



**2023-2024 MCC Governing Board
Elections & Nominations Committee
May 15, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: *in-person:* Rasheq Rahman, Board Chair; Katie Gorka; Eleanor Ague; Kristina Groennings

Committee Members Absent: Ari Ghasemian (**RESIGNED, effective 3/31/24**)

MCC Staff Present: Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Mike Fisher, General Programs Director.

Guests: None.

CONVENE MEETING

Board Chair Rasheq Rahman was designated to convene a meeting of Elections & Nominations Committee of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on May 15, 2024, at 5:36 p.m. No changes were requested to the Agenda; it was adopted by acclamation. An announcement was made about the meeting being audio-recorded. All board members received notification from Rasheq Rahman that he, as Board Chair, is stepping-in to serve as ENC Chair through the end of the 2023-2024 term. This was the final ENC meeting of the 2023-2024 Gov. Board.

UPDATE: ABSENTEE VOTING

Executive Director May-Salazar analyzed recent years to understand patterns of absentee ballots requested vs. absented ballots actually cast vs. voting in-person. Most ballots do come in early (absentee voting) – which is interesting. This year, the preliminary total number of absentee ballots cast were: 814 adult ballots 41 youth ballots. Both totals are less than last year. We will see what happens with the new option of voting at Friday Night Rides.

We accomplished a secure process of emptying the ballot box with LWV as they verified the affidavits from Absentee Voting on Tuesday, May 14. Board members Kathleen Cooney Porter and Katie Gorka were present to assist. The Absentee ballots were secured and will be counted when all the votes are counted from McLean Day.

A few “invalid” absentee ballots came in; reasons for being declared “invalid”/unable to be counted: not residing in MCC tax district; no affidavit enclosed in the envelope (unable to verify address). Chair Rahman stated it was a very good effort and he is glad that board members were able to observe the process.

NEXT STEPS: Two empty ballot boxes are now on the truck (sealed & secured) to be delivered to Lewinsville Park. One box will be used on Friday and will come back to MCC on Friday night for secure storage. The second empty box will come back to MCC on Saturday evening after voting has concluded at McLean Day Saturday. The ballots from McLean Day event (Friday & Saturday) will be combined with all those received during Absentee Voting and then the vote-counting will take place.

FRIDAY NIGHT RIDES /MCLEAN DAY **Voting for Adult & Youth candidates is offered on both days.*

Friday, May 17 voting hours: 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday, May 18 voting hours: 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Voting at Friday Night Rides is new for us, based on the amazing recommendations from youth Board members Eleanor Ague and Sophia Bruno to expand the voting opportunities! Teen candidates will be featured in candidate tents on Friday night. League of Women Voters will staff the voting tent from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. to offer full voting for both adult and youth candidates. Full voting resumes again on Saturday with the adult candidates being featured in their candidate tents.

Key points about featuring adult/youth candidates on opposite dates:

Candidates can *attend* the event and enjoy it on both days – but NOT actively campaign: teens may only campaign on Friday night; adults may only campaign on Saturday. This has been consistently emphasized to all candidates. The candidate tent row (5 on each side) will be on a level grassy area and closer to the voting tent. It's hoped that placing candidates further down the entrance lane will naturally guide people toward the voting tent. Another advantage is not having empty candidate tables (which is a bad look) with no one present because of long hours required over both days. **This is experimental this year and we will evaluate it to assess how many youth and adult votes we receive on Friday night and whether youth participation increases.**

Everyone can vote (adults & youth); no one is prevented from voting on either day. The only difference is which candidates are featured on Friday vs. Saturday. From the perspective of the League of Women Voters, they support not limiting the voting to adults or youth on a certain day. They are comfortable with this new approach: offering more hours available to the public and no restrictions on who can vote.

Youth voter validation: Age bracket with specific dates-of-birth to qualify for youth voting (specific month/day cut-off) will be clearly displayed in the voting tent. To validate their age, teens must either show an I.D. or fill out an Affidavit with their address and birth date. If birth date is within range and they reside in the tax district, they will be issued a ballot to vote.

Summary: Chair Rahman recommended that we make note of what works well and what we should adjust. We will be fascinated by how many youth votes we receive on Friday night. We will see how it goes: if there is more opportunity to engage and if anyone stops to talk to the candidates. It's always been a challenge for us to get more youth engagement. We are marketing this through Youth Ambassadors.

Parking details (for all board members): self-parking is available on Friday night at Christian Science church on Chain Bridge Road (remove the cones if necessary). On Saturday, the parking lot will be staffed and all board members are on the list for a designated space. No security presence at VIP parking on Friday night because the security group wasn't able to meet our entire request, so we had to prioritize these key personnel at other places/times throughout the event.

Weather conditions expected for McLean Day event:

According to current predictions, weather on Friday will be fine. Saturday will have some rain.

ELECTION RESULTS – SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 18

Board members Rasheq Rahman and Anna Bartosiewicz will be onsite at MCC for the duration. Executive Director May-Salazar will drive the ballot box over to MCC from Lewinsville Park. LWV will arrive at 5:00 p.m. The process will continue as long as it takes to count the votes.

ACTION ITEM: Rasheq requests a script for the phone calls to candidates (winners and losers).

At the end of the night when vote-counting is complete, Rasheq will phone each candidate. It is one of his last activities as Board Chair and he is pleased to do it! Losers – thanking them for their effort. Winners – thanking them for their effort and informing them about May 22 and June 5 Board meetings. June 5 will include the officer elections and reinforcing that they are eligible to run for Executive Committee positions, although typically, board members serve one year on the board (to gain experience) before having a leadership position.

The election results are posted on MCC entrance doors on Saturday night to display who won. Official letter goes to Supervisor Bierman on Monday morning, May 20, so that the names of those who are newly-elected to MCC Governing Board can be presented at BOS meeting on Tuesday, May 21 (as required by the MOU). The public announcement doesn't go out until after the BOS considers it in their 5/21 meeting. Then MCC PIO Sabrina Anwah has a coordinated sequence of public announcements in the week following for media coverage. She may put out an early release of names that are going to the Board of Supervisors.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2024-2025 GOVERNING BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The list of people interested in running for officer positions will be announced at May 22 Board meeting but the process is underway now to raise names for consideration. The new Executive Committee is voted on by the newly-convened 2024-2025

Governing Board on June 5. You can self-nominate or nominate someone else > please submit your name and statement of interest to Executive Director May-Salazar and Board Chair Rasheq Rahman.

There is opportunity for new people to serve in leadership on the board. The current Treasurer for 2023-2024 became so because she had qualifications and there was a vacant slot with no continuing board member was interested. That is an example of an open position and no one from the existing board wanting to take it. Having one year of experience on the board definitely helps, but new people have stepped up to fill vacant positions in recent years. There may also be a scenario of multiple people interested in the same position.

Clarification about roles & responsibilities of board officers:

Serving in leadership of this board is a great opportunity. However, be mindful that the position of Chair or Vice-Chair involves a weekly meeting with the Executive Director (at a mutually agreeable time). They discuss any issues that are coming forward and being prepared for board meeting topics based on our conversations with Betsy. Treasurer is also a great opportunity to understand how the MCC budget works. Rasheq Rahman served on Finance Committee and Capital Facilities Committee and found the budget process to be very interesting. He worked with Treasurer Kathleen Cooney Porter about researching why we are spending what we are spending (legacy from previous boards).

Secretary is a role of being responsive to the Minutes being prepared and also handling any other official paperwork. Holly Novak does most of this responsibility, in coordination with the board Secretary. It's a matter of being responsive to review the Minutes so we can get them back and distributed to the board on schedule. The current Secretary is Anna Bartosiewicz.

Committee structure: Another opportunity to contribute leadership is in the committee process. The Board Chair is not the chair of any committee. Vice-Chair often serves as Chair of Capital Facilities Committee. The Treasurer serves as Chair of the Finance Committee. **This year we have done a good job of re-instituting the committee process as an opportunity to address topics on programming.** There are multiple ways to lead in this organization. We are limited in only having conversations with only one or 2 board members working together (so as not to become a "public meeting" with public notice requirements and Minutes summary). Some policies we've worked on over the years have been led by one or two board members. Last year the board worked on a concept document with Executive Director May-Salazar's help to get it across the finish line. Code of Conduct; DEIA statement; amphitheater – there are many ways to contribute beyond just attending meetings. **The board collaborative decision-making has worked well this year. When starting on the board, it's helpful to start at the committee level to see how everything works. We recommend observing and understanding how committees work and then stepping up for leadership positions in the following year.**

