

1 PHILADELPHIA CITY COMMISSIONERS

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ELECTIONS MEETING

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Friday, September 20, 2024

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9:00 a.m.

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ATTENDANCE

- OMAR SABIR, CHAIRMAN
- VINCENT GOWANS, DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR
- LISA DEELEY, VICE-CHAIR
- NICHOLAS CUSTODIO, DEPUTY TO VICE-CHAIR
- SETH BLUESTEIN, SECRETARY
- ERIC KAPENSTEIN, DEPUTY
- JOSEPH LYNCH, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
- STEPHANIE REED, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIONS

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (9:00 a.m.)

3 MR. SABIR: Good morning.

4 MS. DEELEY: Good morning.

5 MR. SABIR: They say third time's the charm.

6 Right? I call to order the meeting of the return  
7 board of the Philadelphia City Commissioners Board of  
8 Elections for Friday, September 20th, 2024. This  
9 meeting is in compliance under the Pennsylvania  
10 Sunshine Act. The Philadelphia City commissioners are  
11 a three-member bipartisan board of elected officials  
12 in charge of elections and voter registration for the  
13 County of Philadelphia.

14 Each commissioner is elected to serve a four-year  
15 term that coincides with the municipal election for  
16 mayor and city council. The commissioners set and  
17 enforce departmental policies to administer voter  
18 registration and conduct elections in accordance with  
19 Philadelphia State voter registration election laws.

20 The city commissioners were created by the  
21 Pennsylvania assembly in 1711 with a focus on taxation  
22 and held various regulatory powers throughout the  
23 century.

24 The commissioner started maintaining voter list  
25 in 1799 and took on more election-related

1 responsibilities but didn't emerge in its current form  
2 until the adaption of Philadelphia's Home Rule Charter  
3 in 1951.

4 We will start off with public comments. Before  
5 beginning their comments, commenters shall state where  
6 they live or if they are not resident of Philadelphia,  
7 and that they are Philadelphia taxpayer.

8 Public comment is not an opportunity for dialogue  
9 or Q&A. It is public comment. A chance for you to  
10 tell us what you think. Each speaker will have two  
11 minutes to speak. However, I may extend the time at  
12 my discretion. Public comment must concern matters on  
13 today's meeting agenda.

14 Finally, it is my responsibility to preserve the  
15 order and decorum of these meetings as such. Profane,  
16 slanders, discriminatory and personal attacks will not  
17 be tolerated. If you wish to make a public objection  
18 to a perceived Sunshine violation, please raise your  
19 hand and I will recognize you.

20 Outbursts will not be tolerated. Anyone wishing  
21 to offer a public comment, please step forward. Fair  
22 enough. We will now move to report from Secretary  
23 Seth Bluestein for email public comments.

24 Commissioner Bluestein, are there any emailed public  
25 comments?

1 MR. BLUESTEIN: There were no emailed public  
2 comments by 7:45 a.m.

3 MR. SABIR: Thank you very much. We will now  
4 proceed to old business. We will hear a report from  
5 our director of election operations and  
6 administrations.

7 MR. LYNCH: Good morning, commissioners. I'll  
8 just make it short and sweet. I just want to thank  
9 the staff and the three commissioners for their  
10 support. And we had two successful special elections  
11 this past Tuesday, September 17th. Everything went  
12 well. Thank you.

13 MR. SABIR: Thank you.

14 MS. REED: Thanks, Joe. I'll echo Joe. Thank  
15 you to the commissioners and your deputies for the  
16 support. And I do just want to point out that our  
17 staff has been doing such an incredible job. I mean,  
18 we've been for four years planning for this  
19 presidential election. And then on top of that, to  
20 have two specials in the middle of it and working to  
21 open all of these satellite offices. It is so  
22 impressive.

23 So I want to thank all of you for everything that  
24 you've been doing. It's not lost on us. We can't do  
25 it without you. So, thank you.

1 MR. SABIR: Thank you. Vice-Chair Deeley, do you  
2 have any questions?

3 MS. DEELEY: Thank you, chairman. Yes. I do.

4 MR. SABIR: Proceed.

5 MS. DEELEY: Thank you. Stephanie, I have been  
6 playing phone tag for a couple days with an individual  
7 who had applied for one of the positions -- for one of  
8 the deputy director positions or language access, I  
9 apologize. And finally, last night, at nearly 9:00  
10 p.m., we finally connected.

11 And she was pretty upset that she hasn't heard  
12 anything from us. And it was my understanding that  
13 you were to reach out to these folks to let them know  
14 the status of their application. And she also did  
15 mention that she did email you. And she hasn't gotten  
16 any response. So I just --

17 MS. REED: So I haven't seen the email, but I am  
18 getting a lot. So if you'll, after this, let me know  
19 who it is, I'll double check. So we did do tests for  
20 all of them. And the person who needs to review those  
21 tests is also opening the satellite offices. So she's  
22 trying to review them as quickly as possible. So  
23 that's the holdup. We just need to get those  
24 assessments of the test back.

25 MS. DEELEY: And it's my understanding that these

1 folks were already interviewed and a decision of go or  
2 no-go has already been made and that you were supposed  
3 to reach out to these people. Now, I don't know what  
4 happened. But we can't allow people to just wait on a  
5 string, waiting to see what their determination is.  
6 So if we could --

7 MS. REED: Understood. We'll take care of that.

8 MS. DEELEY: If we could handle that, I'll  
9 appreciate it. It's a Spanish language. So it's  
10 pretty important. Thank you.

11 MR. SABIR: And I'd just like to add. If there's  
12 anything that the chair's office could do to be  
13 helpful, if there's an issue while you go home through  
14 phone time, if you send our office email, we  
15 definitely can assist as well. Is that all you had,  
16 Vice-Chair Deeley?

17 MS. DEELEY: That's it. Thanks.

18 MR. SABIR: Okay. Secretary Bluestein, did you  
19 have any questions?

20 MR. BLUESTEIN: I do not.

21 MR. SABIR: Okay. So that completes our old  
22 business for today. We will now proceed to the  
23 swearing in of the staff. Would the staff please rise  
24 and raise your right hand? This is probably one of  
25 the coolest things of the job to do. Thank you. I

1 really appreciate it. I feel important right now.

2 Do you and each of you solemnly swear that you  
3 will perform your duties and assisting in the canvass  
4 and computation of the votes cast in the special  
5 election held on Tuesday, September the 17th, in the  
6 City and County of Philadelphia. And do you swear  
7 that you will perform your duties impartially and that  
8 you shall not read, write, count, or certify any  
9 return votes falsely or fraudulently, so help you God?

10 (I do.)

11 MR. SABIR: Thank you. Pursuant to the  
12 Pennsylvania Election Code, the canvass of the votes  
13 cast and the special election, Tuesday, September  
14 17th, for the City and County of Philadelphia is now  
15 officially open for our first ward and division.

16 MR. LYNCH: Thank you.

17 MR. SABIR: Thank you.

18 (Proceedings concluded at 9:07 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

I, JOSEPH MWANGI, Legal Transcriptionist, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing is a complete and true transcription of the original digital audio recording of the testimony and proceedings captured in the above-entitled matter. As the transcriptionist, I have reviewed and transcribed the entirety of the original digital audio recording of the proceeding to ensure a verbatim record to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am neither attorney for nor a relative or employee of any of the parties to the action; further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 3rd day of October, 2024.



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Joseph Mwangi

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**violation**

4:18

**voter**

3:12,17,  
19,24

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**W**

**wait**

7:4

**waiting**

7:5

**wishing**

4:20

**working**

5:20

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**Y**

**years**

5:18



September 20, 2024

9:00am

Philadelphia City Commissioners  
11311 Roosevelt Blvd  
Philadelphia, PA 19154

- I. Call to order the return board meeting of Friday, September 20, 2024
- II. Public Comment
  - a. In-Person Public Comments
  - b. Report from the Secretary – emailed Public Comment
- III. Old Business
  - a. Report from Directors of Election Administration and Operations
- IV. New Business
  - a. Swearing in Canvass staff and Beginning of Canvass
  - b. Additional Non-Agenda Items