



MINUTES

A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE CITY MUNICIPAL ELECTION LAWS

VIRTUAL MEETING Thursday, June 14, 2023 6:00 PM

Task Force Members Present: Faye Gaskin, Scott Gibson, John Michael Gudger, and Andrew Miller. Eileen Leahy, an *ex officio* member, was also present.

Others Present:

- Mark Hildebrand, City of Annapolis TV
- Jared DeMarinis

On motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the May 10, 2023 meeting were approved.

The Task Force then heard from Mr. DeMarinis, who works for the State Board of Elections and was recently named the new State Administrator of Elections.

In general, Mr. DeMarinis advised of the need to modernize the City Code, particularly with respect to campaign finance laws.

A few points were raised in the discussion:

- The City of Rockville did an all-mail ballot, and saw an increase in participation. The State also saw new voters as a result of mail-in ballots during COVID.
- To place City Elections of the State Ballot, the City would have to resolve any technical differences between the City and State Code. This may require state legislation. Some localities resolve this by running their elections concurrently in a nearby location (e.g., a room across the hall or a building across the street).
- If Annapolis adopted State Campaign Finance law and placed its election on the State Ballot, the City could likely leverage the State's Campaign Finance Reporting System. (This would delegate enforcement authority to the State.)
- The precedent of municipalities running "jungle primaries" noting that some do list the candidate's party registration. Under the system all candidates are on the primary ballot, and all voters have a vote in the primary. This could produce a general election where both



candidates are of the same party. If coupled with a “Sore Loser Law” this almost certainly guarantees the winner enjoys majority support.

- The State of Maryland runs Board of Education elections using a “Jungle Primary” format, so there is local precedent for the State and County Board to run these types of elections.

The Task Force then discussed its road ahead noting that it was approaching its halfway point. The discussion included:

- A request to meet with the redistricting task force;
- Planning of an in-person work session; and
- Discussion of a survey to solicit citizen input.

There being no further business, the Task Force adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Scott T. Gibson, Secretary