

The special meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Ferrell at 9:03 a.m. on Monday April 13, 2020.

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

Guests in attendance: none

Ms. Salyers stated that she received an email from Heather Scott of ES&S. We are currently paying \$1,700 a day for support, and it is support that we desperately need. However, ES&S is offering us a contract whereby they offer us a reduced rate of \$1,625 a day, as long as we use up 10 days by the end of 2021. Ms. Salyers explained that we use a day for logic and accuracy testing, plus the day before an election, the day of an election, and the day after an election. We also have a gentleman coming in from ES&S next week to show us how to run ballots through the high speed scanner, but without getting any results. Because we will easily use more than 10 days by the end of 2021, Ms. Salyers wanted to know if it was okay to enter into that contract. The board stated that that would be fine. Motion to enter the contract with ES&S was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Ms. Salyers then mentioned that so far we have received 8,300 requests for absentee ballots, and that we have kept up with all requests. However, employees have been staying until 9:30 or 10:00 every night to keep current. Also, our postage machine and letter opener recently broke down. A repairman from Pitney Bowes fixed both of them, but he stressed that the fix for the letter opener was only a temporary fix, and suggested getting a new one. Ms. Salyers researched getting both a letter opener and a paper folder, first from Martin Yale, and then from Accurate Business. Accurate said that if Huron County also purchased the equipment, they would give us a discount. Because Huron County decided to buy as well, Accurate will be getting free shipping, and they will pass those savings on to us. Ms. Salyers also stressed that the paper folder can do what our part-timers took about two hours to do in a matter of minutes.

Mr. Ferrell asked if the cost of the new equipment would be reimbursed, and Ms. Salyers stated that she believed it would. She would submit the proper paperwork to the Secretary of State today. Motion to go ahead and purchase this new equipment in conjunction with Huron County was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried.

Ms. Salyers stated that the last item she wanted to go over was a concern that Mr. Ferrell had regarding signatures on applications for absentee ballots. Mr. Ferrell received several phone calls over the weekend from voters complaining that they received phone calls saying that the signature on their absentee ballot application does not match the signature we have on file for them, and that they need to submit a new application. Mr. Ferrell stated that these people are concerned that, with having to turn in new paperwork and with the mail being so slow, they won't get their ballot in time and their vote won't be counted.

Ms. Salyers contacted Matthew at the Secretary of State's office, who consulted with legal counsel, and they stated that it is our job to verify voters' signatures. If a voter's signature does not match, we are required to contact them, and either have them fill out a new application, or fill out form 260, which is a change of signature form. This is especially important this election, because verifying signatures is the only way we have to verify a voter is who they say they are. Ms. Salyers also pointed out that we are required to verify signatures whenever we get petitions.

Mr. Ferrell stated that he was not questioning that; he was simply saying that with the mail being so slow, people won't get the new paperwork in time. Ms. Salyers then asked Mr. Ferrell if he was saying that starting today, we shouldn't mail any more absentee ballot request forms out, because people won't get them in time. Mr. Ferrell stated that's not what I'm saying. It would be different if this was a normal election, and people could come into the building, but they can't, and everything has to be done by mail.

Mr. Smith stated that if legal counsel at the Secretary of State said that we have to verify signatures, then we have to verify signatures. We can't get around that. Mr. Ferrell stated that he was not disagreeing with that, but that he wants to know who is doing the checking. Ms. Salyers stated anyone employed by the Board of Elections. Mr. Ferrell asked who was calling these people, and Ms. Salyers responded that whoever it was that checked the signature. Mr. Ferrell asked who caught most of the signatures, and Ms. Salyers said that she wasn't sure; that we had all caught a few. Mr. Ferrell then asked to see some of the signatures in question so that he could evaluate them, and Ms. Salyers said that was fine.

Mr. Krabill asked Ms. Salyers and Ms. James how often a "bad signature" came up, and they agreed it was not very often. Mr. Krabill suggested that when a bad signature does appear, that the board call the person and offer to meet them in the foyer or the parking lot, masks on, to fill out the proper paperwork right there. That way, the board could still do their job and evaluate signatures, but the voter wouldn't have to worry about the slowness of the mail. Ms. Salyers, Ms. James, and the other board members agreed that that was a good solution.

Ms. Salyers then mentioned that she had been in contact with Accurate Business about needing an additional camera for security. Mr. Krabill suggested moving the placement of the camera back a bit in order to cover more ground. Mr. Krabill also asked if this cost would be reimbursed by the Secretary of State, and Ms. Salyers said perhaps. Ms. Salyers stated that for the grant money, though, we only had \$320 left, and that we were hoping to use that to purchase a couple more kingston flash drives and yubi key authenticators. Mr. Krabill stated that even if it was not reimbursed, we should still have money in our supplies account.

Mr. Smith inquired whether a lot of the costs associated with this election would be reimbursed, and Ms. Salyers stated that some costs would be. She mentioned that she was expecting a \$10,000 check from the Secretary of State. She also reiterated how busy the office had been, but that we were keeping current. Mr. Ferrell commented on how we had 128 voicemails the other day, but Ms. Salyers said that with our new voice prompts, we currently only have 10 voicemails.

Next, Mr. Krabill stated that he received the last responses from the salary survey he sent out to other county Boards of Elections, and he passed out his findings to the other board members. He stated that we were not that far off from other, similarly sized counties. He also mentioned that there was a lot of variability between the counties.

Mr. Krabill then asked Mr. Ferrell if he was ever able to set up a time to discuss the budget. Mr. Ferrell responded not yet, as Melissa hadn't been in much. Mr. Krabill suggested that perhaps we should wait until after the 28<sup>th</sup>, because then we'll have a better idea of what we're being reimbursed for, and where all our accounts stand.

Mr. Smith asked if postage would be reimbursed for this election, and Ms. Salyers said that some of it would be, but that there was a formula the Secretary of State's office would use for calculating reimbursement, and that we may be over. She also stated that if the legislature had allowed the Secretary of State to mail out blank absentee ballot request forms to all registered voters, that would have solved a lot of our problems. Instead, the legislature decided to send out postcards to all voters, and we have gotten a lot of them back as undeliverable. Mr. Krabill stated that that was problematic. Do those voters not even exist? Do they no longer live there? Did they move away? He stated that it's not our responsibility under the law to find out, but that the high number of undeliverable postcards does raise some interesting questions.

The board members then discussed the possibility of an August special election, and whether or not the election in November would be vote-by-mail only. Mr. Krabill suggested to Mr. Ferrell that he write a letter to the Secretary of State, the President of the Ohio Senate, and the Speaker of the Ohio House, to let them know that if November is a vote-by-mail only election, that we support the Secretary of State mailing out courtesy absentee ballot request forms to all registered voters. Mr. Krabill also pointed out that when he is helping in the office, more than half of his time is just spent fielding calls for absentee ballots. If the Secretary of State could mail those request forms for us, it would be more cost efficient and time efficient.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried. The board adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

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Lori J. Salyers, Director

Attest:

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Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman