

Elections Committee Dec. 7, 2021

Meeting called to order 6:02 p.m.

Present: Chann, Buxton, Washburn

Approval of Nov. 30 minutes

Buxton moved, Washburn second

Buxton: Tiebreakers, is there a requirement that there be an apparent winner before a recount can be ordered? Washburn and Chann say yes. Buxton will clarify on her own later.

Minutes approved unanimously.

Workshop on draft Clean Elections proposal

Suggestion that program should be administered by City Clerk's office rather than creating new structures/offices.

Should we ban corporate contributions (which would include labor unions)? Yes, but let's do it for everyone, not just Clean Elections candidates. Buxton and/or Washburn to draft this language.

Should we restrict how the candidates can spend their funds? Voters actually have a pretty good handle on this. Refer to John Wayne (Maine Ethics Commission) or counsel.

What to do with unused funds? CE candidates, roll back into fund. Non-CE candidates, what are we allowed to specify?

Public comment on Clean Elections proposal

Anna Kellar: also look at setting a lower threshold for contributions (statewide it's \$500). Also look at streamlining campaign finance reporting and make the information more accessible.

Karen Snyder: Good first draft, agrees on streamlining information and City Clerk administration. Also, look at other cities.

Workshop on draft Elections Commission proposal

Washburn questions why this is necessary. Chann cites need to increase voter engagement and turnout. Buxton and Washburn suggest including diversity rationales.

Public comment on Elections Commission proposal

Anna Kellar: Why not set a turnout/engagement goal for the City Clerk's office? Also allow residents to submit complaints to the commission.

LWV has done some research on voter turnout by race, age, and poverty rates in Maine. Poverty tends to correlate with lower voter turnout. Group could help with that.

Big question: Does this commission have an enforcement role?

Workshop on Universal Resident Voting proposal

Buxton asks to provide more structure around role of city staff and their responsibilities. Washburn agrees and will consult relevant counsel.

No public comment was offered.

Meeting adjourned 8:33 p.m.