

The special meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Ferrell at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

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: Sue Brown and Amy Grubbe

Mr. Ferrell stated that the first item on the agenda is to discuss the new dropbox and security camera and where to put them. Adrienne James, Deputy Director, stated that she and Eliza Link, clerk, spoke with Hank Solowiej from the commissioners' office yesterday. Mr. Solowiej stated that the commissioners do not want the box on the north end of the building because they do not want traffic at that end. Instead, they want the box to be next to the water department box. We would have to wrap the box so that it's clearly identifiable. Mr. Solowiej stated that the commissioners would approve installing several signs outside so that voters know where the box is.

Ms. James stated that she spoke with Brian Malachowsky at the Secretary of State legal department. According to him, we must have our own camera, even though the water department already has a camera out there. Mr. Malachowsky stated that the box needs to be easily identifiable as a Board of Elections Box, and there should be a little bit of spacing between our box and the water department box. He also stated that we are not obligated to check the water box for election related materials assuming ours is clearly marked. If a voter accidentally puts election materials in the water box, then they are technically not complying with the statute. Lastly, Mr. Malachowsky stated that the only people who should have access to the BOE box is BOE staff members.

Lori Salyers, Director, stated that she spoke with Bob Matney from Netpoint Consulting, and he is not sure if he can run a camera out where the commissioners want it because of the distance. Mr. Matney said he would have to talk with Tim Jonovich of the county IT department and wait to hear from him. Mr. Smith stated that, based on all of this, he thinks we just need to keep our current box where it is for this election and get a new one afterwards. Ms. Salyers also stated the problem according to Mr. Matney is that they would have to drill through a concrete wall to get the camera installed. Mr. Ferrell suggested wireless, but Ms. Salyers said Mr. Matney does not recommend wireless because it can be interrupted. Mr. Ferrell suggested contacting Accurate Business about them installing a camera, and Mr. Krabill agreed. Mr. Smith asked if this was the only location the commissioners were willing to look at, and Mr. Ferrell informed him yes.

Ms. James pointed out that the HAVA grant we were going to use to pay for the box is only good until April 15. Since installing the box is postponed until after the May election, how would the board members like us to handle that? Mr. Ferrell stated to go ahead and order the box now. Mr. Krabill asked if there needed to be a motion. The other board members didn't think there needed to be.

The board members then took a few minutes to discuss some problems they were having with their email addresses. Ms. Link urged them to call Netpoint to get that fixed.

Getting back to the dropbox, Mr. Ferrell stated that we would buy the box now and call Accurate Business about the cameras. Ms. Brown from the prosecutor's office reminded the board members that, according to the directive from the SOS office, if the board is placing additional boxes that didn't exist in the November election, then they would have to take a formal vote on it. Mr. Smith stated that we weren't placing the box right now, though.

Next, Mr. Ferrell stated we need to discuss the posting of the Democratic clerk position because Libby Grant is leaving the position. Mr. Ferrell stated that we wish her well in all of her future endeavors. Mr. Ferrell stated that we need to talk about the cost of posting the job. He also asked Mr. Monaghan if he had any concerns about the wording of the job advertisement.

Mr. Monaghan stated that the advertisement should say the applicant must be an Erie County resident. Mr. Smith asked if it could say Erie County resident or willing to relocate to Erie County. Mr. Monaghan stated I guess we could say that. Mr. Smith stated he would defer to Ms. Brown, who said she would have to look into it. The board members then took a few minutes to discuss residency requirements.

Next, Mr. Monaghan pointed out that the job description stated the applicant must be able to “use, understand, and apply election related terminology.” Mr. Smith stated he doesn’t know if you need that on there. Mr. Krabill stated it’s something you learn on the job. Mr. Ferrell stated most of the people that we interview don’t have those skills. Ms. Salyers asked if the board wanted her to take that part out, and they said yes.

Ms. Salyers asked if the board members wanted to add anything about the pay. Mr. Monaghan stated that he would like to talk about this in a future meeting. Mr. Smith asked where we were at with our budget. Ms. James and Ms. Link informed him that it just recently passed. Mr. Smith stated that we need to work within our budget. Mr. Monaghan asked to see the budget paperwork from the finance department, so Ms. Link made copies to give to everyone.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the job description mentioned physical requirements, and asked if we could even put that in there. Mr. Smith responded yes, because there is a physical component to the job.

Getting back to the issue of pay, Mr. Ferrell asked if we can put that the salary is negotiable. Ms. Salyers asked if it would be better to say that salary is based on experience; not necessarily experience with elections, but experience with computers. Mr. Ferrell and Mr. Monaghan agreed that there should be something in there about computers. Mr. Krabill stated that we just have to be careful regarding salary that we’re not misleading people. We have to craft the language carefully. Mr. Krabill also asked if the salary for the open clerk position would affect the salary of the other clerk position, keeping in mind that Ms. Link clearly has more experience.

