

Memo

To: Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission

From: Wayne Barnett

Date: December 18, 2018

Re: Rules for Candidate Introductions

At the October Meeting, the Commission agreed to budget \$61,500 for Candidate Introductions – 150 word statements to introduce Seattle residents to the candidates before the Voters Pamphlet and Video Voters Guide are published.

Here is language that could be the basis of a rule for the candidates who wish to submit Candidate Introductions. If you like the attached draft, we will schedule a public hearing for January to formally consider adopting a rule.

Discussion Items:

While all residents will benefit from learning who the candidates are, a driving force behind this project is that people want to know who they can give their vouchers to. Unlike the ballot, where a person can vote for anyone listed, vouchers are assigned only to participating candidates. For this reason, staff proposes that we include a statement with each submission indicating whether the candidate is participating in the Democracy Voucher Program or not.

Potential Rule for Candidate Introductions

v. 12/14/18

- 1) Candidate Invitations.** Every candidate for Mayor, City Attorney or City Council who registers a committee by the last day of May of the election year is eligible to submit a Candidate Introduction.
- 2) Candidate Introductions submissions:** The Executive Director will accept submissions beginning the first business day in January of the election year, through the last day of May of the election year.
 - a)** Each candidate will be invited to submit one Candidate Introduction. Once the final version of the introduction has been submitted, the Executive Director will not accept additional statements, revisions or corrections.
 - b)** Before submission, all written Candidate Introductions should be proof-read for errors in spelling, punctuation, or syntax. The Executive Director and Commission staff will not proof-read statements for such errors.

- c) The candidate must include the candidate's name, committee name, campaign telephone number and campaign website with the Candidate Introduction. Unless requested otherwise, this information will appear in the Introduction but will not be counted against the statement word limit.
 - d) **Order of Appearance.** The Executive Director shall publish the Candidate Introductions in order of receipt by district
- 3) **Availability of Candidate Introductions.** The Executive Director will post the Candidate Introductions on the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission website. A printed copy of the Candidate Introductions will be available to each Seattle resident upon request. The Executive Director will publish an updated catalog of Candidate Introductions at least once per month through June of the election year.
- a) **Translations.** The Executive Director will translate and publish the Candidate Introductions into the languages required in SMC 2.04.690.
 - b) **Limitations on Statements.** The written statements must not exceed 150 words. The 150-word statement must not include obscene, profane, libelous, or defamatory matter, or language that may impair distribution of the statements through the mail. The Executive Director shall delete such language without prior notice.
- 4) **Editorial Authority – Appeals.**
- a) Upon notice to the candidate, in lieu of an outright rejection, the Executive Director may edit a statement with too many words down to the maximum permitted and/or otherwise remove material which would be cause for rejection of the statement.
 - b) Any candidate aggrieved by a decision or action of the Executive Director may within five days thereafter appeal the matter to the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission, which shall convene as soon as practicable. The Commission shall consider the matter under the procedures established for contested cases in SMC Section 3.02.090, subsections B through I inclusive, and subsection M. The decision of the Commission shall be final; there shall be no appeal to the Hearing Examiner.
- 5) **Guidelines.** The purpose of the Candidate Introduction is to introduce the candidate to the public prior to the publication of the Voters Pamphlet and Video Voters Guide. Therefore, candidates are encouraged to do the following in their written submissions:
- (i) Tell who you are
 - (ii) Show that you understand this community and its concerns
 - (iii) Explain where you stand
 - (iv) Be forthright, and
 - (v) Set a respectful tone
- 6) The Executive Director shall determine the format, font, layout, and appearance of the Candidate Introductions consistent with these rules.