

The recount, audit, and special meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Board Member William Monaghan on Monday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 9:01 a.m.

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 and Bill Minshall

Motion to go into recess was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried. Board went into recess at 9:02 a.m.

While in recess, board staff hand counted the ballots for the Kelleys Island Village police levy. After hand counting, they ran a test on the high-speed scanner to make sure it was working properly. Then, they ran the Kelleys Island ballots through the high-speed scanner.

At 2:17 p.m., the board came out of recess. Lori Salyers, Director, called the roll.

Mr. Ferrell- absent (excused)  
Mr. Monaghan- present  
Mr. Smith- present  
Mr. Krabill- present.

Adrienne James, Deputy Director, explained the process that board staff followed during the recount. She showed the board members the results of the test on the high-speed scanner, and the results of the actual recount. She noted that nothing changed. The numbers are still 119 for the levy and 120 against the levy, meaning the levy did not pass. Mr. Smith asked if the hand recount matched the results from the high-speed scanner. Ms. James stated that it did.

Ms. Salyers stated that the board would need to finish signing some certification papers for certain races. For these races, we were waiting on the numbers from least populous counties, but now we have those numbers. The board members took a few minutes to sign the paperwork that Ms. Salyers presented.

Motion to accept the results of the recount was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Next, board members discussed the timeline for the audit. Motion to begin the audit was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Motion to go into recess until Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board went into recess at 2:27 p.m. While in recess, board staff conducted the audit.

On Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, motion to exit recess was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board returned to regular session at 10:21 a.m. Guests present were Rachel Mullen from the SOS office and Amy Grubbe.

During the audit, the following voting machines and races were checked:

- Election Day DS200 for Hur Twp 1 and 2: Erie County General Health District Levy
- Election Day DS200 for Hur Twp 1 and 2: Huron Township Trustees
- Election Day DS200 for Hur Twp 1 and 2: Huron School Board
- Election Day DS200 for Ver Twp 1 and 2: Erie County General Health District Levy
- Election Day DS200 for Ver Twp 1 and 2: Vermilion Township Trustees
- Election Day DS200 for Ver Twp 1 and 2: Ritter Public Library Levy

Ms. Salyers stated that our audit came out perfectly except for one instance. The report from our election software says that one race had two overvoted ballots, but staff could only find one. Ms. James explained this was for the audit of the Vermilion Township Trustee race. The number of votes per candidate that we figured matched exactly with what the election software says; we just do not have two overvoted ballots. Ms. Salyers explained that we all double-checked our stacks of ballots and looked through the spoiled ballot envelope to try to find a second over-voted ballot, but we could still only find one. The board members then took a few moments to review the tally sheets board staff had completed during the audit. The tally sheets showed that the number of votes cast per candidate as calculated by staff matched with the number of votes cast per candidate as calculated by the election software. The tally sheets also showed that the number of “yes” and “no” votes for the levies as calculated by staff matched the number of “yes” and “no” votes for the levies as calculated by the election software.

Motion to accept the results of the audit and sign the necessary paperwork was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

Next on the agenda was paying the bills. Ms. Salyers explained that the board members would see a \$630 charge from Microsoft due to computer issues she was having. She was unable to get into any Microsoft programs, so she called Netpoint to try to fix the issue. Netpoint tried three times to try to recover her Microsoft programs, but they were unable to do so. Netpoint then proposed the solution of upgrading our Microsoft programs so Ms. Salyers could use the software again. For \$630, we will now have the latest version of Microsoft 365 Business on each of our computers until August 24, 2023. The board members stated that was fine. Mr. Krabill asked if that money came out of our supplies account. Ms. Salyers responded that it would come out of software maintenance and support. She stated that we have almost \$15,000 in that account, so 630 is a drop in the bucket.

Ms. Salyers then stated she had a question for the board members regarding postage. Since she has worked here, she has put about \$50,000 worth of postage in our postage machine. We are now down to about \$6,000 in our machine. Ms. Salyers noted that we are going to have money left over in this year’s budget, and asked if it was okay to move some of that money into the supplies account, and then use it to buy postage for the machine. She estimated that by doing this, we could purchase about \$30,000 worth of postage. Ms. Salyers also noted that we have let the commissioners’ office use our postage machine several times this year. Although the commissioners’ office has always reimbursed us, she stated it would be nice to have some extra postage with the governor’s race and a senate race coming up in 2022.

The board members then took a few minutes to discuss the budget and look over the budget paperwork Ms. Salyers had presented. Mr. Krabill stated that we would need postage next year. He thinks spending the money now so that it isn’t swept back in to the general fund is the right thing to do. Mr. Monaghan agreed. Ms. Salyers asked if there was a limit the board members wanted her to honor. Mr. Krabill stated he wouldn’t spend it out to the final penny. He stated to round it to about 30,000, and leave a little bit left in the accounts.

Ms. James then asked if there was a motion to pay the bills. Motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried. Mr. Krabill asked if we needed a motion regarding the postage. Mr. Smith stated no, because it was on the record that we discussed it.

Ms. Salyers then reminded the board members that the commissioners’ office agreed to give full time county employees a three percent raise starting next year. She also stated that the commissioners granted bonuses to employees this year. She stated that the board members did not need to sign the paperwork for the raise, but they do need to sign the paperwork for the bonus. The board members then signed the paperwork.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of comp hours for BOE staff and payout. Ms. Salyers showed the board members the spreadsheet she compiled, showing the amount to be paid out as per the policy the board adopted last year. Mr. Monaghan stated that when we get into January, we ought to start taking some weeks off, due to the high number of comp hours. Mr. Smith suggested going down to a staff of just one Republican and one Democrat in the office during the lean times so we can burn down comp.

Ms. Salyers then gave her opinion. She reminded the board members that everyone else was paid out for last year, and she was not. She stated that the comp hours she has accumulated is like money that she has earned. She doesn't tell anybody in the county how to spend their money, and she doesn't appreciate being told how to spend her money.

Mr. Smith stated that our office is in a unique spot. He understands that we don't have the luxury of saying we're not going to be working this day or that day during an election. However, when it's slower and we don't need four people in the office, it is our fiscal obligation to the taxpayers not to be over-staffed.

Ms. Salyers stated that we adjusted the schedule this year so that we weren't earning a lot of comp time. Mr. Smith stated he understands that, and stated that we're still dealing with the fallout of the presidential election last year. He then asked Ms. Salyers what she was asking for. Ms. Salyers responded that she would like her comp time payout rolled into her deferred comp account. Mr. Smith asked if we have the money for that. Ms. Salyers replied that we don't right now, but she inserted this payout into the preliminary 2022 budget that the finance department asked her to submit in June. Mr. Smith asked if this means the payout would occur in 2022. Ms. Salyers confirmed yes. Ms. Salyers also pointed out that the longer they wait to pay her out, the more it will cost, because of pay raises set forth by the commissioners.

Mr. Smith stated that he's not saying to burn all the comp time, but we do have to be responsible. We should have a smaller staff when it's slower. Ms. Salyers pointed out that we have been taking some time off. However, if she takes time off, she wants to have something to do. Mr. Monaghan suggested planning ahead to take off a week or two. He stated that the amount of comp time Ms. Salyers has accumulated is a lot.

Mr. Krabill reminded the board that Ms. Salyers is in a unique situation because she wasn't paid out last year when everyone else was. He thinks Ms. Salyers rolling her payout over to her deferred comp account is fine, so long as it's in the budget and the commissioners approve it. He thinks that they would approve it because they approved the payout for everyone else for last year.

Mr. Krabill also stated that he appreciates we were able to control the number of comp time hours accumulated during this past election cycle. Now he thinks we need to make a plan for this coming winter how we're going to be staffed in order to use up some comp time. Mr. Smith pointed out that we need to use up vacation time as well.

Ms. Salyers stated that on Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup> and Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, we would like to close the office to take a familiarization trip to Washington D.C. through the tour guide company that she works for. She stated that that would burn down two days per person. Mr. Smith stated we would need to seek approval from the SOS office to be closed those two days. He also stated that we have to meet our statutory and directive requirements. Mr. Krabill stated that closing the office those two days was fine by him so long as the SOS office doesn't have an issue. Ms. Salyers also reminded the board members that we would be closing the office the week between Christmas and New Year's.

Mr. Smith stated that burning down comp time is a conscious task we have to complete. He also mentioned taking time off during down time. Ms. Salyers replied, "You keep talking about down time. I'm waiting for it. I haven't seen it yet." Mr. Smith then reminded Ms. Salyers that before the meeting started, she stated that perhaps all four staff members could go down to winter conference because it would be slow. Ms. Salyers responded that she didn't say it would be slow; she just said that in other counties, all four employees go to conference. She's not sure if it's going to be slow or busy at that time.

Mr. Monaghan again iterated the need to burn down comp time. Ms. Salyers stated that the payout amount for comp time would be \$26,321.54. Mr. Smith stated that Ms. Salyers, Mr. Monaghan, and Mr. Krabill needed to set up a time to go over the budget. He then asked if there was anything else. Mr. Monaghan stated he wanted to put on the record that he is opposed to putting our new dropbox in an area that is not ADA accessible. He thinks that the dropbox should go in the area that the SOS person came down and recommended that is ADA accessible.

Next, Ms. Salyers stated that we have a camera on the main entrance to the building, where our dropbox currently is. Once the new dropbox is in place, we are going to have Accurate move the camera on the front entrance and place it in either the OSU hallway or the dungeon. Mr. Smith asked if we have money to do that this year. Ms. Salyers responded yes, there is some money for that. Mr. Smith suggested spending it this year. Ms. Salyers responded that she has to wait for the maintenance department to run the wires from where the commissioners want to place the dropbox to our building, and then a camera will go there. She also stated we can't place the dropbox until the camera is in place and turned on.

Mr. Monaghan then asked about the camera that was in the corner of the meeting room. Ms. Salyers replied that that camera is for early voting when we have our voting equipment in here. Ms. Salyers also reminded the board members that the next meeting would be Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.

Mr. Monaghan asked if there was anything else. Ms. Grubbe stated she had some comments. She stated that as a taxpayer, chucking out 23 weeks of comp time is unconscionable. For someone to plan to put it in their retirement fund is not acceptable. She stated that excessive comp time has been going on for years, and we've tried to get it fixed over the years. She thinks the board needs to put a limit on this. Comp time payout should not be a bonus when you're already getting a bonus and a raise from the commissioners' office. Ms. Grubbe also mentioned that the previous director was paid out, as well.

Ms. Grubbe then made a comment about how the new democratic clerk is the mother of one of the office's part-time workers. She stated that past policy has always been immediate family members are not hired. She would like to know going forward what the policy is going to be. Mr. Monaghan replied that we researched this before we hired her, and we're okay. Ms. Salyers stated that a family member cannot be a supervisor over another family member. That's nepotism and we do not have that here. The mother does not report to her son and the son does not report to her mother; rather, both of them report to Ms. Salyers.

Ms. Grubbe then asked for clarification on the payout amount. Ms. Salyers stated it would be \$26,321.54. Ms. Grubbe also asked when the office would be closed for Christmas. Staff informed her that the office would be closed on December 24<sup>th</sup>, and we would reopen January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Smith stated that staff might have to come back briefly during those times to check state petitions.

**Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried.  
Board adjourned at 11:01 a.m.**

**Lori J. Salyers, Director**

**Attest:**

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**Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman**