

BOARD OF ELECTIONS
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

42 Broadway - 6th floor
Commissioners' Hearing Room

New York, NY 10004

January 19, 2021

1:30 p.m. - 2:54 p.m.

January 19, 2021

PRESENT:

President Frederic Umane
Secretary Miguelina Camilo
Commissioner Jose Araujo
Commissioner Michael Michel
Commissioner Gino Marmorato
Commissioner Rodney Pepe-Souvenir
Commissioner Simon Shamoun
Commissioner Patricia Ann Taylor
Commissioner Tiffany Townsend
Commissioner John Wm. Zaccone

Michael J. Ryan, Executive Director
Georgea Kontzamanis, Operations Manager
Steven Denkberg, Commissioners' Counsel
Kenneth Moltner, Commissioners' Counsel
Sherwin Suss, Chief Contracting Officer

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2 (The meeting commenced at 1:34 p.m.)

3 MR. MICHAEL J. RYAN: Okay, we are live
4 streaming. Today is January 19, 2021. And this is
5 the weekly meeting of the Commissioners of
6 Elections in the City of New York. My name is
7 Michael Ryan. I'm the executive director. I will
8 start with the commissioner's roll call.
9 President Umane?

10 PRESIDENT FREDERIC UMANE: Here.

11 MR. RYAN: Secretary Camilo?

12 SECRETARY MIGUELINA CAMILO: Here.

13 MR. RYAN: Commissioner Araujo?

14 COMMISSIONER JOSE ARAUJO: Present.

15 MR. RYAN: Commissioner Marmorato?

16 COMMISSIONER GINO MARMORATO: Present,
17 good afternoon, everyone.

18 MR. RYAN: Good afternoon. Commissioner
19 Michel?

20 COMMISSIONER MICHAEL MICHEL: Present.

21 MR. RYAN: Commissioner Pepe-Souvenir?

22 COMMISSIONER PEPE-SOUVENIR: Present,
23 good afternoon.

24 MR. RYAN: Good afternoon. Commissioner

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2 Shamoun?

3 COMMISSIONER SIMON SHAMOUN: Present,
4 thank you.

5 MR. RYAN: Thank you. Commissioner
6 Taylor? Yes, please unmute, Commissioner Taylor.

7 COMMISSIONER PATRICIA ANNE TAYLOR: I am
8 here, thank you.

9 MR. RYAN: Thank you. Commissioner
10 Townsend?

11 COMMISSIONER TIFFANY TOWNSEND: Good
12 afternoon, present.

13 MR. RYAN: Good afternoon. Commissioner
14 Zaccone?

15 COMMISSIONER JOHN WM. ZACCONE: Good
16 afternoon, present.

17 MR. RYAN: Good afternoon. As I stated
18 earlier, I am Michael Ryan, I'm the executive
19 director. Also joined on this conference via
20 conference are counsels to the commissioners,
21 Steven Denkberg and Kenneth Moltner. And
22 elsewhere in the building is Georgea Kontzamanis,
23 operations manager.

24 In addition to items one and two on the

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2 agenda, we will have a finance committee report
3 that needs to be reported out on and Mr. Suss is
4 here and will be called up at the appropriate
5 time. And executive management doesn't have any
6 personnel or litigation matters. Do any of the
7 commissioners have either of those two things
8 that wish to be discussed in executive session? I
9 guess my question is, is there a reason to go
10 into executive session today?

11 COMMISSIONER PEPE-SOUVENIR: Yeah, I'd
12 like to, I sent some, an e-mail this morning I'd
13 like to discuss in executive session.

14 MR. RYAN: Okay. Is it a personnel
15 matter?

16 COMMISSIONER PEPE-SOUVENIR: Just a
17 brief discussion, yes, personnel matter.

18 MR. RYAN: Alright. Thank you very much,
19 commissioner. Okay. So we will add three,
20 commissioners' finance committee report and
21 executive session for personnel. Okay. So, item
22 number one is there is a special election in the
23 24th Council District, the election day is
24 scheduled for February 2nd. However, early voting

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2 commences on Saturday, January 23rd, so that's
3 this coming week. And with respect to, I know
4 Commissioner Araujo had some questions or wanted
5 addressed regarding training.

6 So, the training for this election will
7 be tomorrow and it will be a video conference
8 type training like we're doing now. Given the
9 timing of the election and the ability to access
10 individuals and the fact that the tasks of the
11 regular poll workers are identical for rank
12 choice voting as they would be in an election
13 that does not implicate rank choice voting, the
14 coordinators will be trained. I believe it's also
15 Queens' intention to have staff members at each
16 of the poll sites since it's for early voting and
17 for election day. We'll double check that, but
18 since it's a small enough election that would be
19 possible.

20 So, I'll hold this up. I know it really
21 can't be seen that well, but this is an example
22 of the materials that have been circulated, that
23 have been worked on by Ms. Vazquez and other
24 members of the staff with respect to rank choice

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2 voting and is part of the public education
3 program that I believe was a presentation was
4 made to the public education committee regarding
5 these materials and videos and other things that
6 we have on our website. And so we are again
7 supplementing the public outreach portion of this
8 process that is required by the city charter to
9 be done by the campaign finance board. As well, I
10 understand that our ADA unit is integrated into
11 that process by the CFB to offer assistance and
12 to help make some presentations with respect to
13 the accessibility community.

14 So we're working as much hand in glove
15 as we can with the campaign finance board to make
16 sure that things get done properly. And we have
17 our own responsibilities as voters come into the
18 poll sites. So, the idea was to keep the
19 materials that will be distributed. And so what I
20 held up is going to be available in all of the
21 locations early voting and election day sites and
22 given to the voter with the ballot. So this will
23 be a handout that goes to the voter and explains
24 the rank choice voting to them. And the training

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2 that the coordinators will receive will be
3 consistent with the information set forth on the
4 handout that's going to the voters. So if the
5 voters have any more detailed questions, they
6 will, we will be able to address them, but that
7 will be done through the coordinators rather than
8 through the individual poll workers.

9 This will give us an opportunity to A,
10 get the training done that we need to get done
11 for the February 2nd election, but also to see
12 what works, what doesn't and what needs to be
13 tweaked and what needs to be expanded to, because
14 we will have two more opportunities to conduct a
15 rank choice voting election before the full
16 citywide election in June.

17 So we have another one coming up in
18 Queens. Queens will be experts at this by the
19 time June rolls around, having done two and then
20 the Bronx will have an event on March 23rd
21 involving two separate districts. So, we're
22 taking this as an opportunity to do our best
23 effort but also to evaluate that effort and to
24 take a look at what we need to do moving forward.

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2 So I don't know, and excuse me, I'll
3 address, since Commissioner Araujo was the one
4 that brought this up, Commissioner Araujo is that
5 presentation sufficient for your purposes or do
6 you have any other questions?

7 COMMISSIONER ARAUJO: No, it is. Thank
8 you for that. I just did have some, an additional
9 question. I don't know if you addressed it.
10 Whether or not that supplemental information to
11 the voter, to those voting in our special
12 election, is that up on our website in a place
13 where it's conspicuous, it can be reviewed if
14 anyone goes to our website?

15 MR. RYAN: There is information up on
16 the website. Ms. Kontzamanis, do you have the
17 specific location? I'm trying to picture it. We
18 do have a rank choice voting button on the
19 website and I'm just not visualizing it
20 presently.

21 MS. KONTZAMANIS: We do, and we have for
22 the special elections as well.

23 MR. RYAN: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER ARAUJO: Great. Thank you

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2 very much.

3 MR. RYAN: And if --

4 PRESIDENT UMANE: Could I just ask that
5 that be circulated to all the commissioners? I
6 know apparently it was reviewed by the committee,
7 but I don't recall, and again, I'm not as young
8 as I used to be with creeping senility, but I
9 don't recall having, if it'd been circulated to
10 the commissioners and theoretically approved by
11 the full board.

12 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: [unintelligible]

13 [00:13:25].

14 PRESIDENT UMANE: And I know we're under
15 significant timeframes but at some point, at
16 least it would be helpful to see it, so that, so
17 if the others of us had comments, we would have
18 an opportunity to provide them.

19 MR. RYAN: Okay. We will certainly --
20 this one is a one-pager but what I'll do is I'll
21 have Ms. Vazquez forward all of the materials. I
22 believe there are links and videos and things
23 that can be done. So we can send this one pager
24 out fairly quickly, and then I'll have Ms.

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2 Vazquez send out the balance of the materials.

3 PRESIDENT UMANE: Okay, great. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. RYAN: Alright. Thank you. So, that
6 concludes executive management's presentation
7 with respect to the 24th Council District. Did
8 any commissioners have any other questions
9 regarding that subject? Secretary Camilo, first
10 time I get to say that in an open meeting.

11 SECRETARY CAMILO: Thank you. So I just
12 wanted to put an idea out there, because our
13 website, which is wonderful and has a lot of data
14 on rank choice voting, you can see a sample
15 ballot if you are a voter that is registered for
16 that district in Queens, right. If we can maybe
17 think about making that sample ballot, which
18 displays what rank choice voting will look like
19 for the first time, if we can make that available
20 to any voter that wants to view it, just so the
21 voters get a sense from now of what that ballot
22 looks like, even though it's not going to have
23 information that they're going to put on.

24 MR. RYAN: Okay. So you're looking then

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2 for a static .PDF and then ultimately, one in
3 machine readable format?

4 SECRETARY CAMILO: We have a graphic
5 right now, and it's on display on our home page,
6 of, you know, the five columns and what rank
7 choice ballot voting ballot could look like. But
8 if that ballot is available for those voters that
9 are registered in the 24th District, if there is
10 a way to make a similar ballot available to any
11 voter. If I want to look at it right now, right,
12 that's just something that I would recommend and
13 maybe we, the commissioners, could have more
14 discussion on that before we actually make the
15 decision. But --

16 MR. RYAN: So, commissioner can I ask
17 you a question? We had been, ESNS had provided us
18 a sample ballot back when we had to respond to
19 the City Council and the mayor and publish our
20 report, which is attached in that. And I believe,
21 if my memory serves me correctly, it was based on
22 the last mayoral election, and they just did a
23 layout that way. Now, in order to make sure that
24 the website is fully accessible, we would have to

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2 reduce that to a machine readable format as well
3 and that could be taken care of. My question to
4 you is would a .PDF like that suffice, or would
5 you prefer something purely fictional? Like we
6 have done with other sample ballots, where no
7 candidate names are mentioned, etc.?

8 SECRETARY CAMILO: I think if you could
9 refresh our recollection as to what that document
10 looks like and that could be circulated, because
11 I want the, I would want the commissioners to
12 look at whatever sample we use.

13 MR. RYAN: Got you, okay. I will do
14 that. I will circulate that. My memory serves me
15 that it was based on the contest list from the
16 previous mayoral election four years ago, or
17 three years ago now. But in the past, typically,
18 when we've done sample ballots like that for
19 educational purposes, they've been fictional, as
20 opposed to using real names.

21 PRESIDENT UMANE: Whatever's easier but
22 I would recommend using a fictional name.

23 MR. RYAN: Right. Okay.

24 PRESIDENT UMANE: But if it creates a

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2 problem and delay and all of that within the
3 upcoming elections, I would go with whatever we
4 can do the quickest, the idea being that the
5 voters get a chance to see what it's going to
6 look like.

7 MS. KONTZAMANIS: Mr. Ryan, I believe we
8 already have one created that the CFB and other
9 groups are already using to show their
10 constituency what the ballot looks like.

11 MR. RYAN: Perfect. And Commissioner
12 Umane, to answer your concern, for the upcoming
13 elections, the voters that are actually voting in
14 those districts will have a specific information
15 available to them for those districts and I think
16 Commissioner Camilo's concern is one of the ways
17 that you access your ballot online is typing in
18 your address. And so if you don't have a contest
19 in your district, and you type in your address,
20 it's going to come up with no contest. So this is
21 kind of to fill that gap.

22 So the actual voters that have a
23 contest, they're covered. And this would be for
24 everybody else, in case people looking for

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2 general information about RCV between now and
3 June.

4 COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND: I think that's a
5 great idea, and I'm happy to convene a, if it's
6 necessary for the public education committee to
7 meet as well too, I'm happy to convene a meeting.

8 MR. RYAN: Okay.

9 PRESIDENT UMANE: Is there any news on
10 any of the litigation regarding rank choice
11 voting and are we going to do it or not do it?

12 MR. RYAN: Well, until we get a decision
13 from a court of competent jurisdiction, we forge
14 ahead. And so --

15 PRESIDENT UMANE: Okay. So we haven't
16 been stayed is what I just wondered.

17 MR. RYAN: No, we have not been stayed.
18 And it does not appear that that particular
19 litigation is moving with a sense of urgency.
20 But, you know, we're on the outside looking in on
21 that one a little bit.

22 COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND: Great.

23 MR. RYAN: Okay. Yeah, anyone? Alright.
24 Number two, we need an appointment of a

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2 commissioner's cover sheet review meeting for
3 January 21st for the Bronx special election in
4 the 11th and 15th Council Districts for the March
5 23rd special.

6 SECRETARY CAMILO: And when will they be
7 scheduled?

8 MR. RYAN: Well, that is typically left
9 to the discretion of the commissioners that will
10 be serving on that committee. We have to, we just
11 need to know because we do have a 24-hour notice
12 requirement, which would have to be completed by
13 tomorrow for Thursday.

14 SECRETARY CAMILO: So --

15 COMMISSIONER MARMORATO: This is
16 Commissioner Marmorato, I will agree to represent
17 the Republicans for this committee meeting.

18 PRESIDENT UMANE: Thank you,
19 Commissioner Marmorato, you're so selected.

20 SECRETARY CAMILO: And I can serve for
21 the dems. I don't know, Mr. Ryan, if you need a
22 date from us now.

23 MR. RYAN: Oh, I'm sorry. The date is
24 going to be January 21st. Then we would just need

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2 a time.

3 PRESIDENT UMANE: Thursday, it's
4 Thursday.

5 MR. RYAN: Thursday, the 21st and then a
6 time convenient to both Commissioner Marmorato
7 and Secretary Camilo.

8 SECRETARY CAMILO: Can we say 3:00 p.m.?

9 MR. RYAN: 3:00 p.m. is fine with us.
10 That's up to you guys.

11 COMMISSIONER MARMORATO: Can we do 3:30,
12 Commissioner Camilo?

13 SECRETARY CAMILO: I'm not available at
14 3:30. If a dem wants to step in.

15 COMMISSIONER MARMORATO: Can we do 3:15?

16 SECRETARY CAMILO: 3:15 --

17 COMMISSIONER MARMORATO: I have
18 something at 2:30 which I just don't want to run
19 over, but if 3:00 o'clock works, I'll be sure to
20 be complete by 3:00 p.m., so 3:00 o'clock.

21 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I can sub for
22 Commissioner Camilo.

23 SECRETARY CAMILO: That's fine. If 3:30
24 Thursday and I could designate you, Commissioner

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2 Taylor, thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Excellent.

4 MR. RYAN: Okay. So 3:30 then, alright,
5 very well. Okay. So that's taken care of. And
6 then, Mr. Suss, if you could please step up, and
7 there is a finance committee report. Commissioner
8 Umane, you participated in that and as well did
9 Commissioner Camilo, if either one of you wants
10 to take the brief summary or should we have Mr.
11 Suss, do his presentation first?

12 PRESIDENT UMANE: Well, I can do it
13 quickly.

14 MR. RYAN: Okay.

15 PRESIDENT UMANE: We have been asked to,
16 and the committee recommends a contract with Iron
17 Mountain to work for six months for special
18 elections and various other trucking duties for
19 the Queens elections that are coming up. And Iron
20 Mountain is a well known company that handles
21 lots of things and lots of trucking assignments
22 in the financial industry. And they're known as a
23 very reliable storage and trucking company. And
24 this is a preliminary, temporary six-month, up to

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2 \$600,000 contract in order to handle the trucking
3 requirements for the Queens elections. And this
4 has been vetted and approved by the committee and
5 I would recommend it as a community
6 recommendation to the full board.

7 MR. RYAN: Are there any objections to
8 the committee recommendation? Hearing none, the
9 committee report is adopted and then that leaves
10 us --

11 MR. SHERWIN SUSS: Thank you,
12 commissioners.

13 MR. RYAN: Thank you. That leaves us
14 with two other matters. One, electing the next
15 meeting date, and two, adjourning into executive
16 session.

17 PRESIDENT UMANE: Well, I would -- we
18 should meet on the 26th at 1:30 as our next
19 meeting date, and I would move to adjourn to
20 executive session for executive session on
21 personnel and possibly litigation.

22 SECRETARY CAMILO: Second, I will
23 second, sorry, commissioner.

24 MR. RYAN: It sounded like you said

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2 psych, which was a childhood thing that we used
3 to do when I was a kid. But it was seconded.
4 Alright, so are there any objections to going
5 into executive session? Hearing none, this
6 meeting is adjourned to executive session and
7 I'll be back to report out anything as needed.
8 Thank you.

9 [OFF THE RECORD]

10 [ON THE RECORD]

11 MR. RYAN: There are no matters to
12 report from executive session. Thank you. Next
13 meeting is January 26th at 1:30.

14 (The meeting concluded at 2:34 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE OF ACCURACY

I, Claudia Marques, certify that the foregoing transcript of the Board of Elections in The City of New York on January 19, 2021 was prepared using the required transcription equipment and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Certified By

Claudia Marques

Date: June 14, 2021

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