Portland Elections Commission Meeting

*February 8, 2022*

**PEC Members Present:** Jenny Lee, Amy Sample Ward, Sabra Purifoy, Anahi Rodriguez, Amy Ruiz, Courtney Helstein. **PEC Members Absent:** Norm Turrill, Berk Nelson, Cristina Nieves. **PEC Staff Present:** Director Susan Mottet and Deputy Director Daniel Lewkow

**Review Minutes** (7:00 pm-7:05 pm)

* Meeting minutes from the January 2022 PEC meeting were approved almost unanimously, with Commissioner Ruiz abstaining

**Program Update** (7:05 pm-7:20 pm)

* Review the list of candidates who are now certified, and what impact that has on the program’s budget
* Recent training for organizations and related discussion

Since the certification deadline passed on January 28th, we now know the full number of candidates who have been certified, and are eligible for matching funds.

There are 7 certified candidates

* In the Auditor race, it’s Simone Rede and Brian Setzler
* In the Commissioner #2 race, it’s Commissioner Dan Ryan and AJ McCreary. Michael Simpson filed a Notice of Intent but did not apply for certification, and 6 other candidates who will be on the ballot did not file a NOI
* In the Commissioner #3 race, it’s Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, Vadim Mozyrksy, and Rene Gonzalez. Steven Cox and Peggy Sue Owens both submitted NOI forms but did not apply for certification. 7 other candidates did not submit NOI forms at all

100% of the candidates who applied for certification had their applications approved and qualified for public matching.

Director Mottet: we will be fiscally solvent because we have enough funds to fully match all 7 candidates.

SDE staff offered a training for organizations that participate in city council elections on February 4th, to make sure that advocacy groups are up to speed on the new rules that the program implemented in December. Some of the organizations were part of the ongoing negotiations about campaign finance reform on a statewide level, and some of the tension from those negotiations may have spilled over into our discussions. Organizations did bring up critiques, and staff wants to ensure that it is thoughtful about how to engage both with the critiques and the organizations.

Staff will offer another training to candidates on February 11th (we already provided trainings to all of the candidates as a mandatory step when they sign up for the program, but several of these candidates were trained before the new rules were implemented, or have since hired new staff, so this was an opportunity to reground them in how the program works).

**Policy Considerations** (7:20 pm – 7:45 pm)

* Subcommittee recommendation on proposal to allow candidates to join SDE for just the Runoff

The policy proposal being discussed would allow for candidates who did not make the NOI or certification deadlines to try again to qualify for the program, if they make it into the runoff. In January, the PEC voted to create a subcommittee to review the policy and propose language. Per the PEC’s instructions, staff met with C&E Systems and Imperium Political Strategies to solicit their input before convening the subcommittee meeting. Both campaign consultants said that this would be a good policy to adopt, and that they would advise candidates to utilize it in case they had filed too late to join SDE in the primary.

The PEC subcommittee recommended allowing candidates to apply for matching funds in the runoff elections. This policy would be particularly useful for candidates who tried and fail to qualify in the primary, or who got in to the race too late due to an evolving political situation. Successful applicants would only get matched if they qualified for the runoff. And they would need to have raised the same amount in the primary that SDE candidates raised to get certified (750 donations for mayor or 250 for commissioner/auditor). And these candidates should be allowed to raise up to $500/donor in the primary, since SDE candidates can raise $500 between the primary and runoff elections and benefit from matching funds.

Commissioner Helstein: if a candidate decides to not do the program in the primary, makes it to the runoff, and then decides to participate, why is that ok? We do not want a number of candidates to avoid the rules so that they can place well in the primary and then join in the runoff. Director Mottet: this rule is mostly for people who try and fail, or who have signed up too late. Commissioner Lee: the smartest decisions is really to run under the program from the start if you can, since you’re not going to raise enough if you run outside of the program. Chair Sample Ward: there could be a late-breaking scandal that would cause a candidate to jump in late, and the program should accommodate that. Commissioner Helstein: this provision seems fine, but it would be preferable to send the draft to the fundraising consultants to double check the language.

Commissioner Helstein makes the motion to adopt the policy (contingent on adding in the language allowing these kinds of candidates to raise up to $500 in the primary). The PEC adopts the policy unanimously. Here is the language itself:

