

MEETING OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF ELECTIONS
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014
AT 1:30 P.M.
42 BROADWAY, 6th FLOOR, COMMISSIONERS' HEARING ROOM
NEW YORK, NY 10004

PRESENT: President Gregory C. Soumas
 Secretary Michael Michel

Commissioners Jose Miguel Araujo, Ronald Castorina, Julie Dent, Maria R. Guastella, Michael Rendino, Simon Shamoun, Frederic M. Umane

Michael J. Ryan, Executive Director
Dawn Sandow, Deputy Executive Director
Pamela Perkins, Administrative Manager
Raphael Savino, Deputy General Counsel
Dorothy Delayo, Director, Personnel
Valerie Vazquez, Director, Communications & Public Affairs
Kenneth Moltner, Counsel to the Commissioners
Steven B. Denkberg, Counsel to the Commissioners

GUEST: Monica Bartley, CIDNY
 Michael Benjamin
 John D. Smith
 L. Ramisiella, DOI
 E. Schultz, DOI
 Catherine Gray
 Davis Seitzer, NYC Council
 Eric Friedman, CFB
 Alex Camarda, Citizens Union
 Kate Doran, LWV
 Alan Flacks, Member of NY County Democratic Committee

President Soumas called the meeting to order at 1:32 P.M.

President Soumas tabled the minutes until a quorum was present.

Mr. Ryan reported on the New York State Election Commissioners' Association (ECA) Winter Conference which was held from January 13, 2014 through January 16, 2014. Commissioners Castorina, Dent, Guastella, and Rendino and various executive staff members attended. Proposed voting system changes were discussed at the Conference and the State Board is scheduled to vote on those proposals at their Feb. 4, 2014 meeting. Mr. Ryan requested to report on those changes in detail at the Commissioners' Meeting on Feb. 11, 2014 after they have been voted on by the State Board.

Mr. Ryan reported on the donation process of the two (2) voting machines to The National September 11 Memorial Museum. He stated that technically it is a purchase by the Museum. The total salvage value of the machines is \$286.50; the payment will be made to the City of New York. Copies of the Board's letter to the Museum and response letter from DCAS are in the agenda. Mr. Ryan stated that the process is in its final stages and he will report back on this item when the transferring of ownership shall take place.

President Soumas noted that Commissioners Castorina, Michel, Rendino, Shamoun, and Umane joined the meeting.

Mr. Ryan reported that the Presidential Commission on Election Administration released “The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations” dated January 2014. A copy of the report is in the agenda. Mr. Ryan has fully reviewed this report and stated that the research will be helpful to the Board. He recited a paragraph on page 8 of the report into the record – “The country’s election officials find themselves second-guessed and heavily criticized when elections run into problems, and praise is not forthcoming in comparable volume – or at all – when the process runs smoothly. At the same time, these officials are all too often given inadequate resources with which to carry out this critical function. Over the months of its preparation of this Report, the Commission arrived at a renewed appreciation of how hard, diligently and effectively the vast majority of the country’s election officials work to provide well-run elections for voters – and how difficult the job is.” Mr. Ryan stated that this statement accurately captures the Board’s circumstances. He noted that there were reports that the Board was not involved in this report which is untrue. Executive Management went to Washington, DC and weighed in

on the issues. Mr. Ryan noted that some operational difficulties at the Board are shared with other election administrators throughout the country and are being worked on. The issue of voter rolls, concerning moves and deaths, is not a problem singular to the Board; it is a national problem. Mr. Ryan noted that the actual instances of voter fraud are minuscule in the U.S. because of the serious consequences. It was found that voter fraud occurs in the absentee ballot process. Prior to the Presidential Commission's Report and DOI's Report, Executive Management arranged a meeting with the PEW Institute, and there is a system known as ERIC, the Electronic Registration Information Center, which uses a multi-disciplinary matrix; a unique 40 character "password" attached to a voter that helps scrub the voter registration list. Mr. Ryan added that the Board and the citizens of New York have the responsibility to give accurate and good information to the voters so that they do not get the impression that things are worse off than they really are which leads to voter apathy. He requested for those to engage in a more positive and constructive conversation, and engage as partners with the City Board. Mr. Ryan recommended for everyone, including the public, to read the Presidential Commission's Report, including the footnotes.

Commissioner Araujo moved to adopt the minutes of the December 17, 2013, January 7, 2014, January 14, 2014 and January 21, 2014 meetings. The motion was seconded, with President Soumas and Commissioner Castorina abstaining on the December 17, 2013 minutes, and Commissioners Guastella, Dent, and Rendino abstaining on the January 14, 2014 minutes. The motion was adopted. The Commissioners noted that they abstained because they were not present at those meetings

President Soumas requested to discuss a Manhattan personnel matter.

President Soumas moved to grant an advance of 84 hours sick time to Marsha Carrington, a Clerk in the Manhattan Office, due to severe illness. This request complies with the City's rules and regulations. Commissioner Umane seconded the motion, which was unanimously adopted.

President Soumas moved to convene an Executive Session for purposes of personnel. Commissioner Umane seconded the motion, which was unanimously adopted.

Following Executive Session, the regular stated meeting resume and President Soumas reported on the following actions taken in Executive Session:

- I. The Commissioners unanimously approved to extend the employment term of the current group of temporary employees through December 31, 2014 due to the extended election calendar. There will be a June Federal Primary, September Primary, November General, and there may be Special Elections.
- II. The Commissioners unanimously approved to grant an advance of 84 hours sick time to Frank Tosi, an Administrative Associate in the Bronx Office.

President Soumas moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and unanimously adopted.

The next stated meeting of the Commissioners will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2014 at 1:30 P.M.