

City of Hyattsville Ethics Commission
Tuesday, December 13, 2022 5:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

In attendance: Mark Graham, Michael Horlick (chair), T. Carter Ross, David Sip. Staff: Nate Groenendyk, Laura Reams. Regrets: Nicola Konigkramer.

1. A quorum was noted and the meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Michael Horlick
2. Minutes for the meetings of October 18 and November 29, 2022, were approved on a voice vote.

3. Third Campaign Finance Reports

The commission reviewed the final/third campaign reports from the Ward 2 special election.

- Candidate Melendez Rivera's report lacked signatures from the candidate and treasurer
- Council Member Stab's report lacked a signature from the candidate.
- Candidate Burrello's disposition of funds report was accepted and her campaign account is officially closed.

Letters were drafted for delivery to Melendez Rivera and Strab noting the deficiencies in their reports and requesting the reports be corrected.

4. Update on Annual Reports

The commission reviewed annual reports that had been submitted since the last meeting.

- Former Mayor Hollingsworth's annual report was reviewed and accepted.
- Council Member Waszczak's amended report was reviewed and accepted.

Clerk Reams noted that annual reports for 2021 and 2022 remain outstanding for former Council Member Suiter. The commission agreed to send a letter requesting the former member file the past-due reports as soon as possible, noting that, if the reports remain delinquent, the commission can refer the matter to the Board of Supervisors of Elections for possible action.

5. Campaign Finance Report Revisions

Ross reviewed several proposed changes and updated forms for campaign finance reporting. He noted the changes were made after reviewing how the state forms handle some aspects of reporting, as well as looking at common reporting errors or problems encountered during past city elections.

Changes made to the cover sheet include:

- Removed In-Kind contributions from the "math" portion.
- Added a section (outside the math) for In-Kind contributions and for Outstanding obligations.
- Tweaked the language for boxes 1-5 to try and make clearer everything to be reported.
- In addition, Clerk Reams suggested removing the commission certification from the cover sheet to save space given that the commission has been meeting virtually and certifying the forms electronically.

Changes made to the workbook include:

- On all schedules added a thick rule around the column that's reported on the cover sheet
- Schedule A: Added a check box to prompt the inclusion of the value of in-kind contributions

with total previous contributions

- Schedule B: Added a column for invoice or receipt number
- Schedule B: Added a check box asking if the person had also made monetary contributions
- Schedule C: Added a check box for indicating if this is a new loan
- Schedule C: Added a column for noting payments made during the reporting period

The commission and city staff were supportive of the changes. With the goal of using the new forms during the 2023 regularly scheduled city elections, the commission agreed Ross will share the updated forms with the Board of Supervisors of Elections for their awareness and Clerk Reams will share them with the city attorney for legal review.

6. Campaign Finance Training

Vice Clerk Groenendyk discussed ways they city could help streamline the candidate training process. One idea was to record a video that steps through how to fill out the campaign finance forms and other materials that can be used as a standalone resource/reference for candidates and their treasurers. Chair Horlick agreed it would be a worthy endeavor and volunteered to help create such a video.

7. Ordinance Review

Clerk Reams noted that the City Council will vote Dec. 19 on state-mandated changes to the city's code of ethics. One provision she noted was that the amended code requires financial disclosures to be posted or a summary of the disclosures. She suggested the commission consider how to handle that requirement for the 2023 election cycle. The city's attorney will revise the forms as necessary to accommodate the changes; Ross noted that the commission will want to review its instructions based upon those changes.

8. New Business

Clerk Reams made note of the city's new committee stipend program and encouraged committee members to reach out to Deputy Clerk Groenendyk with any questions.

Absent an unanticipated need, the next Ethics Commission meeting will be held at 5 pm on January 18, 2022.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Horlick adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m. on a voice vote.