

**Minutes of the
Richland County
Board of Elections and Voter Registration
2020 Hampton Street
Friday, January 25, 2013
11:00am**

Board Members in Attendance

Mr. Allen Dowdy, Acting Chair (via phone)
Ms. Adell Adams
Ms. Elaine DuBose
Mr. Herbert W. Sims

Staff in Attendance

Dr. Jasper Salmond, Acting Executive Director
Mr. Garry Baum, Deputy Director of Elections
Ms. Lillian McBride, Deputy Director of Voter Registration & Absentee Services
Ms. Amie Brunson

Others in Attendance

Mr. Steve Hamm, Esquire

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 11:11 am. It was noted that a quorum was present to allow the meeting to proceed and that the meeting had been properly noticed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act requirements.
- Mr. Allen Dowdy, Acting Chair informed the Board that he is currently out of town but will be present via phone and can hear comments and provide feedback during the meeting.
- Mr. Dowdy also indicated that he had visited the office and expressed his approval of the Budget as written and that this special called meeting was to allow for transparency regarding the budget process for the Richland County Elections & Voter Registration office.
- A motion was made to allow Ms. Adel Adams to serve as chair of the meeting. Seconded. Approved 4-0.

Executive Session

- Mr. Steve Hamm, Esquire informed the Board that for purposes of the budget that all discussion should be held in an open session.

Old Business

- None

New Business

Budget for FY13-4

- Dr. Salmond informed the Board that based on estimates and assumptions arrived at through staff involvement, the preliminary budget for FY13-14 is reasonable and conservative.
- Mr. Steve Hamm stated that the Board is taking the necessary steps to restore public confidence in the office.
- There has been much discussion regarding the Board's recent decision in creating and approving the new organizational structure. Mr. Hamm wanted to state for public record and explained that no additional funds are needed from County Council to fund any newly created positions.
- The Board restructured the offices within the confines of the budget.
- The Board has approved the new organizational structure for the Elections & Voter Registration office. The new Deputy Director position will not require additional funds from the current budget or the new budget.
- The Board had previously stated an income of \$74,600 for the new Deputy Director position that will be funded by several means within the existing office budget.
 - There was a position that had been budget for, but never filled: Elections Liaison. Additionally, there was a former employee who retired in December 2012.
 - Additionally, the Board has allowed Dr. Salmond to serve as an Acting Executive Director on a part-time basis at a rate of \$4500.00 per month.
 - All of these actions combined generates an approximate savings of \$30,000 per year and accomplishes the Board's goal of not requesting additional funds.
- Mr. Steve Hamm also informed the Board that based on the upcoming election calendar the voting machine issue does not have to be resolved in the current budget proposal.
- Currently, the Elections & Voter Registration office does not possess enough voting machines for a General Election. But at this time, the Board does not have to purchase additional machines based on the elections that will occur during the upcoming fiscal year.
- The Board's use of resources can best be used by ensuring the voting machines work correctly, will accept votes, and allow for all votes to count at the conclusion of the election.
- Costs for creating new precincts involve the addition of new voting machines, purchasing new printers, hiring additional poll workers, securing new polling locations, etc...
- Regarding the capital budget, it was noted that spending money on new precincts may not be the best use of County resources.

- Copies of the draft budget were provided to the media.
 - It was noted that additional funding was not requested for salaries
 - Overtime: if new precincts are added, more poll workers and additional staff will be needed.
 - New precincts will also have to be approved by the General Assembly
- Mr. Dowdy stated that in reviewing the budget, it shows the public that the Board is maximizing every dollar, the proposed budget won't cost tax payers any more money, and the Board wants to be more accountable and alleviate problems and lines in future elections.
- Mr. Hamm stated that currently, Richland County owns 958 voting machines. In preparation for the next General Election, Richland County is short approximately 18 to 20 machines.
- The purchase of voting machines, printer, compact, and other additional equipment will cost approximately \$4,000 per machine. The purchase of additional machines can be done over a 3 year incremental period.
- The Board may want to ask for funding and seek assistance in purchasing 6-10 voting machines in FY13-14 budget and begin taking small steps to ensure compliance in future elections.
- The Board agreed to request funds for 10 additional voting machines and adjusted the budget line item downward to reflect the change.
- A motion was made to receive the proposed budget once the budget line item was modified to reflect downward adjustment. Seconded. Approved 4-0.
- Mr. Sims requested an update on the maintenance of all voting machines in order to identify the number of working machines and the number of machines in need of repair.

Executive Director Search Committee

- Ms. Steve Hamm stated that the responsibilities of the Executive Director Search Committee are to solicit applications from qualified individuals; to engage in the review of all applications; and to provide the Board with three individuals for selection.
- All members of the search committee have been selected and include:
 - Rep. Jimmy Bales, Richland County Legislative Delegation Representative
 - Attorney Sue Berkowitz, Community Representative
 - Mr. Norman Jackson, County Council Representative
 - Mr. Herbert Sims, Richland County Elections & Voter Registration Board Representative, Committee Chair

Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:32 pm.

Recorded by:
Amie Brunson, Administrative Assistant