

The regular monthly meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Ferrell at 9:02 a.m. on Tuesday, July 21, 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: Gery Gross, Amy Grubbe

Motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Ms. Salyers, director, passed out a copy of the budget to the board members to review. She explained how much the previous director had encumbered. She also explained how she had the county administrator transfer funds from the repairs account to the part-time employees account, so that the balance for that account would no longer be negative. She and Ms. James, deputy director, visited the Auditor's office earlier in the month to receive training in paying bills and moving money around to different accounts.

Ms. Salyers then stated that the office had received a \$62,750 check for the CARES grant, which can be used to purchase supplies for the upcoming election. She also stated that she spoke with the health commissioner, Pete Schade, and that he will be providing the office with masks and gloves.

Ms. Salyers stated that the office would be receiving a \$40,000 HAVA Grant Check as well. \$25,000 can be used for security, while \$15,000 can be used for ADA improvements. Ms. Salyers explained that she wanted to spend part of the \$25,000 to improve physical security in the front part of the office and asked if it was okay to solicit bids. Mr. Krabill stated that it was important that all the bidders have a standard, and to let them know exactly what we want. Mr. Monaghan suggested contacting Gary Weilnau of the county's facilities department. Mr. Gross, legal counsel, advised soliciting RFPs, or requests for proposals. Motion to allow Ms. Salyers to solicit RFPs was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Motion to pay the bills for July was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Next, Ms. James talked about the possibility of hiring unaffiliated poll workers for the upcoming election. She pointed out the section of the Elections Officials Manual which says that Boards can hire unaffiliated workers. She stated that currently, Erie County has 6,782 Republicans and 8,646 Democrats. With a total of 52,452 registered voters in the county, this means that currently, only about 29 percent are eligible to serve as elections workers. However, if the board were to allow unaffiliated voters to work the polls, that would increase the pool of potential workers by about 240 percent. Ms. James stated that this would be helpful because the corona virus situation is making it more difficult than usual to find poll workers. Motion to allow staff to hire unaffiliated workers was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Mr. Krabill then asked what constituted an unaffiliated worker. Ms. James explained that unaffiliated meant the voter has not voted in the past two primaries, or they did vote, but chose to vote an Issues Only ballot. Mr. Ferrell asked if we wanted to clarify the motion to only allow unaffiliated workers to serve in 2020, and then we could revisit the idea in 2021. Mr. Monaghan then amended his motion to include this wording. Motion carried.

Next, Ms. Link, clerk, explained that the office was due to take its scheduled furloughed day on Friday, July 31. However, the semi-annual campaign finance reports are due that day at 4:00 p.m., so she wanted to know if it was okay to take the furlough day on Monday, July 27 instead. The board members stated that that would be fine. Motion to move the furlough day to July 27 was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Mr. Krabill then asked how the office was doing with hiring poll workers. Ms. James explained that the SOS office mandated that boards send out surveys to all their poll workers by July 31, and that they had recently done so and are just waiting for the surveys to come back. A few had already come back, with one person saying they were unsure due to the corona virus situation, and another two saying they were willing to work.

Next, Ms. Link asked about the possibility of hiring part-timers earlier than usual. According to directive 2020-11 from the SOS, boards will likely need to increase their part time staff for this election. Normally part timers start a week before early voting begins, but Ms. Link stated it would be helpful for them to start as soon as the beginning of September, because the office has been slammed. Mr. Smith asked if there would be any money from the SOS office to pay for this. Ms. Link stated that according to the directive, the CARES grant money could be used to increase part time staff. The board members then discussed if there would be enough money in the budget for this. Mr. Krabill stated that the commissioners understood that “something was coming,” but that in fairness to them, we needed to give them numbers. Ms. Salyers stated that she could get some numbers together, and then present them at the next meeting. Mr. Krabill suggested holding a special meeting to do this. Ms. James asked if they needed to schedule the special meeting now, but Mr. Ferrell stated no. Ms. Salyers stated that once she had some numbers, she would email the board members to schedule the special meeting. Mr. Krabill stated that would be fine and stated that we would need to update the website and notify the media of the special meeting as well.

Next, Ms. James asked about rescheduling the September board meeting. Currently it is scheduled for Monday, September 28, but that is the same day that poll worker training starts, which is already a very hectic time. Motion to reschedule the September board meeting to Thursday, September 24 at 9 a.m. was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried. Ms. James stated that they would, as usual, update the website and inform the media of the change.

Next, Ms. Salyers gave an update on Vermilion city polling locations. Ritter Public Library can only hold three precincts, so she is working on getting a location for Vermilion 3A and 3B. Two facility names she was given are in Lorain County, so those are out. She is now contacting various churches in Vermilion. Mr. Smith suggested contacting the Vermilion UCC and stated that they had just undergone some changes to make their facility more ADA accessible.

Ms. Salyers then moved on to polling places in Sandusky. She asked about making the Sandusky Municipal Building and the City Service Complex permanent polling locations. If they remain temporary, then the office must send postcards to voters in those precincts every election, and that gets expensive. The board members also talked about other facilities that could be used as polling places. Ms. Link pointed out that the directive from the SOS stated that schools can and should be used, but Mr. Krabill stated that we would like to avoid using schools if we can help it. Motion to make the Sandusky Municipal Building and the City Service Complex permanent polling locations was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Ms. Salyers then stated she would get some number together and estimates based on the primary, in preparation for a special meeting next week.

Ms. James asked if there was an update on the OVH, but Mr. Ferrell stated that he had not contacted them yet.

Ms. Link asked if there was an update from Eric Wobser, the city manager of Sandusky. Mr. Krabill stated that he had been in contact with Mr. Wobser, and that he was committed to meeting with the board regarding allowing city employees to work the polls on Election Day.

Ms. Salyers then gave an update on the conference room. She stated that we would be getting a camera and motion detector in there in about two weeks.

Mr. Ferrell then asked if there were any questions from the floor, and Ms. Grubbe stated that she had several. First, Ms. Grubbe stated that the Ohio Senate was having a hearing today to discuss House Bill 680, which would essentially make voting harder for the General Election. She stated that they were asking people to call down there, urging legislatures to vote against it.

Next, Ms. Grubbe asked if the board had requested any CARES Act Money from the county commissioners. Mr. Ferrell stated no. He stated that the county did not receive as much CARES money as they requested, and that he did not think the Board of Elections would be getting any of the county money.

Then, Ms. Grubbe asked for a copy of the poll worker questionnaire since she was scheduled to work the polls in March. Ms. Grubbe then asked when the website would be updated so that people can track their absentee ballot requests. Ms. Link replied that it was updated two weeks ago. Ms. Grubbe stated that it was not on her end, so Mr. Krabill told her to hit refresh. Ms. Grubbe also stated that the new website was difficult to navigate, and that everybody was complaining about it. Ms. Salyers stated that the website was changed to make it ADA accessible.

Ms. Grubbe then thanked the board for providing her with the minutes from past meetings, but said that her main concern was the dropbox. Mr. Ferrell stated that the attorney general was going to write an opinion on the dropbox. Ms. Salyers explained that the directive from the SOS stated not to do anything with the dropboxes until the attorney general opinion comes out. Mr. Ferrell also stated that there are thousands of other outdoor dropboxes, and that they are called "mailboxes." Ms. Grubbe stated that the legislation from the primary dictated the dropbox be outside. Mr. Ferrell said no it does not; it must be outside *the office*. Mr. Krabill stated that the key was availability, and he stated that the dropbox is available 24/7 in the period required by law.

Ms. Grubbe then asked for an update on the OVH. Mr. Ferrell stated he did not feel comfortable going to the OVH to talk to them, because they have several COVID cases there. Mr. Krabill suggested having Ms. Salyers contact the OVH and the SOS by phone to work something out. Mr. Krabill stated that the solution from last election, to bus the residents to the County Service Center, was ridiculous. He stated that the best solution would be to train OVH employees and residents to be poll workers, and then just keep the precinct there at the facility.

Ms. Link then gave an update on nursing homes. She stated that during a normal election, we have two part-time employees who go around to the different nursing homes to assist the residents with voting. However, during the pandemic, some of the nursing homes may not let us in their facilities. She stated that if they do not, we would need to train two nursing home employees to do the jobs that the two part-timers normally do.

Mr. Krabill then gave an update on Eric Wobser. Mr. Wobser stated he would be in contact today regarding city employees working the polls.

Ms. Grubbe stated she had one more question: Are applications for absentee ballots being mailed out now? Ms. Salyers stated yes; if people are calling to request them, we are sending them out now. Ms. Salyers also stated that Ms. Link was working on revising the bottom of the request form to tell voters if they receive a duplicate application from the SOS office, to please disregard it. She is also working on revising the form to explain that "the address at which you are registered to vote" refers to your home address, not your polling location.

Mr. Ferrell asked if Ms. Grubbe had any further questions, and she stated no. He then asked if there was a motion to go into executive session. Motion to go into executive session was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board went into executive session at 10:05 a.m.

Motion to return to regular session was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board returned to regular session at 10:25 a.m.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

Lori J. Salyers, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman