

**Howard County Citizens' Election Fund Commission
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043**

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

A duly advertised public meeting of the Howard County Citizens' Election Fund Commission was held virtually via WebEx on November 17, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

Commission Members Present:

Suzanne Geckle
Wendy Slaughter
Douglas Miller
David Loeffler
Ginna Rodriguez-Panqueva
Lillian Norris-Holmes
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Staff Members Present:

- Diane Zagorski, Chief – Bureau of Tax & Specialty Services, Department of Finance, assigned to assist the Commission pursuant to Code Section 10.310 (h).
- Brenna Punté-Pinos, Chief - Bureau of Water/Sewer & Misc. Revenue, Department of Finance
- Amanda Mihill, Assistant County Solicitor, Howard County Office of Law
- Brook Mamo, Fiscal Manager, Office of Budget

As the Chair of the Commission, Ms. Geckle called the open meeting to order at approximately 6:04 p.m.

The following items of business were discussed in open session:

1. Approval of October 6, 2020 meeting minutes:
 - o Ms. Slaughter motions to approve the minutes, Ms. Bevan-Dangel seconded the motion. There was a unanimous vote to approve the minutes.
2. Schedule next meeting:
 - o The commission agreed to schedule the public hearing for the Rules of Procedure in January 2021.
 - o Ms. Geckle confirmed date of the hearing will be scheduled for January 14, 2021 at 6:00p.m.
3. Open Meeting/Close Sessions Training:
 - o Confirmed that Ms. Norris-Holmes & Mr. Miller completed the Open Meetings/Closed Session training.

4. Summary Guide & FAQ review:

- Reviewed Section XXXIX: Contested Elections. The group agreed to leave the language “as is.” This will be reviewed/revised if there is a change to state law.
- Motion to approve and post the Summary Guide & FAQ on the county website was made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Ms. Slaughter. There was a unanimous vote to approve the Summary Guide & FAQ’s.

5. Rules of Procedure:

- It was agreed that Section VI, subsection b needs adjustment to include language supporting the notion that candidates can participate with other candidates in campaign efforts as long as each candidate pays their proportionate share of the total expense for that activity.
- Motion to approve Rules with the caveat that language for section VI, subsection b is revised, as noted above, and distributed to the Commission by Ms. Mihill was made by Ms. Geckle and seconded by Mr. Loeffler. There was a unanimous vote to approve the Rules of Procedure.
- The group agreed to review Ms. Mihill’s corrections and respond with any concerns within 48 hours.
- APA process will begin immediately so that the hearing is completed prior to January 14, 2021.

6. Office of Budget

- Mr. Mamo shared with the group that he has a request of \$1,900,000 for the upcoming election cycle. Of the \$1.9 million, \$750,000 has been allocated to the Citizens’ Election Fund for FY21. Mr. Mamo confirmed that the group was still in need of the remaining \$1,150,000 for FY22.
- Ms. Geckle explained that requests for FY26 will be made in phases over the four years preceding FY26.
- Mr. Mamo advised the group that FY22 will be a challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic and requested the group consider phasing their requests for funding in FY22 and FY23.

7. FY22 Budget Discussion

- Commission agreed to reduce the amount of funds requested for FY22 from \$1,150,000 to \$500,000 due to the ongoing pandemic. The Commission agreed that the full \$1,900,000 is needed for the upcoming election cycle; however, they will phase in their request starting with \$500,000 in FY22 and the remaining \$650,000 for FY23.
- Commission agreed to reevaluate their needs for funding for FY23 next year to ensure the \$650,000 request is still adequate.
- Ms. Geckle made a motion to request \$500,000 for FY22 and seconded by Ms. Bevan-Dangel. There was a unanimous vote to approve this request.
- Ms. Geckle will write a letter to Office of Budget and it will be sent to the Budget Office through Ms. Zagorski. Ms. Geckle to complete letter by November 30, 2020.

- Ms. Zagorski to send a copy of the 2019 Budget letter to Ms. Geckle to use as a template for this year. Ms. Geckle will add in the additional information needed to convey the reason for the decrease in requested funds for FY22.

8. Adjournment:

Upon motion by Mr. Loeffler and seconded by Mr. Miller, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at approximately 7:53p.m.