

The pre-election meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Ferrell at 4:29 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2020.

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

Guests in attendance: none

Mr. Ferrell stated that we should wait on action from the Secretary of State. We should know more after the 6:00 p.m. conference call, and then we could notify both our staff and our volunteers about the status of the election. He stated that we should have a motion to go into recess until that time. Motion to go into recess was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board went into recess at 4:30 p.m.

Motion to reconvene the meeting was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried. Meeting was reconvened at 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Salyers stated that according to the Secretary of State, he has asked a Franklin County court judge to postpone the election until June 2. We would accept absentee ballot applications through May 26. Early, in-person voting would be finished, and there would be no tabulation of results yet. They do not as of yet have a decision from the judge, but Secretary Larose thinks it will be postponed. Mr. Ferrell stated that Secretary Larose stated that the governor does have other options to postpone the election if the judge denies the request. Mr. Smith stated that on the conference call, it was stated that if the temporary restraining order, or T.R., was an issue, Dr. Acton from the health department could essentially bar people from going to the polling locations. That is an option if the court were to deny the temporary restraining order.

Mr. Krabill then expressed his concerns. He stated that we ought to have an official decision from the court before we start calling poll workers and polling locations to say that the election is off. He stated that he understands that Governor Dewine and Secretary Larose are firm in their opinion, but that if we start calling off the election ourselves, before the election is officially called off by the court, that that puts us in a potentially difficult situation.

Mr. Ferrell stated that he disagrees. The Secretary of State, the Governor, and the Lieutenant Governor are all saying that the election is basically off, and we've got major news organizations also saying that it's off. Phones are ringing non-stop, the public needs to know, and we can't just wait for the courts because that will take a long time.

Mr. Monaghan stated that the Secretary of State has another "ace up their sleeve," referring to Dr. Acton's ability to close the polls if the judge denies the T.R. Mr. Smith stated that we are in a tough spot. We don't know for sure what will happen until the court makes a ruling. The board members agreed, though, that the likelihood of postponement is great.

Mr. Krabill stated that the concern from the staff is what happens if we make all these calls saying the election is off, but then the court rejects the delay and we have to make calls all over again?

Mr. Ferrell stated that we have to make a decision. We can't just stay here late, waiting.

Mr. Smith stated that we take our guidance from the Secretary of State's office, and they are saying the election will be postponed until June 2.

Mr. Ferrell recommended calling the poll workers, telling them it's off until June 2, and saying that we will call them again if something changes. He mentioned that we don't work for the courts; we work for the Secretary of State, and people want answers. He then asked the other board members, "What do you want to do?"

Mr. Smith and Mr. Monaghan agreed that we should call the poll workers and let them know it's off based on the guidance from the Secretary of State. We will call them again if something changes, so they should leave their phones on. Mr. Ferrell then added that we should ask them for patience in this time of flux. Mr. Krabill stated that he was okay with that.

Ms. Salyers then asked that, assuming the election is postponed, should the staff come in tomorrow at 8 a.m. and work until 4 p.m.? The board members agreed that that would be fine, but Mr. Smith was concerned that the phones might start ringing at 6:30 a.m. because that is when the polls usually open. Ms. Salyers then asked if she should come in early, and Mr. Smith stated it was up to her. Ms. Salyers stated that she would come in early.

Mr. Krabill stated to make sure the staff is consistent with what they are saying as they make the phone calls to the poll workers to let them know the election is postponed.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion passed. Board adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Lori Salyers, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman