

Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Regular Meeting

January 4, 2012

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission convened on January 4, 2012 in Room 4080 of the Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue. Commission Chair Bill Sherman called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Vice-Chair Tarik Burney and Commissioners Lynne Iglitzin, Robert Mahon, David Mendoza and Amit Ranade were all present. Commissioner Rich Cohan was absent. Executive Director Wayne Barnett and staff members Anthony Adams, Kate Flack, Polly Grow, Gary Keese and Chris Thomas were present. Seattle City Attorney Jeff Slayton was also in attendance.

1) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action Items

2) Opinion request regarding transfers of funds between committees

Phil Lloyd, a treasurer for many Seattle campaigns over the years, asked the Commission to rule on whether officeholders who seek a different office can solicit contributions to that new campaign from contributors after those contributors have given the campaign permission to transfer funds remaining in a prior campaign account to the new campaign. The Executive Director said that staff considers the consent to transfer funds as a contribution which counts toward the contribution limit. Mr. Lloyd pointed out that the State takes a different view, and said that it is onerous for campaigns to operate with two interpretations of similar laws.

Commissioner Mahon asked why a prior campaign should be able to transfer any more than \$700 in total to a subsequent campaign, given the plain language of the current law. The law clearly defines a transfer from a prior campaign as a contribution, and limits contributions to \$700. He also pressed the Executive Director on why the transfer should be attributed to the contributor, when that contributor has no right to the money after making the initial contribution.

The Chair said that he had been in contact with another treasurer who was unable to make the meeting, and that he wanted to hear from other stakeholders before making a ruling. The Commission directed the Executive Director to provide notice of the Commission's intent to rule on this question and to solicit input before the next meeting. The Commission further asked the Law Department to provide an analysis of the issue before the Commission met again.

Discussion Items

3) Late filing penalty for Friends of Bruce Harrell (\$150)

The Executive Director reported that the Friends of Bruce Harrell committee had paid its \$150 penalty for failing to timely report obligations and expenses in its campaign finance reports. The Executive Director directed the Commission's attention to a letter from the campaign treasurer regarding the penalty.

4) Executive Director's report

The Executive Director reported that the Seattle School Board was planning a vote on the adoption of the District's Ethics Policy for that evening, and that he would attend that meeting. He also informed the Commission that he would be meeting with the City of Kirkland the

following day, to review that city's draft Ethics Policy. He encouraged Commissioners to review the drafts and let him know if they had any comments.

5) Late filing penalty for Friends of Jean Godden committee (\$200)

The Executive Director reported that the Friends of Jean Godden committee failed to timely report obligations. They have indicated that they intend to pay the fine.

6) Executive Session

The Commission went into Executive Session to discuss the legal risks of a proposed action or current practice.

The January 4, 2011 Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Regular Meeting was adjourned at 5:04 P.M.