

**HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 14, 2009**

Call to Order:

Upon notice duly given, Commissioner Walden called to order a regularly scheduled meeting of the Hamilton County Election Commission at 6:30 p.m. on April 14, 2009 at the office of the Hamilton County Election Commission, 700 River Terminal Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Prayer: Commissioner Lewis

Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Bennett

Present at Meeting:

Commissioners Walden, Bennett, Lewis, Summers were present at the meeting. Attorney Chris Clem, and the staff of the Election Commission, as well as members of the media. Commissioner Anderson came in at the end of the meeting. (He wasn't notified, due to not having informatin for him until afetr the meeting)

Election of Officers

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to elect officers.

Commissioner Bennett made a motion to make Commissioner Walden the chairman of the Election Commission. **Commissioner Lewis** seconded. The motion was unanimously accepted.

Secretary Bennett made a motion to make Commissioner Summers the new secretary of the Election Commission. **Commissioner Lewis** seconded. The motion was unanimously accepted.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to select attorney Chris Clem as new legal council. **Commissioner Bennett** seconded. The motion was unanimously accepted.

Administrator Knowles stated that he would like the new council to get \$200.00 an hour plus a 1000.00 retainer fee. This is the same as the previous cuncil.. **Commissioner Bennett** made a motion to accept the amount. **Commissioner Lewis** seconded and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Bennett made a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Lewis seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

New Buisness

Budget

Administrator Knowles stated that he had to appear before the county commission on May 4, 2009 and would like them to review before hand.

Chairman Walden stated that he wanted everyone to review it and if there were any questions they should get with Bud. If they thought there was something that should require

a meeting, let me know and I will schedule a working meeting to go over the budget. address them.

Meetings

Chairman Walden asked that we set the meetings on a different day than Monday because of all the attorneys on the commission. We can meet on that day and if we need another meeting before then we can set one up and meet. **Commissioner Bennett** made a motion to set them on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 8:00 am. **Commissioner Lewis** seconded and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Chairman Walden stated that if there were any questions or concerns to please see our legal council and we will work through them. He further stated that as of tonight the employees will fall under the county hr department and make sure everyone is treated the same and has handbooks and until someone over rules us it will be the policy and that everyone is treated the same. If there are conflicts I am sure we will work those out, this is an attempt to make sure everything is fair across the board.

Counting of Ballots

Legal Matters:

Chairman Walden stated that he wanted attorney Clem to get a copy of everything the commission gets including all forms and things of like that.

Secretary Summers stated that he had sent a memo to Administrator Knowles and Charlotte Morgan on April 9, 2009. I had first suggested we put this over until succeeding council had

been elected. I would suggest we put this on the agenda for the next meeting, and I will be glad to get with new council on this matter.

County

Chairman Walden stated that he had an issue to bring up and that is the status of the employee's as it relates to them being Hamilton County Employee's and not just employees of the Election Commission. He further stated that In the past we have talked about this and the Election Commission had its own handbok and didn't go by the rules of Hamilton County. The hiring process at the Election Commission surcomvents the hirmg proces at the Hamilton County Government. It is the chairs opinion that the employees fall under the same guidelines, benefits, pay structure and the same protections as any employee of the Hamilton County Government, There is a selection process that is through the Hamilton County HR Department and the pay raises will be consitant with other employees of Hamilton County Government, the Disciplinary proceedures, and the protection any employee has through Hamilton County Government has the employees of the Election Commission should have the same. It should be fair, equitable and just for everyone. That it should be fair and equitable hiring process and everyone should have the oppurtunity to apply for a job. In an attempt and hope to de politicise the Hamilton County Election Commission.

Commissioner Summers asked was MR. Walden was saying there were employees being treated unfairly, because he has been here 10 yrs and I don't know of any problem that hasn't

been dealt with and I respectfully differ with you. I am certainly not going to agree that any employees have been treated unfairly. There have been disciplinary problems and they have been handled.

Chairman Walden stated that every employee of Hamilton County Government should fall under the same guidelines, and that those guidelines should be fair to everyone and the employees of the election commission should not be under another handbook that does not apply to all the employees. Our handbook, our selection process, our pay rates are not consistent with the other policies and procedures of the Hamilton County Government and the chair would welcome a motion to put everyone under the same HR policies as the other employees of the Hamilton County Government.

Charlotte Mullis-Morgan stated that we are pretty much under the County Government, pay scale, if there is a problem we go before the county and they hear us. We can't be 100 % under the county because we have several state laws we have to follow that the county doesn't. That is what happened when Mr. Conrad was here, he tried to get us under the county and sir we cannot because of the laws we have to follow.

Chairman Walden stated that it was his understanding that several other departments used to have their own separate policies and procedures for selection.

Secretary Summers stated that they are not regulated by state law and that is the difference

Chairman Walden stated that there was a motion was there a second.

Commissioner Bennett seconded

Secretary Summers was opposed.

The motion passed

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: Monday April 27, 2009 @ 8:00 am

APPROVED:

Jerry Summers

Secretary

Micghael S. Walden

Chairperson

JB Bennett

Commissioner

Jeff Lewis

Commissioner

James Anderson

Commissioner