

Meeting Minutes

NMPRC Nominating Committee Meeting

Date: November 7, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Rikki Seguin** at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call:

Committee Members Present:

- **Rikki Seguin, Chair**
- **Alonzo Baldonado, Secretary**
- **Ron Lovato**
- **Catherine Nicolaou**
- **Cydney Beadles**
- **William Brancard**
- **Denise Ramonas**

A quorum was confirmed.

PRC Staff Present:

- **Chief of Staff:** Cholla Khoury
- **Human Resources:** Sarah Valencia
- **Zoom Administrator/Public Information Officer:** Patrick Rodriguez
- **Project Manager:** Jordan Gutierrez

II. Pledge of Allegiance and State Pledge

Chair Seguin led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and the State Pledge.

III. Consideration and Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was presented. A motion to approve the agenda was made by **Member Ramonas** and seconded by **Secretary Baldonado**. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the meetings held on October 23, 2024, and October 24, 2024, were presented for approval.

- **Minutes for October 23, 2024**
 - The Committee reviewed the draft minutes for the October 23, 2024 meeting. Members noted and agreed to amend the minutes to include the adjournment time and correct a typographical error in the spelling of a public commenter's name, Justin Garoutte. With these amendments, motion to approve was made by **Member Beadles**, seconded by **Member Lovato**. Approved unanimously.
 - **Minutes for October 24, 2024:**
 - The Committee reviewed the draft minutes for the October 24, 2024 meeting. Similar to the October 23 minutes, members requested the addition of the adjournment time. No further edits or comments were raised. A motion to approve the amended minutes was made by **Member Ramonas** and seconded by **Member Brancard**. The motion carried unanimously.
-

V. Announcements

Chair Seguin opened the floor for announcements and updates. Staff provided the following updates:

1. **Commissioner Salaries:**
 - The Governor's office confirmed that commissioner salaries would remain at \$190,000 for incoming commissioners.
2. **Background Verification Updates:**
 - The HR Director reported that all candidates' educational and background verifications were successfully completed up to 10 years, except for Commissioner Ellison.
 - Commissioner Ellison's records from 2015-2023 were verified, but additional information for prior years is pending.
 - Chair Seguin noted confidence in Commissioner Ellison's qualifications based on prior processes for his current role.

No further announcements were made.

VI. Public Comment

- No public comments were received in person, via Zoom, or by phone.
-

VII. Discussion and/or Potential Action Items

1. Selection of Candidates to be Submitted to the Governor:

The Committee discussed and selected four candidates to be submitted to the Governor for consideration. Each candidate was evaluated for qualifications, experience, and their ability to meet statutory requirements. After detailed deliberations, the following motions were made and approved:

Commissioner James Ellison

- Motion by **Member Beadles**, seconded by **Member Ramonas**, highlighting his extensive expertise in grid modernization, renewable energy integration, and leadership on commission initiatives.

Senator Greg Nibert

- Motion by **Secretary Baldonado**, seconded by **Member Ramonas**, emphasizing his legal background, legislative experience, and strong demeanor as valuable assets for the Commission.

Ms. Debra Hicks

- Motion by **Member Brancard**, seconded by **Member Nicolaou**. A separate roll call vote passed 4-3, acknowledging her extensive engineering background and public service record.

Ms. Blessing Chukwu

- Motion by **Member Brancard**, seconded by **Member Nicolaou**. A separate roll call vote passed 4-3, recognizing her regulatory expertise and experience in the public utilities sector.

The Committee fulfilled its statutory requirement to submit no fewer than two candidates, ultimately deciding on four individuals to provide the Governor.

2. Request for Legislative Clarity on Statutory Provisions:

The Committee discussed the need for legislative clarification on several aspects of the statutes guiding the nomination process. Key areas identified include:

1. Political Affiliation Requirement:

- Clarification sought on whether there is a time cutoff for party registration or lack thereof to meet constitutional requirements.

2. Definition of Professional Experience:

- Ambiguity around the application of "professional experience" as defined in the statute, particularly regarding its relevance to candidates with baccalaureate degrees versus advanced degrees.
- Questions about whether the 10-year experience requirement applies uniformly or varies based on educational qualifications.

A motion was approved to direct staff to reach out to appropriate legislators to express the Committee's desire for additional clarification on these statutory provisions. The staff will represent the Committee, not the PRC, in these discussions. The approach will include initiating conversations to highlight challenges and encourage legislative review during the upcoming session.

VIII. Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Chair Seguin expressed gratitude to the Committee and staff for their dedication, collaboration, and commitment to putting forth highly qualified candidates. The next steps include:

1. Submission of Candidates:

- Staff will prepare a letter to the Governor with the four approved candidate names. The letter will be reviewed by the Chair before being submitted promptly, well in advance of the December 2nd deadline.

2. Legislative Clarification:

- As approved by motion, staff will reach out to appropriate legislators to discuss the Committee's desire for clarification on statutory provisions guiding the nomination process.

Chair Seguin noted that this may be the final meeting of the Committee unless a vacancy arises during their terms. She highlighted the spirit of collaboration and the shared goal of strengthening the PRC through qualified appointments.

Committee members echoed appreciation for the process, the leadership of Chair Seguin and Secretary Baldonado, and the quality of work produced by staff. The Committee reflected on the positive experience, the value of working together, and the lasting impact of their efforts.

Chair Seguin concluded the meeting by thanking all members for their contributions and encouraging continued connection beyond the committee's work.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.