NOMINATION PROCESS: The nomination process is open now. If you are interested... or interested in nominating someone, let Executive Director May-Salazar and Board Chair Rasheq Rahman know. That will be part of the agenda for May 22. On 5/22, if people are interested, they will put their name forward and a description of their qualifications and interest and gets read aloud. We will share out with the whole group as people indicate they are interested in advance. Kristina Groennings is interested in the Board Chair position. Some others have indicated interest but haven't put their name in yet. Executive Director May-Salazar will send an e-mail to everyone with the list of what members have shown interest in executive leadership positions. You all have the opportunity to jump in or nominate someone else or nominate yourself. The actual vote is taken by the newly-convened 2024-2025 Governing Board on June 5. There is some room: if we don't have all four positions set by next week, then it gives us a few weeks to talk to some of the new people to see if they are interested in serving in leadership positions. Chair Rahman really encourages people who have been on the board to think about serving and consider the leadership positions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2024-2025 *for ENC to consider based on experience of this year's 2024 election cycle

In addition to this discussion we are having now, you can also write to Executive Director May-Salazar and Holly Novak if you have suggestions. Last year we had some ideas that came out at this time.

1. **Piloting Friday Night Voting**

Friday Night Voting was recommended by the youth board members! We are experimenting with it this year.

2. **Online voting method**

Question: Is there another way to do the Governing Board election voting process without paper? But I think we kind of killed it in the previous discussion because we figured out it was too expensive and too complicated. It is complicated; but perhaps we should re-visit it and attempt to try to be more modern, if we can.

Discussion:

***Reston Community Center differs from our board structure:** Executive Director May-Salazar did research by talking to Reston Community Center – they had to totally change their process to become one vote per household to accommodate online voting per household. RCC also eliminated the teen positions as elected positions on their board because they couldn't have two different elections happening simultaneously with different ages if there was only one vote per household.

***works against the goal of bringing people into MCC – customer interactions:**

Opinion expressed: I think we also realized that it [an online method] killed half of the point of it: the election brings people into the Community Center. That's the biggest point: we would love to cut down on all the online requests and e-mails – especially when people live here! Someone came in today who said they didn't get their ballots in the mail – but he CAME IN today! (*laughter*) It's fascinating about the high number of people who are requesting by mail or online. There are some who live elsewhere during part of the year; however, these online requests are often coming from people who literally live around the corner (local).

***counterpoint: increasing the youth vote:** If you have an online voting system that works that can incorporate the youth vote, that is super-important. And to also be able to accommodate more than one person per household.

***customized technology:** There is a way you could define it so that people can become educated about MCC while they are in the voting process. That might reach many more people than would normally come anyway. Perhaps there is some technology for validation on your phone (a secure code) that proves you are who you are when you vote (but that could be so expensive and unproven that it may not be worth it).

***Costs must be considered:** We did compare our paper processing costs to RCC's which is more expensive. Whereas we are using our election funding for literal outreach about MCC: we send postcards and still do a full MCC promotion schedule. So, we would have to do the marketing plus the cost of running a digital system. We do pay the League of Women Voters organization (but their team is all volunteers). League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area contract cost for MCC 2024 Governing Board Election = \$4,000.

***online voting would have to be offered in addition to regular in-person voting by paper ballot:**

We would still need them because we would still need to offer the ability to have a paper ballot. RCC uses the League of Women Voters also – though a much smaller scale because the majority is online. We can't have only online voting because there are so many people who still use paper ballots. And we have an MOU which says that voting must be in-person at McLean Day; so it would be an additional component to offer voting online. Interestingly, with RCC, it's not as though they have 10X number of votes cast than we do.

***value of 'old-school' in-person voting process:** While there is the convenience of online voting, there is something 'small town Americana' about having an election. We appreciate how the Elections & Nominations Committee gets very involved. Holly Novak has a special word for it: 'intentionally cumbersome.' (*laughter*) It is fun to have people walking in and being able to talk to them and tell them about the process [and how their tax dollars contribute to MCC's funding by the county]. Even if people request the ballots by mail, they often bring them in to cast them – so there is still that personal aspect of coming in the building to put their ballot in the ballot box. We think it helps people feel more invested and we try to make it as seamless as possible.

3. **Getting feedback from candidates about their recent experience of the election**

Chair Rahman asked if board members had received any feedback from the candidates about the experience of running. He asked if we poll the candidates afterward usually? Do we connect with them for feedback?

Clarification by staff: We don't. For the ones who don't win, we send them a letter of thanks and complimentary Alden Theatre tickets. With the people who win, we do ask them about the process and what their experience was. We have time in the fall ENC meetings to include that into our thinking for the next year.

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

Board Chair Rahman opened the floor to any old or new business matters. Nothing was mentioned as a further topic for discussion this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Rahman thanked everyone for attending and said he would see everyone over the next couple of days and to let him know if you have any questions. We're looking forward to it!

There being no further business, Chair Rahman adjourned the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Holly Novak - Executive Assistant