

**COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND FUNDING
FOR THE PUBLIC ELECTION FUND**

Tuesday, February 16– 7:30 p.m.

5th Floor Conference Room

Council Office Building

Committee Members Present:

David Scull, Chair

Sharon Cohen, Vice Chair

Lee Annis, Jr.

Margaret Greene

Paul Schwartz

Staff:

Amanda Mihill, County Council

Committee Chair Scull called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Committee members met via speakerphone with Dr. Kenneth Mayer, Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Committee members and Dr. Mayer discussed his 2013 report regarding public election funding. Dr. Mayer highlighted the following important points from his report:

- It is important not to overstate the impact that a public election fund has in elections (public financing will not radically alter electoral systems).
- There are some effects of public financing of elections, but they are marginal. Effects include that there is a decrease in the number of uncontested seats, there is no change in the rate of re-election of incumbents, and no change in the candidate pool.
- There is a negative relationship between how much a candidate spends and how many votes the candidate receives.

Committee members questioned Dr. Mayer about the experience in New York City elections, especially regarding whether public financing impacted the diversity of candidates or voter participation. Dr. Mayer noted there was a detectable difference. Dr. Mayer noted that the New York City Council is diverse, which could be reflective of the underlying city or might be a result of matching. Dr. Mayer further noted that public financing has changed the way candidates raise money and now candidates go to less wealthy areas and areas with more minorities.

Responding to Committee member questions about how fast candidates began participating in public financing in New York City, Dr. Mayer noted that it was a gradual increase in participation and that there was not universal participation immediately. Dr. Mayer noted that in the New York City political culture, it is unusual to get a large number of amateur politicians running for public office. Rather, there is typically a pattern of recruitment and an

expectation of how a candidate moves up in the system, including having community support and grassroots activity.

Committee members approved the minutes from the January 11 minutes; motion made by Mr. Annis and seconded by Ms. Cohen. Committee members agreed to meet next on November 15* at 7:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

* By subsequent e-mails, the Committee agreed to meet on November 10 instead of November 15.