

The regular monthly meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Thomas Ferrell on Friday, September 23rd, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

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: Jason Hinnners from Erie County Prosecutor's Office and Caleb Stidham

Motion to approve the minutes from the August 29th board meeting was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried.

Motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Lori Salyers, Director, gave an update on pursuing an office credit card. She spoke with auditor Richard Jeffrey, who stated it was not a good idea. She printed the email from Mr. Jeffrey and gave it to the board members. It is okay to obtain a credit card for a specific store, such as Staples or Amazon, but to obtain a carte blanche credit card is not recommended.

Mr. Smith asked if we can obtain most of our office supplies from Staples. Ms. Salyers stated that if Staples, OSupplies, or Seagate does not have what we need, then we go to Amazon. Previously we have used the County IT Department's Amazon account and then reimbursed them. Motion for the Board of Elections to obtain their own Amazon account was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried. Mr. Krabill asked if we needed to rescind the previous motion from a few months ago to pursue an office credit card. The other board members indicated that was not necessary.

Next, Ms. Salyers gave an update on polling location changes. The city of Sandusky informed us that we would not be able to use the Sandusky Municipal Building as a polling location due to renovations. Instead, they offered us the use of the Mylander Pavilion. Ms. Salyers stated that she and Deputy Director Adrienne James went there, and it was a very nice facility that is ADA compatible. Ms. James stated they would send out postcards to the effected voters, who live in the precincts Sandusky E and G.

Ms. Salyers then spoke about polling locations in Margaretta and Milan Townships. She recently attended a Margaretta School Board meeting, where she stated we would eventually like to have all Margaretta Township precincts, #1 through #4, at the old high school gymnasium, once construction of the new school is complete. The Superintendent indicated that would be fine and they would work with us on that. In the meantime, Margaretta Townships #1 and #2 will be at Grace Lutheran Church, while Margaretta Townships #3 and #4 will be at the Castalia United Church of Christ. Ms. Salyers also stated that we have consolidated Milan Township #1 and #2 at the Milan Fire Station on State Route 13. She stated consolidating precincts is a good idea in case we receive poll worker call-offs on Election Morning.

Next, Ms. Salyers spoke about the situation at the Ohio Veterans Home. She previously spoke with Melissa Wilfong, the administrator at the OVH, and then called her again and left a message. According to Ms. Salyers, the OVH administration is fine with us having a polling location for the residents in the basement of our building. They have not received one complaint from the residents, because if they had, they would have had to address it. Ms. Salyers also stated she received an email from Jeff Hobday, Senior Elections Counsel at the SOS office, who informed us that the law does not require a polling location at the Veterans Home.

Mr. Ferrell stated that if the residents want to vote on Election Day, that involves getting in the bus and getting out wheelchairs. Ms. James stated that we offer curbside voting to people who are physically unable to enter the polling location. Mr. Ferrell stated that he would try to make one more call to the OVH.

Ms. Salyers stated that the rate of voting for OVH residents is high. She gave the board members a spreadsheet she compiled, which compares the rate of voting for OVH residents to the rate of voting for the county. The spreadsheet looks at all elections from the 2018 Primary to the present. In every election but two, OVH residents voted at a higher rate than the county.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of a pay raise for precinct election officials, or PEOs. Ms. Salyers stated we have until October 1st to notify the commissioners in writing that we want to raise PEO pay for next year. Mr. Ferrell stated he thinks we ought to raise it. We should pick five counties with a similar number of voters, see what their PEOs are paid, then authorize Ms. Salyers to send the letter. Mr. Smith asked if we needed to put the amount in the letter. Ms. Salyers stated there is a cap according to the Elections Officials Manual, or EOM.

Mr. Krabill stated that, in a recent conversation he had with the board of commissioners, one take-away he had was that the commissioners want better communication from us. If we are looking at a pay raise for whatever position, there needs to be a conversation ahead of time before we take a vote. Mr. Krabill stated that is what this process does. We will send the commissioners a letter before October 1st, and then they can review it and comment on it.

Mr. Ferrell stated the board should authorize Ms. Salyers to send the letter stating we want to raise our PEO pay to be equitable to that of counties with similar number of voters. Ms. Salyers asked if the letter should contain a definite dollar amount. Mr. Ferrell stated the dollar amount would be reflected in next year's budget. Mr. Krabill asked for counsel's opinion. Mr. Hinnners read the statute, which says, "No board of elections may increase a precinct election official's pay during a calendar year unless the board has given written notice of the proposed increase to the board of county commissioners not later than October 1st of the preceding calendar year." Mr. Hinnners stated it was his interpretation that the letter would contain the specific dollar amount. Mr. Hinnners also reminded the board of the cap of \$133.72 per the EOM. Mr. Ferrell asked how Lorain and Cuyahoga Counties pay their PEOs more. Both Mr. Hinnners and Ms. Salyers indicated it was because they pay more for training.

Mr. Smith suggested raising PEO pay to \$130 a day next year. Currently we pay them \$110 a day, so this would be an increase of \$20. Mr. Ferrell stated that the letter Ms. Salyers writes should indicate this does not reflect any training pay changes, which will be reflected in our budget. Motion to authorize Ms. Salyers to write the letter was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried. Ms. Salyers asked the board members to come in and sign the letter before she sends it to the commissioners.

Next on the agenda was discussing closing the office for the week of Christmas. Ms. Salyers stated our last day in the office would be Friday, December 23rd, and our first day back in the office would be Tuesday, January 3rd. Motion to close the office for the days Ms. Salyers proposed was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Next on the agenda was "any other matters to come before the board." Ms. Salyers proposed purchasing standing desks called Varidesks for the office. We would like five, one for each full-time employee, and one for the part-time area in the front. They are about \$175 each. She stated she was not sure if it would fit in this year's budget, but if not, she can put it in next year's budget.

Mr. Smith asked if we are past the deadline for spending the August grant money. Ms. Salyers stated that we are. Mr. Smith asked how much of the grant money we would be returning to the state. Ms. Salyers stated she was not sure of the exact amount, but we would be returning tens of thousands of dollars. Mr. Ferrell stated he had no objections to the standing desks. Mr. Smith stated he was fine with it if it was in our budget. Ms. Salyers stated she would order them in December or January.

Motion to go into executive session for personnel matters, specifically compensation, pursuant to ORC 121.22(G)(1), was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board went into executive session at 9:32 a.m.

Motion to leave executive session and return to regular session was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried. Board resumed regular session at 9:58 a.m.

Motion to go into executive session for personnel matters, specifically employment, pursuant to ORC 121.22(G)(1), was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried. Board went into executive session at 9:59 a.m.

Motion to leave executive session and return to regular session was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board resumed regular session at 10:05 a.m.

Motion to accept Ms. Salyers' letter of retirement, effective March 1st, 2023, was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. The board members thanked Ms. Salyers for her service and said they knew the last few years were rough. Ms. Salyers thanked the board and praised the staff members for their hard work and dedication.

Motion to go into executive session for security matters, pursuant to ORC 121.22(G)(6) was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried. Board went into executive session at 10:06 a.m.

Motion to leave executive session and return to regular session was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board resumed regular session at 10:29 a.m.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Lori J. Salyers, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman