

The regular monthly meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Thomas Ferrell on Friday, July 28th, 2023 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: Gery Gross from Prosecutor's Office, MaryAnn Groot, Amy Grubbe, Debra Nickoloff, and Caleb Stidham

Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the minutes from the May 1st pre-election meeting. Ms. McKeen seconded the motion. Mr. Monaghan, Ms. Crescimano, and Ms. McKeen voted yes, while Mr. Ferrell voted no. The motion carried.

Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the minutes from the June 23rd regular meeting. Ms. McKeen seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Alex Jones, Director, stated that we received our funding from the state for the August election, so today's bills will be a bit more cumbersome. He started with the regular bills to be paid out of the general fund. Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the bills. The board members took a few minutes to review them.

Mr. Monaghan asked about early voting. Mr. Jones stated we've probably had about 2,300 early, in-person voters. He also stated that on Tuesday, he and Adrienne James, Deputy Director, scanned mail-in ballots received back, of which there were 578. Mr. Jones stated that we have 53,189 registered voters. If this rate keeps up, we'll probably have 4,000 to 5,000 early voters, which is about eight to ten percent of the electorate.

Mr. Ferrell asked how much money the state spent on this. Mr. Jones stated that Erie County received \$100,000. He would estimate the total cost would be \$16 to \$20 million.

Mr. Ferrell said someone asked him if a person who lives in Erie County can serve as a poll worker in another county. Mr. Jones stated he is not sure if there is a section in the Election Officials Manual that talks about that. It may be a county-by-county policy. Mr. Ferrell asked for Mr. Gross' opinion. Mr. Gross stated he's not aware of a requirement, but would have to look into it specifically.

Mr. Monaghan seconded Ms. Crescimano's motion to approve the bills. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Mr. Jones stated that two of the bills require Then and Now Certificates because they were from before he started. Ms. Crescimano moved to approve the Then and Now Certificates as presented. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion.

Mr. Jones stated that next, he would present the bills to be paid out of the special fund for this election. We've got to track all of it, so he thought it would be cleaner to do it separately. He also noted that there are two Then and Now Certificates because our vendors billed us for some services before we received the money from the state. Ms. Crescimano motioned to pay the election-specific costs as presented and to approve the Then and Now Certificates. Mr. Jones asked for a vote on the first set of Then and Now Certificates. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Crescimano then re-made her motion to pay the election-specific bills, including the Then and Now's. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

For the director's report, Mr. Jones noted it has been a very busy time for the office. A few weeks ago, staff sent out a mailer to about 7,000 registered voters, rather than rely on a vendor. The mailer notified the voters that they haven't voted in a while and asked them to please respond to confirm their address. The voters then have four years to respond or engage in other voter activity before they are removed from the voter rolls. Mr. Jones stated that staff did a great job getting those notices prepared and mailed before early voting started.

The next week, early voting started, and we also received about 8,000 signatures from the state to verify for state-wide initiatives. The staff came in on the weekend to make sure the signatures were all verified and sent back to Columbus in time.

This week, we are continuing to see a steady flow of early voters. We're also in the process of training our poll workers. Ms. McKeen stated she received a phone call from a voter who attended VLM class and said he was impressed with the training. Mr. Jones stated that both full and part-time staff have done a good job.

Mr. Ferrell asked how many part-time people we are using. Mr. Jones stated that we rotate. We have a fair amount of mail, so sometimes a part-timer will come in from 9 to noon to process mail and get mail ready to go out. We also always have one part-timer working the early voting check-in window. There are about a half-dozen people who come in and work those jobs. Mr. Jones stated they are quality people.

The next item on the agenda was approval of candidate petitions for the November General Election. Mr. Jones stated staff has reviewed the petitions and found that the candidates listed have enough valid signatures to appear on the ballot. Mr. Monaghan asked if the people listed on the petitions were the only ones running. Mr. Jones replied that the people listed are the ones who filed petitions after the last meeting. He stated that the deadline to file is August 9th, so he assumes we'll see a few more. Mr. Monaghan motioned to approve the petitions, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. The approved candidates are as follows:

- Mark Joseph Claus, Huron City Council
- James Monty Tapp, Huron City Council
- Jeff Krabill, Sandusky City Commission
- Michael Meinzer, Sandusky City Commission
- Beth L. Beatty, Bayview Village Mayor
- Larry D. Gwinner, Bayview Village Mayor
- Barbara A. Wobser, Bayview Village Mayor
- Marsha Schenk, Bayview Village Clerk-Treasurer
- Samuel A. Broker, Bayview Village Council
- Lance M. Drossman, Bayview Village Council
- Nathaniel Shafer, Milan Village Council
- Kathy A. Deehr, Berlin Township Fiscal Officer
- Michael R. Old, Berlin Township Trustee
- Nancy Funni, Groton Township Fiscal Officer
- Krista L. Beck, Groton Township Trustee
- Ronald Brown, Groton Township Trustee
- James Joseph Dike, Huron Township Trustee, Unexpired Term
- Zachary J. Rospert, Milan Township Fiscal Officer
- Daniel Frederick, Milan Township Trustee
- Gregory R. Cumston, Milan Township Trustee
- Melissa Pelletier, Oxford Township Trustee
- Diane L. Schaefer, Perkins Township Fiscal Officer
- Stephanie M. Johnson, Vermilion Township Fiscal Officer
- Mark Miller, North Point ESC, Erie
- William J. Muthig, Edison Board of Education
- John P. Jones, Huron Board of Education

- **Mary Gaither, Kelleys Island Board of Education**
- **Nataliya Makarova-Skeans, Kelleys Island Board of Education**
- **Elmer Lippert, Margareta Board of Education**
- **Shelisa Johnson, Sandusky Board of Education**
- **Ebony Sizemore, Sandusky Board of Education**
- **Martha S. Murray, Sandusky Board of Education, Unexpired Term**
- **Shelly Innes, Vermilion Board of Education**
- **Ratiba Stillman, Vermilion Board of Education**

The next item on the agenda was approval of candidate name changes. Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the name changes, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. The approved name changes are as follows:

- **Krista L. Beck-> Krista Beck**
- **Ronald Brown-> Ron Brown**
- **Gregory R. Cumston-> Greg Cumston**
- **James Joseph Dike-> Joe Dike**
- **Jeffrey L. Ferrell-> Jeff Ferrell**
- **Michael Meinzer-> Mike Meinzer**
- **Nathaniel Shafer-> Nate Shafer**

The next item on the agenda was approval of issues to appear on the November General Election ballot. Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the issues, with Mr. Monaghan seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. The approved issues are as follows:

- **Margaretta Township Levy, Renewal 1.0 mill, Roads and Bridges**
- **Margaretta Township Levy, Renewal, 3.95 mills, Fire Protection**
- **Berlin Township Levy, Renewal, 1.0 mill, Roads**
- **Sandusky City Schools Levy, Renewal, 2.82 mills, Emergency Requirements**
- **Berlin Heights Levy, Renewal, 3.0 mills, Operating Expenses**
- **Berlin Heights Question, Electricity Aggregation**
- **Berlin Heights Question, Natural Gas Aggregation**
- **Castalia Village Question, Natural Gas Aggregation**

Next was “any other matters to come before the board.” Mr. Ferrell stated he’s received a number of calls regarding political signage, such as how big the signs can be and how long they can stay up. He stated we used to give out a sheet of regulations. Mr. Jones stated we give candidates a sheet of contact information by subdivision.

Ms. Crescimano asked if there was a Supreme Court decision on political signs. Mr. Gross stated that in general, they have to be reasonable regulations that don’t interfere, so then it becomes a question of what is reasonable. They found that the size requirements are constitutional because they don’t completely interfere with the message.

Mr. Monaghan commented that signs are not supposed to be in the right-of-way. Ms. Crescimano stated that signs are everywhere, and not just election signs. Mr. Gross stated that election signs are a bit different than commercial speech because the highest first amendment protections are for political speech. If there are too many restrictions, it could be found unconstitutional.

Mr. Ferrell asked if there is a regulation on the number of signs that can be in a location. Mr. Gross stated he doesn’t think you can say that once the first five people have put their signs up, now nobody can place a sign. Mr. Ferrell said he was asking about the number of signs for an individual or an issue. Mr. Gross stated he’s not aware that there’s any restrictions on the number. Mr. Ferrell asked if he could research that; Mr. Gross stated sure.

Ms. Crescimano stated if she wants to place three signs for the same candidate in her yard, that is her prerogative. Mr. Ferrell indicated it was fine on your own personal property, but not in the right-of-way. Ms. Crescimano said she agreed. Mr. Gross stated that placing a sign in the right-of-way could interfere with someone's vision.

Ms. Grubbe stated that Vermilion has no problem taking down signs and calling people to pick them up. She also stated that the Board of Elections used to give each candidate a paper containing sign regulations; now it is just a contact sheet. She stated it takes two minutes to call or send a letter asking for regulations. Mr. Gross stated he doesn't think it would be a bad idea to hand out sign regulations; that way candidates can't plead ignorance.

Ms. Grubbe asked if anything had been decided on the voting issue in Castalia between the church and the firehouse. Mr. Ferrell stated he thought it was at the firehouse; Ms. Crescimano stated she thought so too. Mr. Jones stated there was never an official resolution to move the location back to the firehouse. Ms. Crescimano stated that for August it would be at the church but motioned that we move it back to the firehouse for the November election. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Mr. Ferrell asked Mr. Jones to contact the fire chief to let him know.

Ms. Crescimano motioned to adjourn, with Ms. McKeen seconding. Board adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

Alexander W. Jones, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman