

**Special Meeting of the Cincinnati Elections Commission
Minutes of August 25, 2023**

CEC members present: Marcus Bethay, Nick Klingensmith, Sally Krisel, and Terry Rath

City representatives present: Christopher Liu, Law; Teninnah Ross, Law

Old Business:

1. Approval of the August 10, 2023, meeting minutes

Ms. Krisel moved for approval of the August 10, 2023, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bethay. A vote was taken and the August 10, 2023, minutes were approved by the four votes of Mr. Rath, Mr. Bethay, Mr. Klingensmith, and Ms. Krisel.

New Business:

I. Request for an Advisory Opinion

Mr. Liu provided an overview of an opinion request from the Ohio Democratic Party. The issue involved contributions to political parties to fund things like coordinated campaigns, slate cards, etc. Are those contributions imputed to the individual candidate for the purpose of the contribution limit? Are they an in-kind contribution?

Ultimately, the opinion request was withdrawn the evening before this meeting. That email from the Ohio Democratic party was forwarded to all CEC members.

Mr. Liu asked for public comment or Q&A. Mr. Bethay shared his thoughts on possibly considered on how to regulate and ensure there are no passthroughs for campaigns.

Mr. Rath asked about the alignment of contributions limits for state and local governments. Mr. Liu provided information that the City of Cincinnati election is based off the Cincinnati Charter. Mr. Rath asked about how we can police the campaigns to ensure donations do not go over the limit. Mr. Liu acknowledged that the system is based primarily on the reporting of the campaigns and expressed the need for complete and honest reports from the candidates.

Ms. Krisel added that in all 88 counties the Board of Elections audits each financial report.

Mr. Liu suggested the CEC members take no vote since the question was withdrawn.

II. Discussion of August 24th Deadline for Petitions

Mr. Liu began this discussion noting that the final list from the Hamilton County Board of Elections has been received and 13 candidates have submitted petitions. Jaime Castle has withdrawn her petition to run. Mr. Hayward still has a petition under review. The importance of this information pertains to the four candidates that did not file financial reports. Per the instruction of the CEC, certified letters were mailed to Rufus Bowman, Lawrence Brazinski, II, Lakiesha Cook, and James Jenkins. There has been no response from this group. Mr. Liu suggested that at this point it is safe to assume their campaigns have been abandoned.

Mr. Liu posed the question to the CEC membership as to whether they would like to conduct hearings on the four candidates for failure to file. Mr. Liu added that the four candidates that did not file are not actually on the ballot and are first time campaigns. It is the CEC's discretion if a formal meeting should be scheduled.

Ms. Krisel suggested that there is no need for a hearing if a candidate is not on the ballot.

The CEC decided not to have a hearing. No vote was necessary.

III. Amendments to Pre-Election Campaign Finance Reports

Mr. Liu gave a brief overview of some financial reports that required amending beyond the campaign deadline dates. The errors do not change the substance of the reports but will allow them to be more technically accurate. Most of the minor changes are clerical errors.

Mr. Rath noted the special meeting that was scheduled on August 31st at 4pm. Mr. Liu suggested that since this special meeting took place, perhaps the other special meeting should be vacated.

Ms. Krisel made a motion to vacate the August 31st special meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bethay. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously. The special meeting for August 31st has been vacated.

Mr. Rath asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Klingensmith made the motion and Ms. Krisel seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for September 14, at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24pm.