

The regular monthly meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Thomas Ferrell on Friday, April 21st 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) Nancy C. McKeen, Member	Present

Guests in attendance: Jason Hinnners from Erie County Prosecutor’s Office, Rachel Ruffer from Ohio Secretary of State’s office, County Administrator Hank Solowiej, Amy Grubbe, Hallie Lippert, and Caleb Stidham.

Ms. Crescimano made a motion to approve the minutes from March 13th and March 24th, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Adrienne James, Deputy Director, gave an update on absentee voting. She stated as of yesterday evening, we have mailed 178 ballots and received back 104. Of those, 101 are countable. The three uncountable ballots were due to ID issues, and we sent those voters an 11-s form. We have had 327 voters for early, in-person voting, two hand-carry voters, three nursing home voters, and zero military and overseas voters. Last week she and Alex Jones, Director, conducted the public test, which went well. Yesterday they started scanning but not tabulating the mail-in ballots, and that went fine, too.

Ms. James then reviewed petitions. Carl Hill has submitted petitions to run for Vermilion township trustee. He needs 25 valid signatures and has 46 valid signatures. The board members took a few moments to review his petitions. Ms. Crescimano made a motion to approve Mr. Hill’s petitions, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Mr. Jones spoke on the chargebacks to Sandusky city for the special election held on February 28th, 2023. He stated the total cost was \$37,210.84. Ms. Crescimano motioned to certify the chargebacks, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Mr. Monaghan questioned if the PAC would have to pay. Mr. Jones stated no; we charge back the taxing authority, which in this case is Sandusky city.

Mr. Jones then gave updates on our budget. He stated that we are in a good position with most of our line items. There are a few line items, such as salary, where we’ll have to go the commissioners for a supplemental toward the end of the year. Mr. Monaghan questioned why we would need to ask for more money at the end of the year as opposed to receiving what we need in the first place. Mr. Solowiej responded that we didn’t know what the salaries would be when Mr. Jones came on board, so they left the salary lines at the level of the previous director’s salary. Now that the new salaries for the director and deputy have been approved, we’ll have to do an amendment.

Mr. Monaghan stated if he remembers correctly, we were cut about \$275,000. He also stated we didn’t place items in the budget that weren’t needed. Mr. Solowiej stated he has spoken with Mr. Jones, and the board of commissioners intends on doing the supplemental. Mr. Monaghan stated that just like with any other department, if we have money left over at the end of the year, it goes back to the county. He stated we watch out for the citizens of the county and the taxpayers’ dollars. He also thinks it is crazy for us to go begging for more money at the end of the year.

Next on the agenda was an approval of authorization of cash disbursements for the director and deputy director. Mr. Jones asked for a motion to allow the director and deputy director to approve invoices up to \$30,000, which was the amount the previous director and deputy director were allowed to approve. Ms. Crescimano made the motion, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Mr. Jones presented the April bills to the board. Ms. Crescimano made a motion to authorize four Then and Now certificates: one for Elections Systems and Software (ES&S) for \$5,475, one for ES&S for \$7,900, one for Knowink for \$8,280, and one for ES&S for \$13,510. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Crescimano made a motion to approve the April invoices totaling \$39,028.21, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

The next item on the agenda was consideration of director's personal leave time for 2023. Mr. Jones stated that county policy states that county employees receive 32 hours of personal time per calendar year. Based on the math, he is requesting 25 hours of personal time. Ms. Crescimano stated that was standard practice and moved the authorize the prorated personal leave time of 25 hours for the director. Mr. Hinnners stated this was in the personnel policy book and that he confirmed it with county HR director Matt Wilson. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Mr. Ferrell asked if there were any other matters to come before the board. Mr. Monaghan stated he asked Ms. James to make copies of the personnel policy book for the board members. Ms. Crescimano indicated the policy books were the old ones and we should receive the new ones, because we adopted the county personnel policy on March 1st. Board staff stated they would send each board member a copy of the county personnel book to review.

Mr. Ferrell stated he had a meeting with Mr. Hinnners earlier this week, and we are going to need to add an executive session.

Ms. Crescimano made a motion go into executive session pursuant to O.R.C. 121.22(G)(1), to consider the compensation of public employees, and to invite Hank Solowiej and Alex Jones to this session. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion.

Mr. Ferrell stated we need an additional executive session for discipline. Mr. Hinnners stated at this point, it's more of an investigation. Ms. Crescimano withdrew her first motion and then made a motion to go into executive session to consider the investigation of a complaint against a public employee. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. Ms. James took a roll call vote.

**Mr. Ferrell- yes
Mr. Monaghan- yes
Ms. Crescimano- yes
Ms. McKeen- yes.**

The motion carried. Board entered executive session at 9:17 a.m.

The board reconvened at 9:42 a.m.

Ms. Crescimano moved to authorize the investigation of a complaint against a public employee. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Crescimano moved to enter executive session pursuant to O.R.C. 121.22(G)(1), to consider the compensation of public employees, and to invite Hank Solowiej and Alex Jones to the session. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. Ms. James took a roll call vote.

**Mr. Ferrell- yes
Mr. Monaghan- yes
Ms. Crescimano- yes
Ms. McKeen- yes.**

The motion carried. Board entered executive session at 9:43 a.m.

The board reconvened at 10:17 a.m.

Ms. Crescimano moved to authorize the executive director to establish a schedule to work a 40-hour work week to meet the county policy. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Grubbe asked about paid time off and if there is a policy stating employees have to use up certain time first. Mr. Ferrell stated that it's our goal to have basically zero comp time for the clerks. Any extra time that is needed to be worked would be handled by the director and deputy director. As for the previous comp time employees have accumulated, we're going to find a way for them to work that down. That involves personal decisions by the employees.

Ms. Grubbe commented about adding 25 more hours of personal time. Mr. Jones stated the personal time is a set 32 hours. He doesn't know if there is anything in the policy regarding what type of time needs to be taken first, but would defer to the experts in the room. Mr. Solowiej stated the earlier motion on personal time was just regarding Mr. Jones.

Mr. Hinnners stated that under the new policy, comp time is only for the director and deputy director, and if they don't use it within a certain period of time, they lose it. The employees have until December 31st to use their personal time. Any hours over 40 that the clerks work will be paid out as overtime. Ms. Grubbe asked if personal time is paid out if employees don't use it. Mr. Hinnners stated that personal time is use it or lose it.

Ms. Crescimano made a motion to adjourn, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Alexander W. Jones, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman