

**Minutes of the
Richland County
Board of Elections and Voter Registration
2020 Hampton Street
Wednesday, February 6, 2013
4:00pm**

Board Members in Attendance

Mr. Allen Dowdy, Acting Chair
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. Rebecca Brown
Ms. Cheryl Goodwin
Ms. Chelle Epps
Ms. Amie Brunson

Others in Attendance

Mr. Steve Hamm, Esquire

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. 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.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

- The Board Members reviewed the minutes from January 16, 2013. A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes. Seconded. Approved 4-0.
- The Board Members reviewed the minutes from January 25, 2013. A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes. Seconded. Approved 4-0.

Executive Session

- A motion was made to proceed into Executive Session for a discussion and receipt of legal advice. Seconded. Approved 4-0. The Board entered into Executive Session at 4:08 pm.

- A motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 4:45 pm. Seconded. Approved 4-0. The Board indicated that no action and no votes were taken during Executive Session.

Old Business

- None

New Business

Ratification of Job Descriptions

- Dr. Salmond provided the Board Members with the job descriptions for the Executive Director, Deputy Director of Elections and Deputy Director of Voter Registration and Absentee Services for the Board's consideration based on the new direction the office has taken to restore public confidence and trust in the election process.
- The two Deputy Director positions will collaborate and cooperate with each other to fulfill the organization's purpose. Although some components can be separated, both Deputy Directors will work together to ensure that the goals are carried out and to restore public confidence and trust in the election process.
- The Deputy Directors will be accountable to the Executive Director; and the Executive Director will be accountable to the Board as is noted in the new organizational structure.
- Attorney Steve Hamm stated that no new positions were created and that the Board was only dealing with the organizational structure that was already approved by the Board.
- Dr. Salmond indicated that once the Board approves the job descriptions, they would be submitted to Richland County's Human Resource Department for review and final action.
- A motion was made for the Board to ratify the job descriptions for the Deputy Director of Elections and the Deputy Director of Voter Registration and Absentee Services; and that the job descriptions will be forwarded to Richland County's Human Resource Department for review and final action as required. Seconded. Approved 4-0.

Communication Program & Public Information Policy & Procedures

- The Board reviewed a memo that will be sent to Richland County Administration regarding Communication Program and Public Information Policy & Procedures.
- A motion was made that the Board authorizes the Executive Director (Interim Director) and the Chair of the Commission to represent the agency as the first line of communication as may be required to respond to inquiries from the public at large, i.e. media or other organized interests. Furthermore, Administration and the Chair

will work in cooperation and collaboration with each other and the Public Information Office to achieve the goal of restoring and maintaining public confidence and trust. Either may chose or designate a staff member to respond in the interest of the Elections and Voter Registration office. Seconded. Approved 4-0.

Request for Public Input during Board Meetings

- Mr. Dowdy advised the Board members that two individuals from the community desired to speak at the meeting: Mr. Kennedy & Mr. Watkins.
- Before allowing Mr. Kennedy & Mr. Watkins to speak, Mr. Dowdy requested that both individuals observe the code of conduct and abide by the following rules:
 - You may disagree, but will be respectful of all;
 - You will refrain from personal attacks; and
 - You will limit your comments to 3 minutes.
- Mr. Dowdy further stated that if the individuals stray from the pledge, as Chairman of the Board, and with the Board's approval, the individual may be called out of order and requested to end all comments.
- Additionally, Mr. Dowdy stated that the Board would take all comments and questions under consideration, but may choose not to respond or comment at this time.
 - Statements from Mr. Kennedy
 - Mr. Kennedy stated that Attorney Steve Hamm's report detailed many issues that arose during the November 6, 2012 General Election. Mr. Kennedy asked the Board to provide a status update as to where the office currently stands in relation to the progress made in addressing the issues raised in the report.
 - Additionally, Mr. Kennedy stated that based on the new organizational structure of the Elections & Voter Registration office, personnel changes had to be made. Mr. Kennedy requested that the position vacancies be made available in addition to the qualifications for the individual who are hired to fill those vacancies.
 - Statements from Mr. Watkins
 - Mr. Watkins informed the Board that he was born and raised in Columbia and was taught to respect government but that the decision that was made by the Board has caused him much concern.
 - Mr. Watkins further stated that the costs of running the Elections & Voter Registration office is out of control. \$400,000 was added to the budget and now the Board is requesting additional money for next

year's fiscal budget. Mr. Watkins stated that the Elections Department was run efficiently by the former director, Mr. Mike Cinnamon.

- Mr. Watkins informed the Board that the decision to create a position for the outgoing Executive Director has caused a public outcry; many people are angry and the Board has a legal responsibility to make decisions within the best interest of Richland County citizens. Mr. Watkins also stated that democracy is the core and if people cannot trust the office, they will not vote.
- Mr. Watkins asked that the Board reconsider its decision to create another job for the outgoing Executive Director.
- In response to the statements provided by Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Watkins, Mr. Dowdy stated that their points of concern have been received and that the comments will be taken under review and consideration.

Executive Director Search Committee

- Mr. Dowdy requested a status update regarding the Executive Director Search Committee from Mr. Herbert Sims, Committee Chair.
- Mr. Sims informed the Board that the members of the search committee 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
- Mr. Sims stated that the Executive Director Search Committee met on February 4, 2013. A representative from Richland County's Legal Department and Mr. Dwight Hanna, Human Resource Director were also in attendance at the meeting.
- The Executive Director job description will be sent to the Human Resource Department. After review and necessary action taken on behalf of the Human Resource Department, the job description will be forwarded to the Executive Director Search committee who will review and forward to the Board Members. Once the Board approves, the job description will be forwarded to the Human Resource Department so the job vacancy can be posted and advertised.
- Attorney 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 final selection.

Acting Executive Director's Report

- Dr. Salmond informed the Board that he is pleased at the way the staff of the Elections & Voter Registration office has taken the report issued by Attorney Steve Hamm and is working together to find solutions to the issues raised in the report.
- Dr. Salmond has met with poll workers from various precincts and is currently in the process of compiling observations from those meetings in addition to his personal observations into a final report that will contain final recommendations and solutions to the Board for consideration.
- Mr. Garry Baum, Deputy Director of Elections, informed the Board that the staff is currently continuing their inventory of voting machines (working and non-working), assessment of batteries, power supplies, cords, latches, touch screens, etc. The office is currently working with PrintElect to ensure that the voting machines are repaired. The goal is to have 100% of all voting machines operational.
- Dr. Salmond further informed the Board that there are enough operational voting machines for the elections that will be held in 2013.
- Dr. Salmond indicated that incremental purchases of voting machines will be made within the next few years.
- Dr. Salmond also indicated that the Elections & Voter Registration office is currently working with the SC Budget & Control Board in the proposal to create new voting precincts. The office recognizes the fact that final approval regarding new precincts lies with the Richland County Delegation and Richland County Council before the office can implement any changes.

Meeting Date

- The next meeting date will be determined after the Executive Director Search Committee has the opportunity to meet again. Once the date and time have been determined, public notice of the meeting will be issued.

Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:21 pm.

Recorded by:
Amie Brunson, Administrative Assistant