

Minutes of the Richland County Board of Voter Registration and Elections
Wednesday, March 16, 2016
4:00pm, County Council Chambers

Board Members in Attendance

Ms. Marjorie Johnson, Chair

Ms. Adell Adams, Vice-Chair

Ms. Sylvia Holley

Ms. Jane Emerson

Mr. E. Peter Kennedy

Staff in Attendance

Mr. Samuel Selph, Director

Ms. Lillian McBride, Deputy Director

Staff Members – Elections & Voter Registration Department

Others in Attendance

Members of the Public

Media Representatives

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

- A motion was made to amend the agenda to allow public comments and questions to be moved before Executive Session. Seconded. Approved.
- A motion was made to permanently move public comments and questioned before Executive Sessions at all meetings henceforth. Seconded. Approved.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

- The Board Members reviewed the minutes from February 10, 2016.
- A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes. Seconded. Approved.

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Board Comments – Discussion

- Commissioner Kennedy - Items
 - The following 10 questions were posed by Mr. Kennedy to Mr. Selph:
 - *Director's Job Description*
 - The job description that is currently being utilized is the one that was patterned after Greenville County
 - *Number of Full-Time Employees*
 - 16
 - *Number of Part-Time Employees, not Counting Poll-Workers*
 - 4
 - *Number of New Full-Time Employees Added in 2015 – 2016*
 - 1 full-time employee was hired in 2015
 - 0 full-time employees were hired in 2016
 - *Salaries by Job and Description*
 - Information will be provided with employee names redacted
 - *Bonus Amounts Paid to Employees During 2015*
 - There were no employees in the Elections & Voter Registration Department that were paid a bonus
 - *Explanation of the Budget's Professional Services Line Item*
 - Attorney Fees and ABS, which is an entity that assists with absentee voting for the department
 - *Explanation of an Itemized Request to Richland County Council asking for Reimbursements of \$242,560 for holding the City of Columbia Election and billing the City a smaller amount of \$147,481, which is a difference of \$95,079.*

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houses the voting machines (i.e. when it rains, the voting machines have to be covered with tarps due to the leaks in the warehouse).

- Ms. Holley stated that she hoped that everything being questioned is not due to the makeup of the current Board, that includes minorities, and that it is her desire that the Board present a united front and work together to do the right thing for the public.
 - Ms. Emerson stated that she has requested an accounting of the department's funds since December 2015. Additionally, she does not believe that there is a racial undercurrent to the requests and that Council and the public have not received clear communication as to what the additional money is for.
 - Ms. Adams stated that County Council knows all the department's expenditures because they make them and if they want to know, all they have to do is check.
 - Ms. Johnson stated that 7 meetings have been held regarding the current fiscal year budget and that the County's Finance Department generates year to date expenditures. The department is asking for the same money; the budget request was for 3 million and the department received 1 million which is an allocation of less than 50% of the original request.
 - There are currently unpaid invoices and the poll worker budget line item is currently in the red and has been since the City of Columbia election. If reimbursements are added to the department's budget, then the department would only need approximately \$220,000.
- SCARE Conference Outcomes
 - Ms. Johnson stated that the following items were discussed during the SCARE Conference:
 - Witness signature on absentee ballots
 - Increasing poll worker pay

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- *Department's Budget Request*
 - How did the department arrive at an additional 1.2 million dollar request for funds if the department is currently over \$200,000 in the black, as per information provided via a FOIA request. Additionally, why are other comparable counties able to operate their offices on a much lesser amount.
 - The total number requested includes salaries, retirement, FICA, and poll worker payments. Greenville County does not carry poll worker payments on the face of their budget as a line item; those funds are placed in a revolving fund. Richland County does not have a revolving fund.
- Public Comments / Questions – Ms. Nancy Barksdale
 - Ms. Barksdale posed the following questions:
 - *Budget Line Item – Professional Services*
 - What additional items have been charged to the professional services line item.
 - Ms. Lillian McBride responded that advertising charges for candidate filing notices have also been charged to the professional services line item.
 - *Director's Job Description*
 - Has the job description been approved by the Board?
 - Yes, the Director's job description has been approved by the Board and she will receive a copy.
 - *Richland County's Purchasing Department*
 - Does the department utilize Richland County's Purchasing Department and take advantage of purchasing items in bulk.