

**COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND FUNDING
FOR THE PUBLIC ELECTION FUND
Thursday, November 10 – 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 7:35 p.m.

Mr. Scull summarized recent events that are related to public campaign financing. On November 8, Montgomery County voters approved a Charter amendment that instituting term limits for County Council and County Executive. As a result of this measure, 4 Councilmembers and the County Executive will be ineligible to run for the elected office that the current occupy. Mr. Scull noted his view that this is likely to trigger an increase in the number of candidates. Mr. Scull also noted that since Donald Trump won the presidential election, it may inspire even more individuals to run for office. As a result of these events, Mr. Scull questioned whether the Committee should modify their recommendation to the Council and perhaps increase the recommended appropriation amount for the Public Election Fund. Other Commission members had questions about the mechanics of how the program will work in practice and requested that Department of Finance staff and/or staff from the State Board of Elections attend a Committee meeting to answer these programmatic questions.

Committee members reviewed the chart that they based their initial recommendations. Some members noted their view that the number of individuals running as Democratic candidates would increase. Other Committee members remained concerned that the Committee's initial recommendation assumed that all participants in the public financing would qualify for the maximum payout.

Committee members discussed the campaign finance experience in New York City via speakerphone with Matthew Sollars, Director of Public Relations at the New York City Campaign Finance Board. The Committee discussed that there are many differences between the New York City program and the County program. Mr. Sollars noted the following points, based on past experience:

- The NYC Campaign Fund pays out more in the primary election than the general election.
- The expected payment for candidates (as a percentage of the maximum payment amount possible) ranges from about 56% to about 88%.
- There are approximately 3 to 4 candidates that run for an open elected position that are eligible for payments (not all candidate meet eligibility criteria for public financing).

Committee members agreed to meet next on December 8 at 7:30 p.m. and again on January 12 at 7:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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