Mr. Ferrell responded that it would impact Ms. Link’s position, and that we would have to keep the salaries the same. Ms. Salyers asked if we had to keep them the same, or if we could have Ms. Link’s salary higher based on having more experience. Mr. Krabill replied that that was a conversation you would have to have with Human Resources. Then once that conversation takes places, it’s a decision for the commissioners because it has a budgetary impact. Ms. Salyers stated that she didn’t think it was fair that you could bring someone in brand new and they would make the same amount of money as someone who has been here for ten years. Mr. Ferrell replied that we’ve always had a probationary salary for six months, and then after passing probation, employees move up to their regular rate. Ms. Salyers and Ms. James stated that that didn’t happen for them. Mr. Ferrell clarified that it happened elsewhere in the county. Mr. Monaghan added that it was like that in most businesses, too. Mr. Ferrell stated that we could have a discussion with Pete Daniel of the commissioners’ office about how turnover is high and salary is low. Mr. Ferrell also referenced the salary survey of other county Boards of Elections that Mr. Krabill conducted last year. Mr. Smith asked if we did an exit survey for Ms. Grant. Ms. Salyers replied no, but that she could come up with one, and she thinks it’s a good idea. Mr. Ferrell stated that Ms. Salyers could have an exit conference with Ms. Grant.

Ms. Grubbe then asked if she could interject. She stated that if the Board is going to put in the job advertisement that applicants must be in Erie County, that could stymie our options. If people are interested in moving to Erie County, then that’s a plus for us. At least give them the opportunity to interview and get experienced workers here.

Mr. Ferrell responded that the problem with that is that once people get the position, they'll say, "I'm not moving to Erie County." According to Mr. Ferrell, you have no authority to make them move. Mr. Monaghan confirmed that was true. Mr. Krabill stated that he's seen a couple of advertisements for other county Boards of Elections, and they say in the job description that you must be a county resident at the time you begin the job. Mr. Krabill then asked Mr. Ferrell if he was okay with that. Mr. Monaghan replied that he thinks you just need to put in "must be an Erie County resident." He said he was not comfortable with the wording "at the time of the job." Mr. Smith stated that it was a democratic clerk position, so he was going to defer to the Democrats, as long as it passes legal. Mr. Ferrell stated he could talk to Matt Wilson of the Human Resources department and see what he thinks. Ms. Brown from the prosecutor's office stated that she could look into the wording and get back to us in a week.

Mr. Monaghan then mentioned the wording of "clerk must pass to the satisfaction of the majority of the board a criminal background check." He thinks we could take out the phrase "to the satisfaction of the majority of the board." Ms. Brown stated that the Ohio Fair Hire Acts tells us what convictions can be applied to exclude a candidate and which ones cannot. It's pretty specific, and we need to rely on the statute. Mr. Krabill asked Ms. Brown if she could work on revising the language in that part of the ad, and she stated yes.

Mr. Ferrell asked what the deadline on the job ad should be. Ms. Salyers responded that she thinks we should run it for a week, and then give people either one week or two to submit applications. Mr. Smith stated he thought two would be good. Mr. Krabill asked where we put the ad. Ms. Salyers responded the Sandusky Register, our website, and Human Resources. Mr. Ferrell stated that H.R. would post it at nine different locations in the county. Mr. Smith asked if it is posted on the Secretary of State website. Ms. Salyers stated she was not sure, but that it does get posted on our website.

The board members then discussed what days of the week they wanted the ad to run. Ms. Salyers suggested Monday through Friday, but Mr. Krabill stated he wanted it to run on Saturday and Sunday, because many people looking for jobs look on those days. Ms. Salyers asked if the board wanted to do Saturday through Thursday. Mr. Ferrell said that was fine, then asked if the cost would be 1,100 dollars. Ms. Salyers stated she wasn't sure, but that was what the cost was last time. She also stated that the cost would depend on the verbiage and number of words. Ms. Salyers then asked if the job description needs to be tweaked, who does that. Is it Matt in H.R.? Mr. Ferrell responded that we could do that. He then asked when Ms. Grant's last day was. Mr. Salyers responded this Friday.

Mr. Ferrell then asked if there was anything else. Mr. Monaghan commented on the survey that Mr. Krabill conducted last year regarding salaries. He said Mr. Krabill did a good job on it. He also stated that Erie County was toward the bottom in regards to poll worker pay, and we should work on rectifying that. Mr. Ferrell asked Ms. Salyers to contact the Secretary of State's office about how to increase poll worker pay. Mr. Monaghan asked what was decided in regards to the job ad. Mr. Ferrell stated that we would get the information from Ms. Brown and then decide at our next meeting on March 26th. Ms. Grubbe asked for a copy of the survey Mr. Krabill conducted, and Mr. Monaghan gave her an extra one.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Lori J. Salyers, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman