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Minutes of the Hopkins Charter Commission

May 13, 2014

The Hopkins Charter Commission met on May 13. Present were Commission members Dorothy Boen, David Day, Roger Gross, Fran Hesch, Steve Lewis, Emily Wallace-Jackson and staff member Jim Genellie.

The meeting was brought to order at 6:04 p.m. by the Chair of the Commission, Emily Wallace-Jackson.

Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Commissioner Boen moved and Commissioner Gross seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2013 meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Reports

Questions asked at the April 30, 2014 Charter Commission meeting:

Mr. Genellie reported on two questions that the Commission raised at its 2013 meeting.

Commissioners wanted to know the number of cities in Minnesota which have multiple candidates running for multiple offices. Approximately 680 cities have At-Large positions where more than one candidate is elected.

Commissioners also had a question as to which level of government determines the method used to elect the President and Congress. The State Legislature determines the method.

Update regarding Ranked Ballot Voting

Mr. Genellie reported on Minneapolis experience with Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). Minneapolis still needs to hand count votes due to limitations in how the voting machines tabulate the results.

In Minnesota, voting systems must be certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and by the Minnesota Secretary of State, the State's chief election official. The new voting system and equipment purchased by Hennepin County in 2013 is certified for use in Minnesota. However, neither the EAC nor the State of Minnesota have standards for, nor test for, the vote transfers and tabulation processes unique to Ranked-Choice Voting, and no vendor of voting equipment systems has submitted RCV tabulation software for certification at federal or state levels. In large part, this is due to the lack of a fully functioning EAC. The existing federal standards for system certification were last approved in 2005—four years before the City of Minneapolis first used RCV in its 2009 Municipal Election. As a

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consequence of political gridlock at the federal level, it has been impossible to appoint new EAC Commissioners; thus, an update to current federal voting system standards has not been possible. The practical consequence to the City of Minneapolis is that, until new federal and state certification standards are adopted which recognize alternative voting systems, RCV elections will require some element of hand-counting to tabulate any race where first-choice Election Night results cannot determine a winner. – From “The 2013 Municipal Election: An Analysis & Recommendations,” Minneapolis City Council Standing Committee on Elections

Minneapolis is also seeking some changes to expedite the voting.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Discussion of filing for office

One of the recommendations coming out of the 2013 Minneapolis election is that the filing fee be increased. This recommendation came as a result of 35 people filing for mayor in Minneapolis.

The City of Hopkins has not faced anywhere near that number of candidates for any office. However the City has had several candidates in the last few years who filed but did not campaign. (For example, they did not put signs up, respond to newspaper requests for information, or attend League of Women Voters events.)

The Hopkins’ filing fee has been \$5.00 since 1947. This is the equivalent of \$53.00 in current dollars.

Even if the filing fee was raised, state law allows the filing of a petition instead of the fee. The petition has to be signed by the lesser of 500 signatures or five percent of the total number of votes cast at the preceding general election at which the office was on the ballot. For Hopkins, 5% of the total number of votes cast in the last municipal election would equal 84 voters.

The commission looked at the Minneapolis experience, the current value of the 1947 fee and what are other filing fees for other offices in state law. For example the fee set for a county office is \$50 while the filing fee for the office of soil and water conservation district supervisor is \$20.

Commissioner Hesch moved and Commissioner Boen seconded the motion to direct staff to prepare an ordinance to raise the fee to \$25.00. The motion was approved unanimously. Mr. Genellie said that he would look at the schedule to ensure that any change would be in place for the 2015 filing period.

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Adjournment

Commissioner Johnson moved and Commissioner Lewis seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously.