

The official certification/regular monthly meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Board Member William Monaghan at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 19th, 2021.

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

Guests in attendance: Amy Grubbe

Mr. Monaghan stated that we are here to certify the results of the May Primary/Special Election. Adrienne James, Deputy Director, passed around the paperwork for the board members to sign. Motion to certify the results of the election was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the board meeting minutes from April 23 and May 3 and 4 was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried.

Next on the agenda was to pay the bills. Lori Salyers, director, explained to the board members why they are now going to see more “Then and Now” certificates. She stated that she was no longer encumbering money because not doing so makes for a cleaner ledger. However, because she is no longer encumbering, anytime there is a bill for over \$5,000, the board must sign a then and now certificate. The board members took a few minutes to look over the bills and sign the two then and now certificates. Motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Next, Ms. James stated that there would be no August special election in Erie County this year. She updated the board meeting schedule to reflect that, and updated the schedule on the website.

Ms. James then stated that the office received two petitions for Huron City Council. One was from James Joseph Dike, and the other was from Matthew Grieves. She stated that both petitions were filled out correctly, and both had more than enough valid signatures. She also stated that both of them filled out name changes forms. Mr. Dike would like to go on the ballot as Joe Dike, while Mr. Grieves would like to go on the ballot as Matt Grieves. The board took a few moments to review the petitions. Motion to approve the petitions was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried. Motion to approve the name changes was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Ms. Salyers then gave an update on the dropbox. She stated that after the last meeting, Mr. Krabill went to look at it and had some concerns. The lid is bent, so it doesn’t open nicely, and when you put a ballot inside, it doesn’t easily drop down. Someone could put their ballot inside, and then the next person could come along and the first person’s ballot could just be lying there. Mr. Krabill asked Ms. Salyers to call the company and see if we can get a dropbox that is more like the one at the library. She can, but they are about 400 dollars more. She included the paperwork with pictures in the board members’ folders. She also boxed up the old one so that we could return it. Mr. Smith asked if we could get a refund on the old one. Ms. Salyers stated yes, but that it would probably cost a lot to ship it back.

Mr. Smith then asked if there had been any more discussion on the dropbox. Ms. Salyers stated that the commissioners were adamant they wanted it by the water department box. Mr. Smith stated no, he meant discussion in the legislature. Eliza Link, Clerk, stated that she put an email from Aaron Ockerman of the Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAEO) in the board members’ folders, which summarizes the election bill the legislatures are considering. She stated the bill does not eliminate dropboxes; it would just limit the number of dropboxes per county. Mr. Krabill asked if when we get the new one, if the old one would remain in the lobby. Ms. Salyers stated no; the old one would go in the basement to store our backup servers.

Mr. Smith asked where we were at with cameras for the dropbox and what the cost would be. Ms. Salyers stated that the cost would probably be double, if not more, than what we had anticipated when the dropbox was scheduled to go at the north end. Mr. Smith suggested talking to the commissioners to see if their staff could run the lines for the cameras. He said that might be cheaper. Mr. Krabill stated he could talk to the commissioners. Motion to order the new dropbox and get a refund for the old one was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Mr. Smith then stated that, regarding the cameras, he would propose that we hold off on them until we can get an answer from the commissioners, and then we can discuss at the next board meeting. Ms. Salyers reminded the board members that the issue needs to be resolved soon. She stated that when she asked the SOS office when we should have gotten the dropbox, their response was “before you came here.” She said it should have been done by this past election, and it needs to be done by November.

Next, Ms. Salyers gave an update on the date/time stamp. She stated that the current one only goes through 2021. We can get a new date wheel from Accurate, or, because the machine sometimes gives us trouble, we could order a brand new machine. Mr. Smith asked how many years the new date wheel would have. Ms. Salyers stated she was not sure. Ms. Link stated that the current one started at 2010, so you get about 11 years. She also stated that the second machine starts at 2014, and goes until 2025. Mr. Monaghan suggested revisiting the issue in January. Mr. Smith stated that the office should consider purchasing a manual date stamper, in case both of them go down.

Next, Ms. Link asked about sending campaign finance reminders to PACs. According to the Campaign Finance division of the SOS office, BOEs are not required to send notices to PACs, because it is up to the PAC’s treasurer to know when reports are due. Mr. Monaghan asked how other counties handled this issue. Ms. Salyers responded that she was not sure. Mr. Smith asked how many PACs we send notices to. Ms. Link responded that it depends on what is on the ballot, but that all together, we have 28 PACs. Mr. Krabill stated that he realizes we don’t have an obligation to send the notices, but he thinks it’s a nice thing we do to keep people informed. He also stated that if we send the notices and the treasurers still fail to file, we can at least say that we notified them. He also stated that continuing to send the notices avoids problems. Mr. Monaghan agreed. The staff stated that they would continue to send the notices.

Ms. Salyers then gave an update on the budget. She stated that the finance department asked her to work on a proposed budget for 2022 and return it to them by June 10. She based it on 2018, which was the year of the last governor’s race. She stated that for this year’s budget, we would likely be short, and that we will probably have to move money around.

Ms. Salyers then explained the type of money we can expect to pay various vendors for software maintenance and support. She stated that Triad would be \$33,000, Knowink would be \$20,000, ES&S would be \$26,000, and Netpoint would be \$14,000. She stated that this year she used HAVA money to pay for Netpoint, but that next year the county would have to pay for it. She also explained that this year she hasn’t paid anything out of software maintenance and support, because she was paying for those sorts of things out of contract services. However, she recently contacted the auditor’s office, who informed her that the previous director only paid poll workers out of contract services.

Mr. Krabill asked what the finance department is proposing. Ms. Salyers replied that they are not proposing anything; she is just telling them what she thinks the office will need next year. She is estimating \$95,000 for software maintenance and support, which she knows they will have a “heart attack” over. Mr. Krabill responded that there is a reason we are asking for so much money, though. He stated that the SOS office puts demands on us that we have to meet. Mr. Smith also pointed out that the commissioners made us get our own IT group instead of using the county IT department. Mr. Monaghan stated that the county reabsorbs any leftover funds at the end of the year, and Ms. Salyers confirmed that was correct.

Ms. Salyers then stated that she recently spoke with Ed Widman of the finance department. He told her that this year's budget was decided when she was out on medical leave. Ms. Salyers informed Mr. Widman that she thinks the office will be short this year. Mr. Widman replied that in June we could come and ask them for more money if we need it.

Mr. Smith asked when the bills for Triad, ES&S, and Knowink are due, and how much we have paid so far this year. Ms. Salyers stated she was not sure and that she would have to look through all the bills. There was then some cross talk about the budget this year versus the budget next year. Mr. Krabill reminded the board members that two different conversations are happening here. Mr. Monaghan asked Ms. Salyers to report at the next meeting the full list of vendors that have been paid so far. Mr. Smith asked her to report how short we are this year for paying Triad, ES&S, and Knowink. Ms. Salyers stated that she would have that at the next meeting. Mr. Smith made a comment about paying Netpoint, but Ms. Salyers iterated that we used HAVA money for that this year.

Mr. Smith stated that for the 2022 budget, we should shoot high. Ms. Salyers commented on how expensive the various vendors (Triad, ES&S, and Knowink) are. Mr. Smith stated that at the conference in June, maybe we could look into getting new vendors. Ms. Salyers responded that that would involve buying new equipment, and that would be tens of thousands of dollars.

Mr. Krabill then stated that the other side of the paper for the 2022 budget projection was all personnel costs. Mr. Smith commented that there was a large projection for comp time payout, and that he thought we were going to burn that down. Ms. Salyers reminded him that last year she did not receive a comp time payout, but the other employees did. Ms. James told Mr. Smith that now that the election is certified, there is no longer a requirement of one D and one R in the office, so staff can take time more time off.

Next on the agenda was to discuss the open Democratic clerk position. Ms. Salyers stated that since we ran the ad a second time, we received two more applications. She stated that she would give copies of the applications to Mr. Monaghan. Mr. Monaghan stated that he hoped to get together with Mr. Ferrell soon to conduct interviews. Mr. Smith suggested it might be helpful for Ms. James to be present for the interviews as well.

Ms. Salyers then asked the board members if it was okay to send the 2022 budget projection to Finance, and then talk about the 2021 budget at the next board meeting. The board members agreed that that was fine. Mr. Smith stated to tell Finance that that we may get money from the SOS next year to offset the costs, but right now we have to assume that we won't. Mr. Krabill also suggested that Ms. Salyers lead with the fact that she decreased spending in one category. Ms. Salyers stated that in the software maintenance and support category, though, she asked for an increase of \$80,000. Mr. Smith responded that when the decision was made not to use the county IT department and instead contract it out, then that is what happens. Ms. Salyers commented that she was told by one of the commissioners that they never told us to get our own IT. They only wanted us to obtain our own IT to get us through that security directive. Ms. Salyers responded that that was not her understanding, and that was not the understanding of the county IT department, either. Mr. Smith stated that IT is never going to go away for us. It's only going to get more and more expensive. Mr. Krabill stated that there aren't a lot of vendors, either. The staff agreed that Netpoint does a good job, though.

Ms. Salyers stated that we have been having server troubles, so Netpoint is coming next Tuesday to work on them. Netpoint asked if Cyber Defenses sold us used equipment. Ms. Salyers told Netpoint that she was not sure, because she was not here when Cyber Defenses did work for us. She also explained that Netpoint will tear down the servers, wipe them clean, and reload everything back on. They have to do this because due to the server problems, we have to shut them down and reboot them nearly every day. Mr. Krabill stated that if we did get used equipment, the potential is that there is software that still lingers that may not show up in a list of files. Ms. Salyers stated that Netpoint said fixing the servers would be "quite a job," which she took to mean it would be very expensive. However, we have to get it done. Mr. Monaghan asked Ms. Salyers to let him know when Netpoint arrives on Tuesday.

Mr. Monaghan then asked if there was anything else. The staff said there was not. Mr. Smith made a motion to go into executive session for personnel matters, and Mr. Krabill seconded. Ms. Grubbe asked if she could ask a few questions before the board went into executive session. Mr. Smith stated that there was already a motion pending, but that he will withdraw it. Ms. Grubbe asked that Mr. Ferrell's absence be marked as excused in the minutes. Ms. James stated it would be.

Ms. Grubbe then asked, as far as the wiring for the dropbox cameras, would it go from the brick building to this building? Ms. Salyers stated yes. Ms. Grubbe stated the whole thing doesn't make sense, why the dropbox won't be put on the north end of the building. Mr. Monaghan agreed, and stated he'd rather have the box at the north end. Ms. Link stated that we all would. Mr. Monaghan asked if a final decision had been made. Ms. Salyers replied that the commissioners want it by the water department box. Mr. Monaghan suggested getting ahold of the SOS office. Ms. Salyers stated that when she talked to the SOS office, they said they do not want to be involved in the placement of the box. They said it was between the board and the commissioners; they just want it outside. Mr. Monaghan then expressed concerns with the security of the ballots if the box is next to the water department box. Ms. Salyers reminded him that the prosecutor's office said that was okay, though.

Ms. Grubbe then made a comment on the wiring, and that the cost of it is "absolutely ludicrous." Mr. Smith stated that's why we need to ask the commissioners if they've got people who will do the wiring for us. Mr. Monaghan stated that it makes no sense to him other than they want to be contrary to us. He also stated that he'd like to make an issue with what we're doing here and why we're spending taxpayer money. Ms. Grubbe expressed her opinion that this should be in the newspaper. She stated that all four board members and all staff members should be going up there, not just one. She also stated that this was a safety issue.

Motion to go into executive session for personnel matters was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Monaghan- yes

Mr. Smith- yes

Mr. Krabill- yes.

Motion carried. Board went into executive session at 10:00 a.m.

Motion to return to regular session was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Smith.

Motion carried. Board returned to regular session at 10:10 a.m.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Board adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Lori J. Salyers, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman