December 2024 Portland Elections Commission Meeting
December 18, 2024, 7-8:30pm

PEC Members Present: Commissioners Amy Sample Ward, Anahi Segovia Rodriguez, Norman Turrill, Cristina Nieves, Kevin Neely, Amy Ruiz

PEC Members Absent: Commissioner Berk Nelson, Courtney Veronneau

Small Donor Elections Staff Present: Susan Mottet

Housekeeping

November minutes were passed unanimously with one edit.

Program Update

The Commission discussed the process and timeline for hiring a new Deputy Director and created a hiring subcommittee of Amy Sample Ward, Amy Ruiz, and Kevin Neely. Whichever 2-3 are available for each interview will be present for interviews.

The news that rulemaking authority has been delegated to the program director with no sunset provision was announced.

The news that the new appeals hearings contractor needs to bow out due to a health diagnosis was shared, so the program will contact the other recommended hearing officers to find a replacement.

Based on feedback from the prior meeting, the program will be conducting a user experience survey in addition to the user experience interviews. The Director will send the questions to the Portland Elections Commission and collect any feedback.

Budget Update

The news was shared that it was announced that Mayor Wheeler is asking for an 8% budget cut across the board. To be on track for FY2025-26, the program needs only $400,000-500,000 in addition to the CAL Target with an 8% cut, but will need $1 million more the next 3 years to be financially solvent for the 2026 and 2028 election cycles. The program is working with Grants Management to use their staff, for free, and rely less on casual staff, which will enable the program to run even leaner and preserve matching funds. The program is working with Civic Software Foundation to make improvements to the software to process contributions even faster yet still accurately, to also reduce the use of casual staff and run leaner, to preserve scare matching funds.

Preparation for the 2026 Election Cycle

It was announced that the program is ready for the start of the 2026 election cycle in 2 days, except for setting some dates and deadlines. The Commission discussed where to set dates and deadlines for the 2026 election cycle, including the dates to begin to file to use the program, to begin to apply to get certified, the last date to turn in the Notice of Intent and certification applications, the last day to take the mandatory training, a new deadline for tier certification, and making official an existing optional early deadline to report contributions collected on the last day to collect matchable contributions in order to receive payment quickly. Dates and deadlines were selected for publication on the program's website by December 20, 2024, which is the first day of the 2026 election cycle.

Executive Session

The Commission went into executive session to discuss non-public documents relating to program employees. There was a point of information request for employment information for current and departing staff and about Human Resources processes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.