

# Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee To Review Election Procedures Minutes

July 23, 1996

The Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee to Review Election Procedures in the City of Mesa met in the Gold Room in the lower level of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on July 23, 1996 at 5:33 P.M.

## COMMITTEE PRESENT

Leo Mahoney, Chairman  
Bob Bloom  
Bill Brandofino  
Barbara Jones  
Helen Warman

## STAFF PRESENT

Neal Beets  
Linda Crocker  
Ruth Ann Norris

## OTHERS PRESENT

Dan Nowicki

## COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

## COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Wayne Brown

### 1. Welcome by Mayor.

Mayor Brown thanked the members of the Committee and staff for their attendance at the first meeting of the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee to Review Election Procedures. Mayor Brown indicated that the purpose of the Committee is to review the election process in an effort to provide information, alleviate complaints and improve election operations. Mayor Brown noted that City Attorney Neal Beets will serve as a legal advisor to the Committee. Mayor Brown expressed concern regarding recent election consolidation legislation, particularly the length of time required between the City's primary and general elections. Mayor Brown encouraged everyone in attendance to pursue any and all issues of interest and/or concern. (Mayor Brown left the meeting at 5:45 p.m.)

Committee Chairman Leo Mahoney requested that the members of the Committee and staff introduce themselves. Mr. Mahoney stated that the goal of the Committee is to offer recommendations to the Council no sooner than 90 days nor later than 120 days from this date.

Discussion ensued among the members of the Committee relative to meeting dates and times and it was determined that the meetings will occur monthly, on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Mahoney noted that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 27, 1996 at 5:30 p.m.

Chairman Mahoney stressed the importance of thoroughly reviewing all of the documentation distributed to the Committee relative to the election process in order to avoid delays. Chairman Mahoney also encouraged the members of the Committee to solicit input regarding elections from friends and neighbors in an effort to identify common concerns. Chairman Mahoney noted that future agenda items will be added based on input from the members of the Committee.

In response to a request from Chairman Mahoney for future agenda issues, Committeemember Brandofino indicated an interest in pursuing the fact that the City of Mesa utilized an outside consultant rather than the Maricopa County Elections Department for ballot tabulation. Chairman Mahoney stated that this item will be the subject of discussion among the Committee.

2. Polling locations/problems created by changing for each election.

Chairman Mahoney discussed the fact that voters are often required to utilize different polling places for City, State, Federal and School Board elections and commented that the varying locations result in confusion and dissatisfaction among the electorate. Chairman Mahoney requested input from Committeemembers, particularly Committeemember/City Clerk Barbara Jones, relative to this issue.

Committeemember Jones noted that the City of Mesa currently utilizes 38 polling places, or districts, and added that each district is comprised of three to five precincts. Committeemember Jones stated the opinion that although efforts could be expended to secure individual polling places for each of the 124 precincts, costs would be extensive and polling place selection would be limited. Committeemember Jones added that the likelihood of consistently securing the same polling places utilized in County/School Board elections is slight and discussed difficulties encountered in obtaining Americans With Disabilities (ADA) approved sites with high visibility and adequate parking/voting room space. Committeemember Jones added that oftentimes facilities are unwilling and/or unable to allow their facilities to be used for elections.

Committeemember Warman stated a preference for allowing the County to be charged with the administration of all elections. Committeemember Warman spoke in favor of election consolidation and spoke in support of conducting all of the various elections on the four approved consolidation dates.

Chairman Mahoney concurred with Committeemember Jones that the costs associated with utilizing individual polling places for each of the precincts would be significant.

Discussion ensued relative to the ability of the Maricopa County Elections Department to manage multiple elections, ballot space limitations and placement, the fact that voter registration and early voting procedures have been simplified, ballot scanning equipment, the importance of increasing voter turnout and negative impacts associated with increasing the size and content of the ballot.

3. Review City Charter pertaining to elections.

Chairman Mahoney requested that the members of the Committee thoroughly review their copies of the City Charter, specifically Articles II and VII pertaining to elections, prior to the next meeting.

4. Review Campaign Finance issues.

Chairman Mahoney indicated his intent to discuss Political Action Committees (PACs) at a future Committee meeting. Chairman Mahoney noted that the City of Mesa maintains a listing of PACs which may contribute to City of Mesa candidates and issues. Chairman Mahoney added that the City's list is substantially smaller than the Secretary of State's PAC list. Chairman Mahoney requested that City Attorney Neal Beets address this issue at a future meeting and advise whether the City of Mesa could utilize the Secretary of State's PAC listing in place of and/or in addition to the City's listing.

5. Review procedures for counting ballots.

- a) Timelines
- b) Early ballots
- c) Program testing

In response to a question from Chairman Mahoney relative to the use of an outside consultant for tabulation services at the City's 1996 elections, Committeemember Jones advised that Mr. William Doyle of Election Operations Services was previously employed for approximately 12 years by the Maricopa County Elections Department. Committeemember Jones noted that a decision was made to utilize Mr. Doyle for election tabulation services as a result of the County's decision to no longer provide tabulation services at the various jurisdictions' election centrals. Committeemember Jones stated that the County was willing to provide those services at their Phoenix location, 2025 East University. Committeemember Jones discussed staff's concerns relative to requiring elderly boardworkers to deliver ballots to the Phoenix address and the possibility of late election results based on the fact that the County may be required to process various jurisdictions' ballot on the same election day.

Discussion ensued relative to the electronic scanning equipment which will be used in the upcoming elections, the likelihood of rapid election outcome reporting as a result of the system, and the possibility of streamlining election boardworkers in the future.

City Attorney Neal Beets expressed concern relative to the fact that County election results will most likely receive priority treatment and questioned whether delays will negatively impact the City's election reporting process. Discussion ensued relative to initiating procedures to ensure efficient election reporting.

Committeemember Warman recommended that the City of Mesa establish a centralized location for the delivery of the system's memory packs. Discussion ensued relative to the scanning equipment and the reporting of election results.

Committeemember Brandofino requested that all City Council candidates and all representatives of ballot issues receive prior notification of the official testing of the ballot tabulation equipment (Logic and Accuracy Test). Committeemember Jones noted that staff followed State statute requirements and established City policy by posting and advertising a notice of the equipment testing in a local newspaper.

In response to a question from Chairman Mahoney, Committeemember Jones indicated her willingness to include information in future candidate informational documents relative to the date and time of the equipment testing. Discussion ensued relative to the fact that notification would be provided after candidates have submitted nomination petitions and been qualified for placement on the ballot. Chairman Mahoney noted that it is ultimately the responsibility of the candidates to attend and/or send their representatives to the Logic and Accuracy Testing.

Committeemember Warman expressed the opinion that candidates and representatives of ballot issues should assume responsibility relative to this issue.

Additional Discussion:

In response to a request from Chairman Mahoney, City Attorney Neal Beets indicated that he would summarize new legislation for the Committee at the next meeting.

Committeemember Bloom stressed the importance of utilizing the term 'early voting' rather than 'absentee voting.' Committeemember Bloom discussed the fact that confusion exists among the citizens relative to the early voting process and commented that citizens must be educated and encouraged to utilize this useful tool.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that early voting and voting by mail will greatly improve voter participation in elections and the importance of eliminating the possibility of election fraud.

Committeemember Warman expressed the opinion that it would be helpful to obtain both County and School Board election costs for future analysis and discussion. In response to a request from Chairman Mahoney, Committeemember Jones indicated that she would request this information for presentation to the Committee at the next meeting.

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6. Adjournment.

It was moved by Committeemember Warman, seconded by Committeemember Bloom, that the meeting of the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee to Review Election Procedures, adjourn at 7:01 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee to Review Election Procedures of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 23rd day of July, 1996. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 3rd day of September 1996

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK