

## MINUTES

New Haven Democracy Fund Board

Special Meeting

July 25, 2007

Present: Maria Lamberto (chair), Dennis Curtis, Caleb Kleppner, Stephen H. Kovel, Lori Kozlowski (not yet approved by Board of Aldermen), Robert Wechsler (Administrator); two members of news media also attended.

Call to order and unanimous approval of July 10 minutes.

Public comments were requested, but the lone member of the public chose not to say or ask anything.

Discussion of \$300 contribution limit, whether it applies to the entire election cycle or to each of the two elections, the primary and the general elections. There was discussion of the language of the Ordinance, which did not mention the two elections; of the format of the Ordinance, where everything was applied twice, once to each election; and of the two candidate contracts and how one committee could not hold another committee to a promise that applied to both elections. Maria Lamberto was concerned about those who participate in a primary being given an undue advantage by having the contribution limit apply to each election. Caleb Kleppner moved to have the Board interpret the Ordinance as having the \$300 contribution limit apply to each election, and his motion was approved 3-1, with Lamberto voting against the motion.

The Board asked the Administrator to tell the candidate committees about this interpretation, and the Administrator said he would add a comment to the Ordinance on the Democracy Fund webpage.

Discussion of fact that Ordinance does not clearly deal with excess contributions accepted by a candidate committee prior to the signing of a candidate contract and affidavit. This issue arose because of the Newton campaign's late decision to participate, after having accepted contributions over the \$300 limit. The Administrator explained that the Newton campaign had told him that the excess amounts had been returned, and that cancelled checks would be supplied, as much as possible, by the time the first matching funds were requested, so that there should be no problem in this instance. The Administrator felt that this is another area where the Board should consider making recommendations to change the Ordinance, so that it deals

clearly with such a situation.

Unanimous vote to go into executive session at 6:00 p.m. in order to discuss the applicants for the position of Investigator.

Discussion of changes to language in the Request for Qualifications for the position of Investigator, so that a new Request can be made through the city's Purchasing Department. Discussion of how an investigation might begin, whether the allegations must come from an external source, or whether they may be made by the Administrator or Board. The Board was in agreement that anyone, including board members and the Administrator or Investigator, could make such allegations.

Discussion of Matching Funds Request Form, and unanimous vote to approve this form as presented by the Administrator.

Discussion of possibility of disbursing funds via a checkbook, instead of making requests for disbursements from the Controller's office. General agreement that this would allow for quicker responses to candidate committee requests for matching funds. Another matter to recommend in the future.

Discussion of how to get a seventh Board member. Agreed to ask reporters to mention this in their articles on the Democracy Fund.

Discussion of the fact that the Administrator's contract has not yet been approved.

Discussion of the Friday presentation of the first matching funds and grant check to the DeStefano campaign.

In response to a question from the last meeting, Administrator said that it would be against the Freedom of Information Act to have a meeting via telephone.

Meeting adjourned.