

The regular monthly meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Thomas Ferrell on Friday, January 27th, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call:	(D) Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman	Present
	(D) William J. Monaghan, Member	Present
	(R) Lisa M. Crescimano, Member	Present
	(R) Jeffrey N. Krabill, Member	Present

Guests in attendance: Rachel Ruffer from SOS office, Jason Hinners from Erie County Prosecutor's Office, Gary Brunetti, Mary Ann Groot, Amy Grubbe, Hallie Lippert, Steve Lippert, Debra Nickoloff, and Caleb Stidham

Mr. Monaghan made a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting, with Mr. Krabill seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Crescimano asked if we post the audio recordings of our meetings online. Lori Salyers, Director, stated we do not. Ms. Crescimano stated she thinks it would be a good idea; Mr. Krabill agreed so that we can be fully transparent. Ms. Crescimano moved to post the audio recordings on our website, with Mr. Krabill seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Salyers stated that for the bills, she has asked our vendors to bill us annually for their services, including Netpoint and Delage. Triad we pay from August to August. Next month, Triad will bill us from August to December. Starting next year, they'll bill us from January to December. She has not heard anything from ES&S yet regarding paying them annually. Ms. Crescimano stated that paying the vendors annually would help us with our budget. She then moved to pay the January invoices totaling \$25,091.90. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Crescimano made a motion to adopt and pay the Then and Now Certificate for Netpoint Consulting, totaling \$16,920.00. Mr. Krabill seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Salyers stated that we need the board members to provide their signatures for a new signature stamp, using a black felt tip pen. The board members took a few minutes to do so.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of a temporary polling location change for the precinct Sandusky A. Adrienne James, Deputy Director, stated that Son Rise Marina normally hosts San A. The marina called us and said they had a water main break and would be unable to host us this February. They should be able to host us for the elections after February, though. Ms. James suggested placing the San A voters at the Mylander Pavilion downtown, just for this election. She stated she emailed Jason Werling at Sandusky City, who said that should be fine.

Mr. Ferrell asked how many voters live in San A. Ms. James estimated 450, and said the precinct was very small. Mr. Monaghan asked if San A used to be at the Cedar Point building. Ms. James stated yes, but they removed us several years ago. Mr. Monaghan commented that the Cedar Point building would be a lot closer. Mr. Krabill asked if we could move the San A voters to the firehouse. Ms. Salyers stated we already have two precincts there. Mr. Krabill stated he worried we would be suppressing some votes by moving the San A precinct so far away. Ms. Salyers responded that she doesn't see how people can say we are suppressing the vote. Sandusky is a small town. We also have 30 days prior to the election for people to vote early. There are people who come all the way from Vermilion to vote early.

Ms. Grubbe suggested the Cedar Point Sports Center. She also stated that putting the precinct downtown is too far. Mr. Monaghan stated he thinks Cedar Point would open for us just this one time. Mr. Krabill commented that there is a strong sense of cooperation between the city and Cedar Point right now which could work in our favor.

Ms. Salyers stated we would do whatever the board wants, but we are in a time crunch. Mr. Ferrell asked about the deadline. Eliza Link, Clerk, stated we would need to notify the voters within a month of the election. Ms. Grubbe commented that there are several hotels on the Cedar Point causeway with large conference rooms. Ms. Salyers asked the board what they wanted us to do. Mr. Ferrell asked Ms. Salyers to call Cedar Point before we adjourn, and if they say no, then we'll go with Ms. James' suggestion.

While Ms. Salyers called Cedar Point, Ms. James reviewed the entities that want to place issues on the ballot for the May 2023 election. The deadline to submit paperwork to appear on the May ballot is February 1st. Both Edison Local Schools and Perkins Local Schools would like to place a bond issue on the ballot. In addition, there are three establishments in Sandusky G that would like to have a Sunday sales question on the ballot. All three establishments had enough valid signatures on their petitions. We have submitted the relevant paperwork to the SOS office and are waiting to hear back from them on the ballot language. Mr. Monaghan motioned to approve the five issues for the May ballot, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Next, Ms. James spoke about having petty cash available to make change. She stated that people have suggested this to us before, and it is particularly relevant this year because of all the petitions we'll be receiving. The cost of turning in petitions is either \$30 or \$45. We don't always have change and that is a problem. Therefore, would it be okay to have petty cash on hand to make change? Ms. Crescimano asked how much we are recommending. Ms. James suggested \$50. Ms. Crescimano asked if we would reconcile every Friday. Ms. James stated if that is your recommendation, then yes. Ms. Crescimano stated it was best to reconcile every week. She also confirmed that we were only asking for \$50. Ms. James stated she was not sure and asked for the board members' thoughts. Mr. Ferrell recommended \$100. Ms. Crescimano agreed and stated we could revisit it after the November election. She then made a motion to establish a petty cash of \$100. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of poll pads. Ms. James stated a bill recently passed that will allocate funding for the Boards of Elections to upgrade their poll pad equipment. We haven't heard much yet, but we should be receiving more information soon.

During winter conference, we attended a presentation by ES&S, which offers poll pad services. Currently, our poll pads are from Knowink. During their presentation, ES&S stated that the cost of their election day support includes both scanner support and poll pad support. On Election Day, we have two support people present- one from ES&S for scanners, and one from Knowink for poll pads. If we were to move to ES&S for poll pads, we would only need one support person, who could cover both scanners and poll pads.

Ms. James stated that we asked ES&S for a quote for poll pads. She also stated that the Ottawa County BOE invited us to their office to look at their ES&S poll pads and see how they work. Ms. James stated that no decisions have been made yet, but we want to let the board know what our thoughts are. She also asked the board to let her know if they have any questions.

Mr. Krabill stated that the greatest savings would be in not having two different companies on site on Election Day. Ms. James agreed. Mr. Ferrell asked when we are going to Ottawa County. Ms. James stated February 8th. Mr. Ferrell then asked how much we are paying Knowink. Ms. James stated that Knowink's quote for support for the February election is \$5,000.

Mr. Ferrell then asked if the guests had anything they wanted to say. Mr. Lippert stated that he spent 15 years with the Board of MRDD. He stated he was amazed at the commitment and time the board members of the BOE have made. He said that despite the contentiousness, we are making good things happen in our county. Mr. Ferrell thanked Mr. Lippert and said he enjoyed working with him when he served on the Board of MRDD.

Ms. Groot asked for the cost of the special election for the city of Sandusky. Ms. James stated our estimate is \$45,000, but we won't know the exact cost until after the election.

Ms. Grubbe stated she had a question about the voter cards kept by the BOE. Where are they being stored and what information do they contain? Ms. James stated the cards are behind the glass partition and in a filing cabinet next to the glass partition. The cards contain the information someone must provide when they register to vote, which is their name, address, birthday, driver's license number or last four digits of their social security number, and signature.

Ms. Grubbe asked if the cleaners have access. Ms. Link stated that we do not have cleaners. Ms. Grubbe then asked if the cards are considered secure. Mr. Ferrell replied that the cards are not locked up. He also stated that after attending the winter conference, he found out we will probably need to make some changes to our office regarding accessibility for wheelchairs. Ms. Grubbe asked what accommodations are going to be made. She also stated that the ramp outside the building is illegal. Mr. Ferrell replied that it is not our building. He also stated accessibility is something to take into consideration when we submit our budget to the commissioners.

Ms. Nickoloff stated that there was a time when the Board of Elections received bids to redo the front counter. She also stated she thinks Ms. Grubbe's concern is that anyone who has access to the room has access to every registered voter's data. Ms. Link replied that only the board employees and board members have access. No one else can get through the side door. Mr. Ferrell also stated that we changed the doorknobs.

Next, Ms. Salyers stated that she called Cedar Point and spoke with someone at the Training Center. They said that we need to request the use of the training center in writing, which she did. Her concern is that we are running out of time, and also that we have already done logic and accuracy testing on the voting equipment. Ms. James stated that she asked Heather Scott from ES&S to package a separate thumb drive just for San A.

Mr. Ferrell stated that we can pass a motion to place San A at the pavilion, and if Cedar Point contacts us, then we can have a special meeting. Mr. Hinnners reminded the board that they would need to give 24 hours' notice for a special meeting. Mr. Monaghan stated that in the future, we need to know about this type of situation a little more ahead of time. Ms. Salyers stated that the people at Son Rise told her they would be able to host us again, just not for the February election.

Ms. Grubbe asked if there can be signs posted at the gates of the marina. Mr. Ferrell replied that we have big plastic signs. Ms. Salyers stated those signs are very expensive. Mr. Ferrell replied that the city can pay for it. Mr. Krabill stated that we post an 8 ½ by 11 sign on the door. Ms. Nickoloff asked if we would notify the radio and the newspaper. The board members stated yes and that we would send all affected voters a postcard. The board members also talked about encouraging absentee voting. Ms. Crescimano made a motion to temporarily change the San A polling location from Son Rise Marina to the Mylander Pavilion. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Next, the board discussed the 2023 budget. Ms. Salyers stated she gave each of the board members a packet. She broke down the full-time salaries based on the new salaries requested for the director and deputy. The comp time payout is listed, too. We discussed leaving 40 hours of comp time on the books for the clerks, which they will have one year to use. If they don't, then they will be paid out the 40 hours in 2024. The clerks will be paid overtime as they work it, and the director and deputy director will receive an annual salary with no overtime or comp time.

Mr. Monaghan stated he had a question regarding the clerks' salaries. He noted that about a year and a half ago, the board voted to increase Ms. Link's pay by almost \$2 an hour. At the time, the second clerk, Kimberly Barnum, was still on probation. Mr. Monaghan stated that when it was time for Ms. Barnum's salary to increase, he could not get a second. He said he went back 30 years, and there's never been a difference between the two clerks' salaries. He then asked Ms. Salyers if she figured in the budget that the two clerk salaries would be equal. Ms. Salyers stated she did not. Mr. Monaghan asked why.

Ms. Salyers responded that Clerk 1 is paid more than Clerk 2 based on experience and job duties. Clerk 1 does more job duties than Clerk 2. Mr. Monaghan asked for examples. Ms. Salyers responded that Ms. Link took over many job duties of the director that she should never have taken over. She stated Ms. Link never complained about it or gave them back to her. Mr. Monaghan asked why Ms. Salyers wasn't performing those duties. Ms. Salyers responded, "I don't know what I don't know, Bill." She also stated she came into this job and was never trained.

Mr. Monaghan asked Ms. Salyers if her salary was basically the same as the assistant director's even though she didn't have experience. Ms. Salyers stated it was. She also stated that she did not set the salary. She came in and was paid what she was told she would be paid.

Mr. Monaghan commented that the change in clerk salaries occurred when Mr. Ferrell was absent. He then stated he thinks the clerk salaries need to be equal. Ms. Salyers stated that is up to the board. She also stated that perhaps duties need to shift. Mr. Ferrell stated that we need to look at the job description. The descriptions for both clerks are the same, so they should be paid the same.

Ms. Salyers stated that when she worked for the state of Ohio, she never earned the same as her co-worker who did the same work as she did, because her coworker had more experience. Mr. Ferrell asked how many people were in her office. Ms. Salyers replied 25. Mr. Ferrell stated it was different in a four-person office. Ms. Salyers replied that's how it was state-wide.

Mr. Monaghan stated that in the county there are longevity budgets, and he doesn't have a problem with that. He has a problem with someone making \$4,000 more a year for doing basically the same job. Mr. Krabill stated he was going to make a motion that our 2023 budget reflects an equalization of the clerks' salaries. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion.

Mr. Ferrell stated this would not reflect Ms. Link's longevity. Ms. Crescimano asked how long she had been with the Board of Elections; Ms. Link stated it will be four years in April. Mr. Krabill stated that we are equalizing the base. The only variable that will remain is longevity. Ms. James took a roll-call vote on Mr. Krabill's motion.

Mr. Ferrell- yes
Mr. Monaghan- yes
Ms. Crescimano- yes
Mr. Krabill- yes

The motion carried.

Ms. Salyers then continued speaking on the proposed 2023 budget. She stated we spend about \$35,000 on part-time salaries. Anything we do not use is sent back to the county. The Medicare and OPERS amounts are set by the county. For office supplies, she is figuring in the cost of a new refrigerator and microwave. For repairs and maintenance, she is figuring \$25,000. For advertising and printing, most of that is for the cost of ballots.

Mr. Krabill asked how we jumped from \$53,000 last year to \$75,000 this year for advertising and printing. Ms. Salyers stated we must pay for the ballots for the Special election in February before Sandusky city reimburses us. She also stated she was not sure if the cost of ballots would increase. Ms. Crescimano stated the ballots come in as an expense. When the political subdivision reimburses us, it goes in as a revenue, not as a reduction in expenditures, so we must show the full amount of the expenditure.

Ms. Salyers stated that contract services run over \$35,000 for each election. This is the cost of poll workers, janitors, and Monday and Tuesday night workers. She budgeted \$125,000 for three elections this year. She also stated that software maintenance was a big expense. For example, Netpoint Consulting increased about \$2,000 this year. Mr. Krabill stated he had a question about the software maintenance. Ms. Salyers' explanation states it is \$86,379.50, plus an increase of ten percent. Did she mean to say including an increase of ten percent? Ms. Salyers stated yes. She also stated that at the end of last year, we had almost nothing left.

Mr. Ferrell stated that in other county departments, they usually have one month reserve in their budget. Ms. Salyers stated that did not happen for us. She stated that last March she indicated we did not have enough to make payroll, but nobody seemed worried about it. Then, toward the end of last year, we were told we didn't have enough money to make payroll. Mr. Monaghan stated that the commissioners put out a general fund cash flow forecast and asked if we had a copy of that. Ms. Salyers stated she would give him a copy.

Ms. Crescimano stated that she met with Ms. Salyers for a few hours last week. She also stated she spoke with payroll on the comp time issue. The auditor's office confirmed that the only time OPERS is paid for a lump payout of comp time is if it's paid out in the same year it is earned. This will change our OPERS budget amount. Ms. Crescimano is going to meet with county administrator Hank Solowiej, then give us updates at the next meeting. She also stated that Ms. Salyers has been very helpful in supplying her with information.

Mr. Krabill asked if the expectation is that we will formally adopt the budget at our next meeting. Ms. Crescimano said yes. Mr. Ferrell stated the board would need copies of the proposed budget before the next meeting. Mr. Krabill stated that the explanations regarding the budget are helpful.

Mr. Krabill stated that he is not putting his name in for the Republican party to reappoint him to the board. It will be in the executive committee's hands to choose his successor. Mr. Ferrell stated he would like to congratulate Mr. Monaghan, who was elected last evening for another four-year term with the board.

Ms. Nickoloff stated she had an observation about the \$2 payroll change. She stated that Ms. Link was doing some of the director's duties and asked with the pay scale change if those duties would go back to the director. Ms. Salyers stated yes. Mr. Ferrell commented that we were in a unique situation when the previous director left.

Ms. Salyers spoke regarding a high school student who wanted to come to the office to observe the process on Election Day. Because the student is not old enough to be an elector, she is not permitted to be an election observer. However, she may attend the official canvass meeting. Ms. Salyers also stated she invited the student to be a poll worker.

Mr. Krabill made a motion to adjourn, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board adjourned at 9:59 a.m.

Lori J. Salyers, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman

