Portland Elections Commission Meeting
November 20, 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

*7:05-7:10pm: Housekeeping*
The September and October minutes were approved.

*7:10-7:15pm: Complaints*
The Director updated the commission on a complaint resolved by the program, in which no violation was found for a candidate forum that invited only candidates certified to use the Small Donor Elections program, which was determined to be neutral criteria applied in alignment with established interpretations of the state definition of "contribution." The Auditor's office issued a determination with the same conclusion deferring to the program's interpretation of state law as applied to city campaigns.

*7:10-7:30pm: Discuss 2024 Election*
The commission discussed the passage of the charter amendment for an independent Portland Elections Commission. They shared insights related to the how the Mayor, Auditor, and Council campaigns were carried out now that the city has one November election, ranked voting, and district council elections – all of which were done with lowered match caps – and what that might mean for the design of the program. Insights shared included:

- because of dramatically reduced match caps, campaigns couldn't get their message out and three groups carried out independent expenditures to support some candidates as a result,
- it is beneficial to our democracy and voters for there have been so many candidates running,
- the commission should look again at certification requirements so a diverse array of candidates can qualify but not be so accessible that just anyone can qualify,
- money was not the determining factor in who was ranked first the most in many races,
- districts are too big to knock doors alone and campaigns need to be able to send out mail or other mass communication,
- there was some expense sharing between campaigns but it was mostly across race mailers (e.g. Gonzalez endorsing Council candidates) with a few exceptions mostly in district 3 council race mailers (Novick/Kezia, Koyama Lane/Morillo),
- groups made endorsements and there was a Portland Voter Guide slate,
- it is worth evaluating winning candidates' campaigns for what amount of outreach was effective when evaluating if match caps are set to the right amount (and the program could ask independent expenditure committees how they split up their funds to inform this deliberation),
- it is worth evaluating when deliberating over match caps if different strategies are most effective in different districts,
- with so many candidates on the ballot and voters lacking sufficient information to make ranking decisions, campaigns need enough money to get their message out, and
- beefing up training so candidates know what they can and cannot do is important and making sure they all know about the safe harbor rule so they ask before taking action.

*7:30-8:00pm: Initial discussion about 2024 campaign finance data and user experience*
The commission reviewed some very early campaign finance data and discussed very early insights from user experience research. Deep user experience research interviews are underway, but some members expressed that surveys should also be sent, as there is value in anonymous surveys. Other members said to do surveys again if only if they have been valuable in the past. Asking a nonprofit to administer the surveys was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned.