

Minutes from the Board of Elections Meeting on July 14th, 2022

The meeting was called into order at 7:30pm. Ben Bellows, Trevor Parry-Giles, Tim Anderegg, and Matt Ling in attendance.

The Board approved the June 16th minutes. The Board approved the agenda.

The Board discussed the feedback it received from the Council on the code revisions that it has recommended.

Pre-election reports. The Board understood the concern of the councilmembers that reducing the number of reports may defeat the purpose of the reports, which is to inform the public about the campaign finances and expenditures of the candidates for office. Trevor noted that additional reporting requirements create impediments that may discourage people from running for local office. Matt agreed and stated that many Takoma Park races are often uncontested. Matt also commented that the recommendation to reduce the amount of reports was based on feedback from candidates from the 2020 cycle. Tim commented that the later report (2 weeks before the election) seems like a reasonable compromise between the need to inform the public early enough when they are making their decisions about who to vote but late enough to inform the public about late contributions and expenditures. The Board agreed that its current recommendation for the election reporting requirements should remain the same.

Candidate registration expiration dates. The Board agreed to defer discussion regarding registration expirations, as this presents novel issues that the Board has not yet discussed.

Registration for special elections. The Board agreed to defer discussion regarding registration for special elections, as this presents novel issues that the Board has not yet discussed and because this issue should not arise during this election cycle.

Limitations on political committees. The Board agreed that all expenditure and contribution limitations, and all requirements regarding authority lines and disclaimers, and all reporting requirements, should apply the same to political committees as they do to the campaigns and candidates.

Formation of political committees. The Board agreed that the language regarding the formation of political committees should be clarified. Specifically, the point of formation of a political committee should occur when it registers with the City Clerk. Before that registration, any groups or organizations would not be permitted to engage in the raising and spending of money for the purpose of influencing campaigns, as they otherwise would be if they were registered as a political committee with Takoma Park.

Exploring-run exception. The Board agreed that adding an “exploring-run” exception to the “seeking office” registration requirement would potentially overcomplicate the process for new candidates. The Board has deferred discussion regarding the timing of the registration requirements for candidates until after the 2022 election.

Non-citizen, permanent resident contributions. Matt noted that it was his most recent understanding that permanent residents who are not US citizens may contribute to Takoma Park

candidates under federal law. If that is accurate, Matt suggested that the Board receive some formal memo or opinion from the City Attorney stating such.

Matt noted that there was some concern from the Council that the Board should work to increase transparency during the counting and tabulation of ballots. The Board agreed that the location of where the counting and tabulation occurs should be open to the public, provided it is safe to do so, as has been the historical practice.

Board business. Matt noted that the Council has appointed a new member, John Quinn, to the Board of Elections.

The Board agreed to defer discussion of scheduling for August, September, and October, as several members of the Board were not present.

The Board adjourned at 8:30pm.

Matt Ling, Interim Chair, presiding and recording.