

The regular monthly meeting and audit of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Ferrell at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 3, 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: None

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 2/3 meeting was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried.

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

Mr. Ferrell stated that Ms. Salyers would need to contact Brenda at the Auditor's Office about the board members getting their furlough money back. Mr. Krabill stated that the money was considered a contribution and that they couldn't get it back, but Mr. Ferrell stated that was not true. Ms. Salyers stated that she would take care of it.

Ms. Salyers, director, stated that she shared the potential policy changes with both Gery Gross and the Secretary of State's Office. She stated that they had no problems with them, but that the SOS office suggested removing the part about taking a signature matter to the director or deputy, and instead take a signature matter before a bipartisan team.

Mr. Smith inquired who in the office does the signature checking. Ms. Link, clerk, stated that it was the four full-time employees, plus one part-time employee. Mr. Ferrell stated that he thought it should only be full-time employees checking signatures. He also brought forth the idea of getting a computer program like Pennsylvania uses to do the signature matching for us. After some cross talk, the board decided that the people checking signatures should be a full-time employee or a part-time employee designated by the board.

The proposed policy change reads as follows:

“Whenever a full-time employee or a part-time employee designated by the Board has deemed a signature on an application for an absentee ballot, identification envelope, or those signatures that appear on petitions, do not match the one we have on file, an employee of the opposite party must validate this in order to proceed sending a form to verify/update the individual's signature. If a determination is unable to be reached it will be taken to a bi-partisan team for a final opinion.”

Motion to approve this policy change was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Krabill- yes
Mr. Monaghan- yes
Mr. Ferrell- yes
Mr. Smith- yes

Motion carried.

The board then moved on to the proposed policy change regarding holiday time. The proposal reads as follows:

“In the event that the Secretary of State's Office directs the Board of Elections to be open during the period of time that Erie County would normally be closed due to an approved observed holiday, the office may use another day within that calendar year in lieu of that holiday. The board may also approve the closing of the office to compensate for that day mutually agreed upon by the staff and the board.”

Motion to adopt this policy change was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. A roll call vote was taken.

**Mr. Krabill- yes
Mr. Monaghan- yes
Mr. Ferrell- yes
Mr. Smith- yes**

Motion carried.

Next, the board discussed the potential policy change regarding compensation time payout. Mr. Smith asked if there was money in the budget to pay for this. Ms. Salyers stated yes, from the \$68,000 reimbursement from the Secretary of State from the Primary. