

NEW COLUMBIA STATEHOOD COMMISSION MEETING

March 24, 2022 at 4:15pm

Virtual

Attendees: Members of the Commission

- Mayor Muriel Bowser
 - DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson
 - Senator Paul Strauss
 - Representative Oye Owolewa
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- Co-Chair Chairman Mendelson opens with acknowledgements of the New Columbia Statehood Commissioners with the absence of Senator Michael Brown, who was present via phone call prior to the roll call but had to drop due to a medical situation. Quorum is met with four members of the Commission present.
 - Co-Chair Chairman Mendelson opened the meeting and calls roll at 4:27 pm with acknowledgements of the New Columbia Statehood Commission members and outlined the agenda for the New Columbia Statehood Commission meeting.
 - Co-Chair Chairman Mendelson moved a motion to approve the minutes from the NCSC Meeting on December 16, 2020. A second was provided by Senator Strauss. The minutes was unanimously approved.
 - At 4:36pm, Senator Paul Strauss presented the spending plan which is a resolution of the commission that allocates the budget. Senator highlighted that this spending plan for statehood initiatives under the jurisdiction of the new Columbia State Commission is a total of \$241,000, which includes personnel services for the Office of State and delegation and the amount of 163,000 and an aggregate amount of non-personnel surpluses of 78,000 are stated initiatives as approved by this commission. He referenced the below chart from the spending plan with the total amount by dollar being 240,992:

REGULAR PAY -OTHER	\$144,000
FRINGE BENEFITS -CURRENT PERSONNEL	\$19,000
SUBTOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES (PS)	\$163,000
SUPPLIES AND MATERTIALS	\$14,802
OTHER SERVICES AND CHARGES	\$63,190
SUBSIDIES AND TRANSFERS	\$0
SUBTOTAL NONPERSONAL SERVICES (NPS)	\$77,992
GROSS FUNDS	\$240,992

- Senator Strauss further noted the statehood initiatives included in the plan as follows:

51 STARS PROGRAM	\$20,000
TARGETED STA TES OUTREACH+ IRA VEL	\$18,890
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION EFFORTS+ IRA VEL	\$15,000
NATIONAL CLUB MEMBERSHIP DUES	\$1,800
PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS	\$6,000
OFFICE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT	\$7,802
MISCELANEOUS	\$1,000
SHADOW POLITICS Radio Show	\$7,500
TOTAL AR-0 NPS EXPENSES	\$77,992

- Senator Paul Strauss continued and noted that he anticipates that later this year, the commission would use its discretionary authority to add funds from the new Columbia statehood fund which may include donated funds to supplement this budget on an as needed basis. He then called attention to a note that he saw in the chat that Senator Brown may have a medical issue which is precluding his participation right now. And he added that, of course, we all wish him the best and a speedy recovery. Senator Strauss, then, paused to take any questions that the commission members might have on the spending plan, with the note that the spending plan has been introduced and cosigned co introduced by all three members of the delegation and with the approval today that will represent its unanimous determination of necessity pursuant to DC code section one dash 129 point 35. He thanked the two co-chairs Madam Mayor and Chairman and the members.
- Senator Paul Strauss noted a question “about the applicability of the PPR a to our agency we do not appear to be an agency that is testing is having the PPRA applicable to us. But neither do we appear to be an agency that has been given an express exemption and it may be helpful to clarify that for some of our agency partners who work with us or perhaps it needs to be better addressed by the budget support act, but I don't know that is pertinent to the discussion of this resolution”
- Chairman Mendelson responded “I believe that we have to follow the PPRA but I don't, but We're independent in that we don't go through the Office of Procurement to do our purchases.”
- Senator Paul Strauss: “According to the chart, the council is exempt from both the PPRA and the CPOs authority. But that's according to OCP. I certainly wouldn't want to presume to speak for the council. But to the extent that we are an agency, which includes the council. I don't know that if it's something that needs clarification, and it comes up and I don't want to get into too much minutiae. But some of the spending occurs on an agency P card administered by OCP in partnership with us, and the questions have arisen about clarifying our exemption because a lot of what we do is spent outside of the district and so we often use venues in places like Iowa and Arizona and targeted states that are not exactly on the DSS supply schedule and so forth.”
- Co-Chair Chairman Mendelson: “Yeah, I'm trying to see if I can get an answer. The independent agencies and branches of government that are independent of the executive don't have to go through the office of contracting and procurement. But many agencies still have to comply with requirements of the procurement practices act. So I don't know that I can give you a better answer, Mayor Bowser.”
- Co-Chair Mayor Bowser: “That is my recollection of how the council is treated and I would suggest, I don't know, Paul, from what you just described, if for your practical purposes. How you would like that clarified. Perhaps the chairman would consider some clarification. In the establishment act.”
- Senator Paul Strauss: “We have a very broad statute, DC code dash, one 120 9.35 Which we gives the commission basically authority to make a final determination of necessity through this process, but it is I'm told by arcs and so while I'm a lawyer, procurement law is not my specialty. My reading of the statute as long as the discretionary authority gives us that makes us independent and exempt. But I have been asked by some of our agency partners and agencies like OFRM and OCP to seek clarification.”
- Co-Chair Mayor Bowser added: “Another thing I might suggest, maybe this is even more direct is the council's General Counsel, May, opine or the Attorney General may opine and you share that opinion with OCP.”

- Senator Paul Strauss: “Thank you very much, Madam Mayor. I will avail ourselves of that suggestion. And, again, the only narrative I would add is that, in passing this budget, we are operating as the commission and making a determination to our own code section, which I've cited previously.”
- Co-Chair Chairman Mendelson: “Well, and Senator Strauss, reach out to my staff which I believe would be Christian Washington on my staff, and we can work with you and if we need to do something legislative, you say that we will.”
- Senator Strauss thanked the office of CFO and OCP for their patience and help.
- The budget was approved unanimously by the four members present at 4:52pm.
- Next, Senior Advisor, Beverly Perry, provided an overview of the recap on statehood activities in the past year. Ms. Perry highlighted the continued digital campaign which increased awareness and education across the United States. Ms. Perry noted the historic achievements we have gained over the last couple years our investments in educating Americans across the country.
- Ms. Perry closed her remarks by recapping the achievements from the FY21 DC Democracy grantees.
- Senior Advisor, Beverly Perry added that Mayor’s proposed \$1 million increase towards the statehood education effort for FY23 will provide more resources to reach more Americans about the District’s disenfranchisement, with some added in-person activities in key states while highlighting that DC Statehood is inextricably connected the Voting Rights movement. She also noted opportunity to get all democrats’ support in the US Senate in moving the bill this year, particularly between November and January. Ms. Perry highlighted the significance of the lame duck period of the 117th Congress: she reported that she is hopeful for the Democrats in Congress to fulfill several of their pledges in this critical period.
- Co-Chairs Mayor Bowser and Chairman Mendelson thank that NCSC Commission, Senior Advisor Beverly Perry, the Office of Federal and Regional Affairs, Statehood HQ, staff members.
- Meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm.