and didn't have deep roots

Voting Process

What was the initial motivation for holding an election, from your perspective?
- Natural step for Ujima → practicing democracy. Want to incorporate democratic principles. Use mechanism of voting to have people involved
- Was not involved in planning, but self-nominated and gave a speech at a weekly meeting. Video recorded the speech. Think it contributed to his defeat. Was embarrassed by his video. Others had years/decades of experience. Regretted nominating himself. If i run again for something w/ Ujima, I would strengthen my roots in the community. Because it's a very localized experience.

Walk me through the voting process.
- Asked for nominations-- for a time. Don't remember how long. More than 10 people were nominated. Nominations gave live speeches at weekly meetings or video recorded themselves
- Then Ujima shared an edited video with the speeches through a weekly email
- Did not vote (doesn't live in Boston)
- Does not remember how nominated people went from 20 to 10
- Did not ask me if I wanted to be a candidate or not

How did you learn about the results of the election?
I think learned results through a mass communication email: weekly email or special email dedicated to the election. Don't think I was personally notified that I was not elected. Whole spirit behind the election is not competitive. It was about what's best for the community. I totally respect that.

Reflection
- Even though I was embarrassed and uncomfortable about the speech, sharing the video of speeches was a good idea. At least the majority of them gave a speech at the meeting or sent a video recording. Seeing the other videos was helpful for me.
- Got to know a few people who were there at the meeting because we were competitors in a sense. Got to know their backgrounds and how they were committed to the community. Really made me feel even better about the election results. It is great that I was not elected. Looking back, I am not qualified for the position.

What could have gone better?
- Almost everything about the election went well. It was well thought out. The process was fair and transparent. From the candidate's perspective, it could have been better if I had been more informed about what they were looking for. If I had had a little bit more information beforehand, I would not have nominated myself. They could have provided more information and guidance on who is qualified to run. Could have prevented people like me from nominating myself and motivated others to nominate themselves.
- I totally understand. They were just getting started and still getting organized.
- Impact of election getting extended on me was minimal. Was not waiting on results. I am a little bit concerned that it's becoming a chronic issue that they're having a hard time mobilizing people to vote. I don't have a good solution but I am becoming more and more aware that it's an issue. I'm concerned because I care about the success of the project. And the success is dependent upon the ability to mobilize. Could be another research question: why is this the case and what could be the solution?
- I know they're making a lot of efforts: email, texting, phone banking
- My suggestion: try to have a better understanding of the people who don't vote. Don't seem to have a lot of information about the characteristics of members. Who they are and how engaged they are. Tough mission because if they're not voting, how can you get them to talk to you?

Do you feel confident that the results of this election accurately reflect the needs and preferences of Ujima's members?
Don't think I'm qualified to answer. Don't share physical, cultural, and social environment with members. I tend to believe that voting reflects the preference of the members. If there is one thing to be skeptical about, it's the low turnout.

Do you think 50% + 1 is the right threshold?
- 50% → Might not reflect a problem, might reflect an unrealistic expectation of democracy.
- I think they should maintain that because it gives them legitimacy as a democratic agency
- May have to lower it if they continue to need to extend the deadline

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
- If you could make every decision democratically that would be great, but it's not possible.
- Should maintain democratic processes around the fund, as that's a key piece of their work.
- Other ways to use democratic process: Committee teams that represent members' perspectives
- Voting is only one mechanism for democracy → encourage more participation in member teams
- How many times/year: right now, 3-4 times/year if I remember correctly. Don't think it's excessive. As far as I know, people can still vote online.

Big Picture
How did this election compare with subsequent Ujima elections?
- Don't recall other elections, because I wasn't a candidate
- Think there was more excitement and enthusiasm around the first election
- Seems that the process wasn't as hard as its been lately
- Don't know if voting members get different info from the solidarity members-- I think I get everything. Don't pay much attention to the voting emails.

How was this different from other democratic processes you have observed or have participated in?
Feels much closer. Was able to meet candidates. Get to know them. Different from other elections in which I vote for people who I have never met.

How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
- Hope turn out rate improves. Have greater understanding of the members. First step in gaining participation. I'm not sure how often they renew their member list. Have people moved from Boston? Try to expand the definition of democracy beyond voting. Lots of insights and good ideas coming from committees. And some things about committees that could be improved.
- Think they have different classes of committees-- meet every month
- Investment evaluation committee-- solicited by Ujima-- not elected
- Terms are always changing -- member teams -- not now, semester is crazy and I cannot participate on Wednesday evenings
- Has been on investment evaluation, Investor organizing, financial education, business support member teams in the past → had convo with Sarah Jimenez who is leading another team -- participated on 4 teams for 5-6 months
- Realized that its difficult to continue the momentum because its volunteer-based and people are always changing. Lack of continuity.

- How is info collected from team meeting processed for staff members? That process is not clear. One month, someone made a great suggestion. Next month, it hadn't gone anywhere.
  Staff works really hard and they have a lot to work with. Ultimately their call. Have heard from other team members that their voice is not heard. Majority of team members who participate monthly have high expectations and expect to be heard. Not staff. Participation is irregular. Want to incorporate, but it's difficult. Puzzle for any organization who wants to be democratic. I have shared that with Nia.

Andy Nash
Solidarity Member | Senior Advisor, New England Literacy Resource Center

Introduction
- Andy is a solidarity member (non-voting), and is a member of several unelected Ujima committees, including the outreach committee.
- Andy was a member of Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ), heard of Ujima through this.
- Went to a meeting that launched Ujima in August (2017?), went to meetings to figure out where her place should be.
- Was eager to participate in committees, including outreach, investor organizing committees. (How do these committees coordinate? It hasn't always been clear).
- Asked to make calls as part of the outreach committee to encourage members to vote.

Voting Process
- No role in planning the election.
- One of the things Ujima needed was a vote early on to engage people and send a message that we were organized. This vote was a good early vote because there were a lot of names people knew.
- One of my concerns with Ujima is not enough strategy; what's the strategy here? So I hope that this early vote was seen as a way to engage people.
- Meetings happen every week, and different committees happen. I only go once a month.
- Aside from Joyce, who is very present, there aren't many others who are very present.

Walk me through the voting process.
- I remember reviewing the video clips. I thought that was a great idea. They had candidates at a meeting, too. It's important to present info in ways that aren't just in written form, as that can be difficult for people.
- I know I did call people to remind them to vote and direct them to the videos.
- [How did the calls go?] The people I knew and called were great. There were other people who were open but clearly didn't know where this was coming from. Mostly I was leaving messages.
- There were a lot of people who at some point got excited about Ujima but then didn't know that they were expected to vote.
- I think there were people going to farmer's markets and places they thought people would gather. Though outreach was limited to Ujima members, as they were the ones who could vote.
- I'm not sure that there is an annual meeting – there should be! There have been neighborhood forums. These are meant to understand what people like and want to change about their neighborhood, and do a good job of getting people excited.

How did you learn about the results of the election?

- Sarah sends out a newsletter each week, and I think that's how I found out, along with everyone else.
- I haven't had direct engagement with the committee since then.

Reflection
What went well?

It was a good topic. People understood what they were voting on. In other elections, people were confused and didn't know what they were voting about. It was clear what the purpose of was, and what your choices were.

What could have gone better?

- It's possible this happened and I didn't know, but I had no idea where these candidates came from. One of the issues is that it hasn't been really a grassroots initiative; it's coming from people who have a vision, and are organizing it by getting buy-in from leaders and hoping that the community will come. That might work, but we've had some struggles with getting the community to come. If it's all high-profile people, but you haven't done on-the-ground organizing, then you haven't done enough.
- I understand that all of that base-building takes time. I think they were looking to build a structure with acknowledged leaders and have the community fill in," but it's still a work in progress.
- This process is part of a bigger set of issues, which is transparency. One of the things Ujima needs to work on is telling people what they're doing. Especially for an organization that's built on a democratic structure, people are asking, 'how did that [decision] happen?' which undermines the purpose of this organization.
- Ujima was slow to hire community organizers. They asked the outreach committee to do this, but we didn't know what we were doing, we didn't have the capacity. We needed someone to help us.
- You'd often hear that staff are off at conferences promoting Ujima. Ujima hasn't accomplished anything yet. I wanted to say, "get off the road, come home, and get something done."
- The volunteer committee are mostly solidarity members, mostly white people. How are we going to convince people of color to join? We need to rethink our volunteer model.
- Committees have dropped in number. People who had 6-8 people now have 3-4 people.
- We should use voting to excite people about Ujima's mission. This most recent vote was confusing – even highly educated people didn't know what the vote was looking for. That was a big mistake.
- We need to prepare people well for a vote. The organizer needs to figure out: how are you going to get people excited about this?
- What if we asked people, 'what kinds of things do you want to vote on?' That would give people a sense of ownership and involvement.
- People care more about what are the business standards, rather than who's on the committee.
- One thing I've heard from Ujima members: 'the business standards are great, but why are we asking a small business in Roxbury to meet these standards when we aren't asking big businesses downtown to do so. That puts them at a competitive disadvantage.' I think we should have a discussion about this so that people have the chance to think through the decision.

Do you feel confident that the results of this election accurately reflect the needs and preferences of Ujima's members?

- I don't feel the same way about each vote. Some votes, the technical ones, we don't need everyone to vote – just people to say "yes, keep going." Other questions, about the direction of the organization, I would hope we get more than 50% + 1.
- People don't get it that it's a participatory process.

In your opinion, when should Ujima rely on community-wide voting to make decisions? When is it necessary?
- It's about building momentum. Has the groundwork been laid for people to get excited about the vote?
- The newsletter ideally would have a section on "what are we working on?" that gives transparency on what's coming down the road. Currently, votes are coming out of the blue.
- Something that pulls people in. Maybe a video update from the staff that previews what Ujima is working on or thinking about. One of the problems is the committees don't know what other committees are working on.
- [previewing info] also gives people a sense of what it means to vote for Ujima.

Big Picture
How do you hope Ujima's voting processes evolve over time?
- Subsequent votes would take half an hour to vote. They need to figure out how to make this process simpler, because people were overwhelmed. It was too dense.
- There were a lot of financial questions on the vote. I initially joined the "financial education committee," which didn't get off the ground because people were stretched thin. But there's this big question: how do voting members get educated on financial issues, given that this is what Ujima will work on. But they're not going to walk in the door to get educated; what's going to pull them in?

Is there anything else that we have not covered yet in this conversation?
- There are many committees, and none of them are elected. There's been a staffer assigned to each committee, but staff are limited in their capacity.
- Ujima said that their vision is for committees to run themselves. But volunteers don't have the bandwidth to do that. And there's a lack of clarity about who is making the decisions. Is it the staff making the decision, or the committee? It's not clear who owns the process. None of that was thought through. And the committees don't know what each other are working on – committees are only meeting 1.5 hours per month. It's clear that there's a hierarchy of committees, and some of those committees get more staff attention.
- People come and go and not a lot gets done. A lot of time is spent introducing new people. Catching up on what was covered last meeting. Each committee should have an assigned staff members so that the conversation can always be forward-moving and so that decisions can be made more quickly.

Appendix C: Community Standards Committee Election Overview

BOSTON **UJIMA** PROJECT

COMMUNITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE ELECTION
APRIL 5th-13th 2018

The Community Standards Committee is an elected body of the Ujima General Assembly. Members of this committee will play an essential role in ensuring that our investments align with our values. The Community Standards Committee will work to make sure that the businesses that we invest in meet the collective standards of Ujima members, like paying a living wage, reinvesting profits into our communities, and hiring staff that reflect our neighborhoods.

Committee Structure
We are voting to elect 6 members for the Committee, which will have 12 seats total.
The other 6 members will be appointed by the Ujima Business Alliance, our Grassroots Partners, and the Investment Committee.

How the Election Works
- During the month of March: **over 20 people were nominated** by Ujima members
- **10 nominees accepted** the nomination to run for the committee
- Ujima voting **members will vote between April 5th and April 13th,** selecting at least 1 and up to 6 candidates

Who Can Vote
Only Ujima Voting Members are eligible to vote. We need over 50 percent of members to vote for the vote to be valid! If you would like to become an Ujima member you can join today: ujimaboston.com/join.

Community Standards Committee Candidates:

Melonie Griffiths	Luis Cotto	Jovanny Munoz
Suntae Kim	Sheila Blalock	Joyce Clark
Chuck Turner	Darnell Johnson	Alex Ponte-Capellan
Brother Lo		

How to Vote: In Person or Online
You can either vote in person at one of the locations listed on the next page, or online using Voatz. Find directions beginning mid-day Thursday, April 5th at
UJIMABOSTON.COM/VOTES.

#REWRITETHERULES

Appendix D: Member Memo and Role Description

Community Standards Committee Elections
Member Memo and Role Description

<u>**Introduction**</u>
We are excited to announce a Call for Nominations for the Ujima Community Standards Committee. As part of an elected body of the Ujima General Assembly, members of this committee will play an essential role in ensuring that our investments align with our values. The Community Standards Committee will help develop, guide, and implement Ujima's Good Business Certification program. This program will ensure we support and invest in businesses that build wealth and wellbeing in our communities.

We will take nominations between now and March 23, and hold elections between April 4th and April 13th. Self nominations are welcomed and encouraged!

<u>**Community Standards Committee Responsibilities**</u>
The Community Standards Committee is a standing Ujima Working Group, with the following core responsibilities:

- Set Ujima's Good Business Certification Standards
    - Engage Ujima Members and stakeholders to develop a proposal for Good Business Certification Standards (for example, paying a Living Wage)
    - Educate Ujima Members about proposed standards
    - Facilitate the vote, ratification, or amendments of Ujima's Certification Standards by the General Assembly

- Implement Ujima's Good Business Certification Standards
    - Evaluate and approve potential members of the Ujima Business Alliance based on their adherence to eligibility standards
    - Oversee annual Ujima Business evaluation to assign "Certification Levels" based on improvements or declines in meeting Ujima Standards

- Monitor and Report Social Impacts and Community Benefits
    - Oversee regular data collection from Ujima Businesses Alliance members on metrics relating to Certification Standards and their social impact

○ Ensure that Ujima Members and stakeholders are informed about the social impacts measured and generated by Ujima businesses

Standards Committee Composition

The Standards Committee is composed of up to 12 members, representing a cross section of Ujima members and stakeholders. The Standards Committee members can be elected or appointed in the following ways:

● 6 At Large Members elected by General Assembly
● 2 Members appointed by the Ujima Business Alliance
● 2 Members appointed by Grassroots Partners Committee
● 2 Members appointed by Investment Committee

Suggested Criteria of Standards Committee Membership

Nominees for the Community Standards Committee should possess some of the following characteristics:

● Ability to think creatively and expansively when problem solving and considering possibilities
● Experience with or interest in worker justice
● Understanding of or interest in learning about constraints faced by small businesses and businesses owned by people of color
● Experience, skills, abilities or interest in facilitating responsive dialogue
● In depth understanding of industry sector(s) history, norms, and current conversations or interest in researching/learning about industry sector(s)
● Flexibility
● Ability or interest in working with people with diverse backgrounds and expertise
● Strong or interest in developing analytical skills
● Identify with or have significant experience with Boston's working class communities of color

Standards Committee Expectations

Members of the Community Standards Committee should be willing and able to meet to the following ethics, time and eligibility requirements:

● Ethics: in addition to upholding Ujima's broader Code of Conduct, Standards Committee members should be careful to avoid biases and disclose conflicts of interests when evaluating local businesses as part of Ujima's Certification program

● Time Commitment:
   ○ Monthly: 1 two-hour meeting
   ○ Monthly: Up to 1-4 additional hours of work outside of group meeting
   ○ Annually: 1 Standards Committee Retreat
   ○ Participation in Ujima's General Assemblies

- Term Length
  - Standards Committee members will serve for 2 years
  - Members can serve up to 2 consecutive years on the Committee before being required to take a 1 year break before being re-elected or re-appointed

- Eligibility
  - At Large Standards Committee Member:
    - Must be a Voting Ujima Member in good standing
  - Appointed Standards Committee Member:
    - Must be an Ujima Member (voting or non voting) in good standing
    - Not required to be a member of the appointing stakeholder group

- Compensation:
  - Standards Committee membership is a non-compensated volunteer position
  - Lower-income Members are eligible for travel and expense stipends required to conduct Committee business

Nominations and Elections Process for At-Large Members
- **March 1:** Nominations welcome. Nominate yourself or others with this form.
  - If you forget your member log-in information, please email info@ujimaboston.com
- **March 23:** Nominations close.
- **March 23- March 30:** Nominees respond to nominations.
- **April 4:** Election kick-off with in-person event at City Life/ Vida Urbana
  - Nominees deliver short remarks which will be shared with broader Ujima community
- **April 4- April 13:** Elections Held Among Ujima Voting Members
- **April 15:** Six candidates with most votes join new Ujima Community Standards Committee!
- **April 21:** Standards Committee Term Begins **with a** Retreat for the Community Standards Committee

About Community Standards, Certification and Business Standards
- Good Business Standards (Sample)
- About the Ujima Business Alliance

Appendix E: In-Person Voting Locations and Times

IncluDe Innovation/Grove Hall Neighborhood Development Corporation
5 Cheney St, Dorchester MA, 02121

Voting Times: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
Contact: Brandon Ransom, CEO, IncluDe

City Life/Vida Urbana (CLVA)
284 Amory St, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
Voting Times: Monday, April 9th 10am-6pm, Wednesday, April 11th 10am-6pm, Friday, April 13th 11am-5pm
Contact: Denise Matthews-Turner, HR/Office Manager, CLVA

Dudley Cafe
15 Warren St, Boston, MA 02119
Voting Times: Monday-Friday 7am-6pm, Saturday 9am-3pm (Closed Sunday)
Contacts: Biplaw RaiCo-Founder, Dudley Cafe and Daoud Sogoba

First Church of Roxbury
10 Putnam St, Roxbury, MA 02119
Voting Times: Monday-Friday 9:30am-6:00pm
Contact: Shamika Harrison, Director of Office and Facilities

Appendix F: Voatz

About Voatz: Voatz is a for-profit, private mobile election voting application. The stated mission of Voatz is to "make voting not only more accessible and secure, but also more transparent, auditable and accountable." The app can only be used on a smartphone and is designed for absentee and remote voting. It uses a three-step authentication process that involves the voter scanning their state driver's license or passport, taking a live facial snapshot (a "selfie"), and touching the smartphone's fingerprint reader, which connects the voter to their unique device. Once the voter is authenticated, the app matches the voter's "selfie" to the facial picture on their passport or driver's license and confirms the voter's eligibility. The company was founded in 2015 and is headquartered in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Ujima's Use of Voatz: According to Co-founder Aaron Tanaka, the decision to use Voatz was fairly arbitrary. The Ujima team looked into other software, including Mentimeter and Poll Everywhere, but what sold them on Voatz was the unique voter tracking functionality. They wanted to ensure that each member voted only once. The team also liked that the app utilized block-chain technology and was a local business. Within a few days, the Voatz app presented several usability and accessibility challenges for voting members. The following list of challenges was compiled from interviews notes and emails from the election period from Ujima staff and volunteers.

Challenges with Voatz:
- Ujima did no testing—rushed the decision. Didn't realize kinks like security.
- Had conversations with Voatz about making it easier. More could have been done on the tech support side to members to reduce issues that were frustrating.
- Did do a survey about what is happening tech wise to understand barriers to downloading and using the app but the survey didn't have much uptake. Could have had info sessions prior to voting. Other tools could have been used.
- Not user friendly and security was heavy (thumb-prints, ID card scans, etc.)
- Required login; too secure

- Was very hard to get people onboarded onto app
- Intended primarily as a mobile app which made it difficult; steered people to online desktop version which was simpler to use
- Interface was not great (e.g. couldn't watch candidate videos without leaving the app)
- Voatz was also a startup, didn't have capacity on their end to provide needed level of support
- Voatz didn't make sense for Ujima; they eventually had to ask for security standards to be relaxed
- Could not view candidate profiles when clicking the blue info button
- Modal dialogue box wasn't big enough to accommodate the content; some was getting cut off in the app

Screenshot of ballot:

Appendix G: Paper Ballot

Ujima Community Standards Committee Election: Member Ballot

Please cast your vote before the end of the day on Friday, April 27th.

Name: _____

Date:_____

Email: _____

Neighborhood: _____

Membership Type: ⬜ General ⬜ Youth ⬜ Grassroots ⬜ Good Business
*Please note that all membership types are eligible to vote except for Solidarity

Member ID/ Ujima Account # _____
*This can be found by logging into your membership account at tinyurl.com/ujimalogin

If you are not a member you can join online today: www.ujimaboston.com/join.

Voting Instructions: Please vote for at least 1 and no more than 6 people, by filling in the box beside their name. To learn more about the candidates, visit: www.ujimaboston.com/votes

⬜ Melonie Griffiths
⬜ Suntae Kim
⬜ Chuck Turner

⬜ Brother Lo
⬜ Luis Cotto
⬜ Sheila Blalock
⬜ Darnell Johnson

⬜ Jovanny De Amor
⬜ Joyce Clark
⬜ Alex Ponte-Capellan

Thank you! We look forward to co creating a new local economy with you!

Appendix H: Election Results

Elected/At Large:
- Alex Ponte-Capellan
- Luis Cotto
- Joyce Clark
- Darnell Johnson
- Chuck Turner
- Melonie Griffiths (elected in April 2018; no longer serving as of November 2019)

Appointed:
- Mea Johnson
- Jill Kimmel
- Elie Tigalo

COMMUNITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Joyce Clark
Community Health Advocate, NAACP New England Area Conference Chair on Climate Change

Luis Cotto
Program Manager, Mass Cultural Council

Darnell Johnson
Regional Coordinator, Right to the City

Mea Johnson
Director of Community Organizing, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Jill Kimmel
Director of Operations, Haley House

Alex Ponte-Capellan
Community Organizer, City Life/ Vida Urbana

Elie Tigalo
Worker Owner, Tanám

Chuck Turner
Organizer and Former Boston City Councilor