

**Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Regular Meeting  
September 6, 2017**

A regular meeting of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission convened on September 6, 2017 in Room 4080 of the Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue. Commission Chair Eileen Norton called the meeting to order by telephone at 4:06 p.m. Commissioners Vickie Rawlins was in attendance and, and Commissioners Bruce Carter and Hardeep Singh Rekhi joined the meeting by telephone. Vice-Chair Brendan Donckers and Commissioner Charlene Angeles were absent. Executive Director Wayne Barnett and staff members Anthony Adams, Rene LeBeau, Polly Grow, Marc Mayo, Jenna Smith and Annie Tran were present. Assistant City Attorney Gary Smith was also in attendance.

**1) Public Comment**

Tiniell Cato gave public comment on opening the Bertha Knight Landes Room for a weekly meeting.

**2) Special meeting minutes for May 16, 2017**

**3) Special meeting minutes for July 12, 2017**

**4) Special meeting minutes for August 14, 2017**

The Chair asked for comments on the three sets of meeting minutes. Hearing none, she made a motion to adopt the minutes for the three meetings. Commissioner Carter seconded and the motion to adopt was unanimous.

**5) Rule regarding releasing Democracy Voucher candidates from the spending and contribution limits**

The Chair noted that the under the Commission's Administrative Rules, a quorum was not present to adopt a rule. She asked the Director to reach out to the affected campaigns and let them know the rule would be taken up in the near future.

## **6) Request for wider distribution of voucher replacement forms**

The Chair invited Joe Mizrahi and Samantha Grad from United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21 (UFCW 21) to address the Commission. Mr. Mizrahi said that when they asked their members about their vouchers, 80 percent of their members did not know about the voucher program. He said it was very difficult for the members of UFCW 21 to print documents and get their vouchers replaced. The Chair said she was struggling with how and why the union's outreach was different from the candidates' outreach. She asked about the outreach the union had done.

Mr. Mizrahi described some examples of the outreach the union had done, and Ms. Grad said their goal was to break down the barriers to getting replacement vouchers to their members.

The Chair said the Commission was being very deliberative in its approach to implementing the voucher program, because it has a fiduciary duty to steward public funds. She said she was not inclined to move quickly on this request.

Mr. Mizrahi asked why candidates were given access to a form to which third parties were not given access. The Chair noted that one of the goals of the program was to promote interactions between candidates and residents. She said she wanted a broader conversation before changing the rules around replacing vouchers.

Commissioner Carter asked what the process would be if the union was permitted to distribute replacement vouchers. Mr. Mizrahi said the union would distribute the form and tell its members the various ways to return their vouchers. He said they know that they can't collect the forms without violating the bundling law.

Commissioner Rekhi said that no one was intimating that any of the organizations petitioning the Commission for permission to distribute replacement vouchers had any intention of breaking the law. But if the Commission does permit organizations to distribute replacement

vouchers it has to open that up to all organizations, and the Commission needs to assess the risks of doing that. The Chair echoed that the Commission needs to think through worst-case scenarios.

The Chair said she would like to hear from other members of the community before moving forward on the proposal.

Ms. LeBeau reported that 1,700 participants had used the campaign replacement form to submit their vouchers. She said it had been a successful process, and that the error rate on those forms was very small.

She said that in June the Commission had launched a web-based form for issuing replacement vouchers. Replacement vouchers had come in from approximately 1,100 individuals through these other means.

The Chair said the Commission would have this item on its agenda when it looked to assess the program in 2018. She said she would be looking to hear from stakeholders when the Commission conducted that review.

## **Discussion Items**

### **7) I-122 status report**

Ms. LeBeau reported that staff received more than 12,000 vouchers in July, more than double what were received in August. She had brought on temporary staffmembers to process the influx. More than \$500,000 had been disbursed in voucher proceeds.

She referred to a June 6 map showing where vouchers were coming from, and a September 1 map updating returns. She said staff would be continuing to do outreach through the general election, focusing on the northernmost and southernmost regions of the City, since return rates in those two locations were trailing the rest of the City.

She reported that three-quarters of vouchers were coming in by mail, with that number spiking to 90% in the month of August.

In response to a question from Commissioner Carter, the Director said that five of the six candidates on the general election ballot were enrolled in the program.

Commissioner Carter commended the staff for the smooth rollout of the program

**8) Executive Director's report**

The Director reported that the City's motion to dismiss the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the democracy voucher program would be filed shortly and that he would share the pleadings with Commissioners.

**The Regular Commission meeting for September 6, 2017 adjourned at 5:05 p.m.**