

Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Regular Meeting

February 1, 2023

A regular meeting of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) convened in Seattle Municipal Tower Conference Room 4080 and remotely. Chair Hardeep Singh Rekhi called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. The Chair, Vice Chair Zach Pekelis, and Commissioners Kristin Hawes, Richard Shordt, Chalia Stallings-Ala'ilima, and Susan Taylor attended remotely. Executive Director Wayne Barnett and staff member Cliff Duggan were present. Staff member René LeBeau, Fedden Amar, Chrissy Courtney, Randal Fu and Polly Grow, and Assistant City Attorney Gary Smith joined remotely.

Final Action Items

1. Approval of minutes from December 7, 2022, Commission Regular Meeting

The Vice Chair noted one correction to the abbreviation of Community-Based Organizations (CBO) on Page 2. The Chair made the motion to approve the December 7, 2022, Commission Regular Meeting minutes as noted and seconded by Commissioner Shordt. The Commissioners unanimously approved the December 7 minutes.

2. Election of 2023 SEEC Commission Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair opened discussion of selecting the 2023 Commission Chair and Vice Chair. Vice Chair Pekelis said he is happy and willing to serve as the new Chair. Commissioner Taylor made the motion to elect Vice Chair Pekelis as the new Commission Chair, which was seconded by Commissioner Stallings-Ala'ilima. The Commissioners unanimously elected Vice Chair Pekelis as the 2023 Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Chair.

Commissioner Rekhi asked Chair Pekelis about the 2023 Vice Chair position. The Chair mentioned a previous conversation with Commissioner Hawes who indicated an interest in serving.

Commissioner Rekhi made the motion to elect Commissioner Hawes as the new Commission Vice Chair with Chair Pekelis seconding the motion. The Commissioners elected (with Commissioner Hawes abstaining) Commissioner Kristin Hawes as the 2023 Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Vice Chair.

Discussion Items

3. SEEC Elections Code Rules update

The Director discussed the recent Elections Code Rules update. Over the last few months, the office undertook the project to make sure the Rules were up to date for the 2023 election cycle. Polly Grow, Chrissy Courtney, and Cliff Duggan lent a huge hand in combing through previous meeting minutes to make sure all Commission changes were incorporated, approved, and adopted. The current Rules are now in one location on the SEEC Commission web page.

4. Democracy Voucher Program report

Ms. LeBeau announced that the vendor has the Democracy Vouchers ready to deliver to the Post Office for a target date of February 21. This initial mailing will be sent to approximately 450,000 English-speaking registered voters. Requests for translated Democracy Voucher material will be handled in-house. Ms. LeBeau shared images of the Program material available to the public.

The staff is working with community partners, the Library, and Community Centers to have Program information distributed. Pre-launch media updates will primarily focus on dot-com ads. Short video clips will run on KING 5's website, often before and after the news – like mini commercials. The spend is about \$5,000 and scheduled to begin the week before packets are mailed. Ms. LeBeau and Fedden Amer have reviewed a very significant ethnic media list provided by the City to identify those who have worked with the Program and others who have shown

interest. The Department of Neighborhoods' community liaisons also reviewed and added to the list. The liaisons are working on how best to reach out to these contacts regarding the Program launch.

The Vice Chair asked if there is a sense of how many people have opted to receive their Vouchers online out of the initial mailing of 480,000 Voucher packets. Ms. LeBeau shared that approximately 12,000 people in the 2019 election cycle chose the online option. The data was retained and reviewed to verify if they are still registered for 2023. The total number of online users could end up being as many as 20,000.

Ms. LeBeau discussed the one-on-one training offered to candidates and their campaigns by Randal Fu and Polly Grow. To date, 17 training have been conducted, and the current total of candidates is 15. Eight candidates have signed the [Candidate Pledge](#). At the next meeting, the Chair would be interested in knowing how the total number of current candidates compares to the year 2019. The Chair thanked Ms. LeBeau for the update and commented that it is another big year for Democracy Vouchers.

5. Executive Director's report

The Director reported that the Governance, Native Communities, and Tribal Governments Committee will take up the reappointments of Commissioners Pekelis and Taylor at the February 16 meeting. Council confirmation is anticipated at their February 21 meeting. The Director has submitted a candidate to the Committee to backfill former Commissioner Winmill's position; however, the Committee has requested a slate of candidates for consideration.

The Director commented on the ongoing interest in the Democracy Voucher Program. Conversations have been held with Hawai'i and Minnesota who are looking at statewide programs. There have been numerous interviews with local and national reporters.

The Vice Chair requested the Director resend the Commissioner position description to the Commissioners. With Commissioner Rekhi rotating off the Commission, the Director stated there are two current Commissioner vacancies. The Chair appreciates Commissioner Rekhi sharing his experience; the Vice Chair thanked the Commissioner for chairing the Commission. Commissioner Rekhi expressed his pleasure working with the group and is happy to stay on until a replacement is confirmed.

Hearing no other comments, questions, or items to add to the agenda, the Chair adjourned the February 1, 2023, SEEC Commission Regular meeting at 4:29 p.m.