**Open and Accountable Elections Commission Meeting**

*June 17, 2020*

Present: Members Lujan, Sample Ward, Anahi, Bussell, Nelson, Helstein, Turrill; Susan Mottet and Daniel Lewkow

Absent: Members Ruiz and Purifoy

1. May Meeting Minutes Review

OAEC members requested that staff

* Add the word “and” under the core data points section of the May meeting minutes
* Next time, staff should include the Absent list along with the Present list, and include staff in the Present list
* May meeting minutes unanimously approved

1. Budget Update

* OAE Budget for the Runoff Elections
* Confirm the City’s allocation for OAE, following on the City Council vote
* The program has $1.7 million cash-on-hand. Staff anticipates an additional $1.2 million in next fiscal year. That would put the program at $2.9 million.
* Staff believes that the program can maintain solvency if the 2020 runoff election costs OAE at most $1.8 million.
* In the next set of recommendations, staff suggested that the OAEC consider calling for the City Council to increase the total cost of the OAE program beyond 0.2% of the City’s General Fund budget. The program could use more flexibility to respond to certain factors—such as a sudden special election.
* The City Council did vote to allocate $1.2 million to OAE in the upcoming General Fund budget
* The Honest Elections contribution limits may impact the OAE budget. If the limits are upheld by the court, it will incentivize candidates to participate in the program. And that would result in more matching dollars distributed

1. Program Location

* Continued discussion about which office the OAE program should be based in
* Staff met with Commissioner-elect Carmen Rubio. The OAE code situates the program in the Commissioner Position #1 office, so it was important to connect early with the incoming Commissioner to discuss this question.
* Staff briefed Commissioner-Elect Rubio on the code and the dynamics surrounding this discussion. The Commissioner-Elect wanted time to think it over and follow up with her thoughts
* The OAEC must make a recommendation about the program’s host-office. OAEC decided that it does not need to discuss this question further until it hears from the Commissioner-Elect.

1. Data Analysis

* Review the data that staff pulled from the primary candidates’ fundraising
* Identifying data for staff to compare with money raised by candidates running under OAE
* Key data points from the 2020 Primary show that there were
* 15,000+ donations to all the candidates running
* Across the four races
  + An average of 83% of donors lived within the City of Portland
  + The average donation was just $56.70
  + An average of just 4% of donations came from entities. Close to 96% came from individuals
  + 90% of gifts were below $250, and nearly 60% were below $100
* 16/23 candidates who applied were certified, giving the program a 70% acceptance rate
* 6/7 candidates in the runoff elections are OAE participants
* The data shows that the program met many of its goals. It brought more people into our City’s democracy, centered everyday Portlanders who gave smaller donations, and successfully attracted candidates to participate.
* Staff asked the OAEC how to best compare data for candidates who did and did not participate in OAE. OAE has data on small donations under $100. However, non-participating candidates do not report their data to OAE, just to the Oregon State Elections Office. And while that information is public, donations under $100 are aggregated and do not have individualized information on each donor. Therefore, for a non-participating candidate it would be impossible to ascertain the percentage of their donors who gave less than $100, or where these donors live, for instance. If staff has this information for OAE-participating candidates but does not have it for non-participating candidates, what is the best way to accurately and fairly compare the data from both sets of candidates?
* OAEC member Helstein advised putting out the data that OAE does have on participating candidates, and letting that show how the program is more transparent than the Oregon State Elections Office.
* OAEC member Helstein suggested reporting on the total and the percentage that non-OAE candidates raised from donations under $100. That would still provide a perspective on how the program influenced candidate behavior.
* OAEC discussed the possibility if telling the non-OAE candidates that the program will be sharing the data with the public. That may create an incentive for the candidates to share the data voluntarily.

1. Feedback Reception

* User research parameters/questions and how OAEC should help draft them
* User research timeline and process
* Survey for donors and for residents
* OAE is pursuing a small contract with a professional user researcher. The proposals from interested researchers are due June 26th.
* The timeline for the user research is: have the contract by July 16th, draft the questions, begin interviews from late July to mid-August, interview Special Election runoff candidates after Aug 11th and General Election runoff candidates after Nov 3rd, report written and presented in Jan 2021.
* The user research will interview campaign staff, donors (both individuals and organizations), treasurers, volunteers, candidates, the public at large, organizations, and city staff including election aides. OAEC member Sample Ward suggested adding organizations that held events and had to navigate the program’s accessibility rules. OAEC member Turrill suggested including disability-support organizations and individuals as well.
* Staff needs help from OAEC to craft questions. Interested OAEC members could join the conversation with user researcher. Member Sample Ward offered to review questions and/or provide feedback. Member Helstein could help review too. Member Purifoy later emailed and agreed to help.
* OAE staff is interested in conducting a survey for general public and general donors. Staff needs help from OAEC members to help craft questions. Members Bussell, Purifoy, and Sample Ward agreed to help.

1. OAEC Report

* Discussion of report that the OAEC is required to issue following the first cycle
  + Outline of report’s contents
  + Process for completing and approving the report
* The OAE code requires the OAEC to issue a report on the conduct of the program.
* The goal is to finish the report in the spring of 2021, before current terms expire for several OAEC members.
* OAEC said early in 2019 that program staff should write the report.
* OAEC and staff agreed to write many sections of the report during this election cycle.
* OAEC member Bussell suggested creating a subcommittee to help reviewing and write the report
* Staff will then share whole draft in advance of meetings.
* In terms of content:
* OAEC member Turrill suggested comparing the program’s outcomes with the objectives from the code.
* Member Helstein asked if there was a longstanding public matching program in another city that the report could compare OAE’s outcomes to.
* OAEC members were asked whether this report should include any policy recommendations, or whether those should be compiled separately? Member Sample Ward suggested adding a brief section saying that the OAEC would anticipate having policy recommendations, but it will share those details at a later date.
* Staff and OAEC members suggested the following item to include in the content:
* Quantitative campaign finance data
* Qualitative data such as diversity among participants
* Several items from the user experience research report
* The results of the audit
* The OAEC reactions to the qualitative and quantitative data