

Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Special Meeting

November 6, 2018

A special meeting of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission convened on November 6, 2018 in Room 4080 of the Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue.

Commission Chair Brendan Donckers called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Commissioner Bruce Carter was present and Vice-Chair Vickie Rawlins and Commissioners Charlene Angeles, Nick Brown, Eileen Norton, and Hardeep Singh Rekhi joined the meeting by phone. Executive Director Wayne Barnett was joined by staff members Polly Grow, Rene LeBeau, Marc Mayo, and Annie Tran. Assistant City Attorneys Jeff Slayton and Gary Smith were also in attendance.

1) Public Comment

Marguerite Richard and Alex Tsimerman gave public comment.

Action Items

2) Request for Administrative Dismissal: Case No. 17-2-0721-1

The Director gave a brief overview of his request, noting that this was the second or third time that Commissioners had heard this matter.

Commissioners Rekhi and Norton both said that the commission should follow through on this matter. Commissioners Angeles, Brown and the Vice-Chair all said they had nothing to add to their prior comments.

The Chair asked for an explanation of why the City settled this matter. The Director said he would be speculating if he answered, but said that he assumed that the traditional factors that inform a decision to settle went into the decision to settle this case.

Commissioner Norton asked whether the Director had been consulted about the settlement. He said that the City Attorney's office had spoken with him about the settlement.

He apologized for not being able to recall those conversations with particularity. Commissioner Norton said that she was not happy with the terms of the settlement.

Commissioner Carter made a statement, expressing his grave reservations with the settlement. He was disappointed that there was never an account of what actually happened in a significant public corruption case. Ms. Secrest should have been tried.

Commissioner Carter was reluctant to say the Commission should proceed further just because of concern about the work the prosecutor did, especially since the prosecutor is the Commission's attorney. He said the Commission should close this case and move on.

Commissioner Rekhi asked whether the Commission was setting a precedent that referrals to the prosecutor's office would be the end of the story. Assistant City Attorney Smith said the Commission's displeasure had registered at the City Attorney's office. The Director said that in the future staff would be having a far more robust discussion with the City Attorney's office before referring allegations to them.

Commissioner Carter made a motion to administratively dismiss, and Commissioner Angeles seconded. Commissioners Angeles, Brown, Carter and the Chair voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Norton, Rekhi and Vice Chair Rawlins voted against the motion. The motion carried 4-3.

Discussion Items

3) Ethics and Elections Commission vacancy

The Director said that Vice Chair Rawlins will not be reupping for the Commission-appointed seat on the Commission. He also said that Commissioner Angeles, a City Council appointee, was also ending her service on the Commission. He thanked the two departing Commissioners for their service, and said he would be circulating a notice of the opening for

Commissioners to review. He noted that it is awkward, because candidates need to be interviewed in public session, and the selection needs to be done in public session as well.

The Chair also thanked Commissioners Angeles and Rawlins for their service.

4) I-122 report

Rene LeBeau told the Commissioners that a contract had been inked with a vendor to design the online voucher portal.

She also told the Commission that the request for proposals for outreach assistance in 2019 was on the verge of going out.

She then told the Commission that staff is preparing to reach out to treasurers and campaign consultants to advise them of what is in store for 2019.

Commissioner Carter said he was still amazed by how many people don't understand the voucher program, and encouraged outreach to local media outlets again in advance of the 2019 elections.

Commissioner Angeles encouraged staff to work with candidates, because they have an incentive to make sure people understand the program.

The Chair asked for clarification around which consultants and treasurers staff would be reaching out to. He wanted to make sure the outreach would be inclusive.

5) Executive Director's report

The Director told the Commission that staff had completed interviews for the Administrative Specialist position and was prepared to make an offer. He said the Commission should expect to confirm a new staff member at its December meeting, bringing the Commission staff back to full strength.

The special Commission meeting for November 6, 2018 adjourned at 4:54 p.m.