

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
New Columbia Statehood Commission



CHAIRMAN MENDELSON
2016 FEB 12 PM 6:12

MEMORANDUM

TO: Phil Mendelson, Chairman
Committee of the Whole
Council of the District of Columbia

THRU: Mayor Muriel Bowser, Co-Chairperson
New Columbia Statehood Commission

Chairman, Phil Mendelson, Co-Chairperson
New Columbia Statehood Commission

FROM: Senator Paul Strauss
Senior US Senator, Office of Statehood Delegation
Ranking Member, New Columbia Statehood Commission

James M. Hurley
Agency Fiscal Officer

DATE: February 10, 2016

SUBJECT: Responses to Preliminary Questions regarding FY 2016 Performance
Oversight Hearing for New Columbia Statehood Commission

This memorandum is in response to the preliminary questions sent by you via letter to selected individual members of the New Columbia Statehood Commission by letter dated January 11, 2016. As a initial matter, we note that you, as the requestor of this information are in fact the Co-Chair of the Commission, and therefore as part of this entity's leadership structure would in theory be both responsible for and capable of responding to your own inquiry. Finally, the Commission has not yet convened at any point in Fiscal Year 2016. Therefore, pursuant to Section 2.3 of the Commission's By-Laws,¹ as the in my capacity at the member of the Commission with the longest tenure, I am responding to your inquiry based on information provided in part from our fiscal officer and budget analyst in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

¹ Section 2.3 states that "In the absence of the co-chairs in attendance at an official meeting of the Commission, the Chair will fall to the member of the Commission with the longest tenure on the Commission."

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1. See Requested Attachment in response to Question #1
2. See Requested Attachment in response to Question #2
3. There are no employees either detailed to, or detailed from our Agency.
4.
 - a. The Agency had no employee with a salary of over \$110,000 per year in fiscal year 2015.
 - b. The Agency has no employee with a salary of over \$110,000 per year in fiscal year 2016.
5. There were no intra-District transfers to or from the agency in fiscal year 2015. There were no intra-District transfers to or from the agency in fiscal year 2016, (to date).
6. For Fiscal Year 2015, the agency reprogrammed funds within the agency on one occasion in September 16, 2015. (See Attached Memorandum of 9-16-2015). The total “bottom line” that explains the revised final budget for the agency remained \$225,800.00
7. No special purpose revenue funds were used by or maintained by the agency during Fiscal Years 2015 and or Fiscal Year 2016 (to date).
8. The agency has not entered into any Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) for fiscal year 2015 or fiscal year 2016 (to date).
9. The agency has received no grants or sub-grants for fiscal year 2015 or fiscal year 2016 (to date).
10. Investigations, Studies or Reports;
 - a. The agency is not aware of any investigations or studies on our agency of any employee of our agency in fiscal year 2015 or fiscal year 2016 (to date). Pursuant to the New Columbia Statehood Initiative, Omnibus Boards and Commissions, and Election Transition Reform Amendment Act of 2014, effective February 26, 2015 (D.C. Act 21-615) (referred to as “the Act”), the Commission was required to prepare a report on or before September 1, 2015 pursuant to Section 33(a)(1),(2),(2) of the Act. The report was prepared and delivered timely. Also pursuant to the act, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer provided a report summarizing the revenues and expenditures of the New Columbia Statehood Fund for

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Fiscal Year 2015 on November 20, 2015. Finally, pursuant to Section 32(h) of Subtitle C of the act, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's Office of Integrity and Oversight completed Audit OIO No. 16-01-02 NCF, which had no adverse findings.

b). The agency is not aware of any ongoing investigations, audits, or reports on our agency or any employee of our agency.

11. Grievances: None.

12. The following table indicates our SmartPay (credit) card usage,

Fiscal Year 2015

Name and Title	Purchase Limits	Total Spent
Jackson Rees, Legislative Assistant	\$20,000 per Month	\$8,559.78
Rema Wahabzadah, Legislative Counsel	\$20,000 per Month	\$19,296.46
FOR THE AGENCY	\$20,000 per month	\$27,856.24
	For Fiscal Year 2016 (to date)	
Rema Wahabzadah, Legislative Counsel	\$20,000 per Month	\$42,091.72
FOR THE AGENCY	\$20,000 per Month	\$42,091.72

13. Please refer to Schedule "A". With the exception of our sole FTE, all employees are WAE personnel.

14. This question seeks the top five priorities of the "agency", or more specifically the New Columbia Statehood Commission. That being said, we note that you, as the requestor of this information are in fact the Co-Chair of the Commission, and therefore as part of this entity's leadership structure would in theory be both responsible for and capable of responding to your this specific inquiry. As we understand the Commission's role, pursuant to DC Act 20-615, it is to;

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New Columbia Statehood Commission



- a.) Educate regarding the proposition of statehood and voting rights for the District of Columbia to District residents and citizens of the 50 states;
- b.) Advocate for the proposition of statehood and voting rights for the District of Columbia to District residents and citizens of the 50 states;
- c.) Advance the proposition of statehood and voting rights for the District of Columbia to District residents and citizens of the 50 states;
- d.) Promote the proposition of statehood and voting rights for the District of Columbia to District residents and citizens of the 50 states;
- e.) Develop an annual budget for, and oversee expenditures from, the new Columbia Statehood Fund.

To the extent that this question invites responses from individual members of the Commission, we expect that these will be addressed in greater detail at the upcoming hearing.

The CFO's Office of General Counsel has determined that the legislative intent of Act 20-615, which would prevent unspent funds from lapsing into the General Fund, and therefore leave them available for Statehood initiatives is currently without legal effect because although language exists in the Budget Support Act, for money to be available over multiple fiscal years, no language was included in the Budget Request Act.

In order to address this shortcoming, express language should be included under the heading "Division of Expenses, for the Statehood Initiatives Agency, which would state;

"provided further, that all funds deposited into the New Columbia Statehood Fund are, without regard to fiscal year, authorized for expenditure and shall remain available until expended".

For the following fiscal year, the agency is including a program enhancement request to support an expanded level of effort in the pursuit of statehood and voting rights for the citizens of the District.

The agency's baseline budget submission reflects a request for local budget authority of \$234,298 and 1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position. The submission is in accordance with budgetary guidance and maintains existing programs and services.

If you have any questions, please contact Elisa Farr, Budget Analyst, at (202) 727-6533.

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New Columbia Statehood Commission



Attachment in response to Question #1

1. The New Columbia Statehood Commission is composed of the following members;

A.

Mayor Muriel Bowser, Co-Chairperson New Columbia Statehood Commission
Chairman, Phil Mendelson, Co-Chairperson New Columbia Statehood Commission
Senior US Senator Paul Strauss, Ranking Member New Columbia Statehood Commission
Junior US Senator Michael D. Brown, Member New Columbia Statehood Commission
United States Representative Franklin Garcia, Member New Columbia Statehood Commission

All members receive an equal vote on the Commission.

- B. The Agency has one sole FTE position which is filled.
- C. There are no Vacant FTE positions.
- D. The name of the sole FTE employee is Karen A. Szulgit.

For the prior times the Commission met in Fiscal Year 2015, no agency staff had been engaged. During the two meetings in FY 2015, staff services to the New Columbia Statehood Commission was provided by personnel from the Mayor's Office of Federal and Regional Affairs, and the Office of Statehood Delegation. Ms. Rema Wahabzadah, Esq, and Mr. Omeed Tabiei, J.D., from the Delegation office joined Roberta Downing from the Mayor's Office of Federal and Regional Affairs, in preparing the adopted regulations and meeting minutes under the guidance of the Office of the Attorney General.

Posn Stat	Posn Nbr	Title	Name	Emplid	Empl Rcd	Hire Date	Vac Stat	Grade	Step	Salary	FTE x Dist	9 Adds to FTE	Budgeted F	Appr Year	Agency	Index	PCA
A	00086132	Staff Assistant	Szulgit,Karen	00089682	0	12/14/2015	F	ES-3	0	\$51,000	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086154	STAFF ASST	Richard,Deneysa	00086006	0	5/18/2015	F	7	5	\$32,396.25	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086155	SENIOR LEGISLATIVE ANALYST	Fleming,Myron	00086009	0	5/19/2015	F	12	10	\$21,843.50	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086156	LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL	Wahabzadah,Rema	00086296	0	6/11/2015	F	12	10	\$21,843.50	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086157	LEGISLATIVE SPECIALIST	(FY'15 Sharon Toomer)				V	12	0	\$68,294	1	Y	Y	15 - ONLY	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086158	Staff Assistant	(FY'15 Jackson Rees)				V	5	0	\$30,895	1	Y	Y	15 - ONLY	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086159	Staff Assistant	Tepper,Madison	00087226	0	7/30/2015	F	S	1	\$3,089.50	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086160	Staff Assistant	Merdach,Tamara A	00087947	0	8/20/2015	F	S	1	\$6,179	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086161	Staff Assistant	Barnard,Rachel	00089680	0	12/14/2015	F	ES-2	0	\$15,600	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000
A	00086162	Legislative Assistant	Tabiei,Omeed	00086282	0	6/9/2015	F	4	0	\$5,064.82	1	Y	Y	16	ARO	10000	10000

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



Office of Finance and Resource Mgmt.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Muriel Bowser
Office of the Mayor

THRU: Mohamed Mohamed
Associate Chief Financial Officer
Government Operations Cluster

THRU: James M. Hurley
Agency Fiscal Officer
Government Operations Cluster

FROM: Senator Paul Strauss
United States Senator, District of Columbia
Ranking Member, Office of Statehood Delegation

DATE: September 16, 2015

SUBJECT: Local fund Reprogramming Request within Statehood Initiatives Agency
(\$102,000)

This is to request a reprogramming of \$102,000 within the Statehood Initiatives Agency (ARO) to cover necessary expenses for goods, services and part-time staff in furtherance of the effective execution of programs and activities promoting statehood and voting rights for citizens of the District of Columbia.

Why are funds needed?

The approved budget allocates the entire non-personal services portion of the budget to Comptroller Source Group (CSG) 50, subsidies/ transfers. The reprogramming will align budget authority with the expense categories needed for execution of agency programs and activities. The funds will cover expenses for goods, services, and part-time staff.

Is this reprogramming to restore a budget cut?

No, as noted above, funds are required to cover necessary expenses associated with conducting business for the agency.

How will the funds be reprogrammed?

The funds will be reprogrammed as follows:

- \$70,000 from Comptroller Source Group 0011-0111 Full-Time Personnel to Comptroller Source Group 0012-0124 WAE Personnel (part-time staff).
- \$32,000 from Comptroller Source Group 0050-0507 Subsidies to 0040-0408 Professional Services \$30,000 and to 0020-0201 Office Supplies \$2,000.

Why are the funds available?

The funds are available in Comptroller Object 0011 because of salary lapse and 0050 because of spending needs in other CSGs.

What hardships will the District face if action is postponed until the subsequent fiscal year?

Without the proposed budget, the agency will not be able to procure goods and services necessary to execute statehood programs and activities in a timely manner.

What program will be delayed as a result of the action, and the impact on the agency?

The Statehood Initiatives Agency needs to realign budget authority to support the programs approved by the New Columbia Statehood Commission.

Should you have any questions, please contact Elisa Farr at 202-727-6533.

Attachment

cc: Gordon McDonald, Deputy CFO for Budget and Planning
Senator Michael Brown
Representative Franklin Garcia
Council Chairman Mendelson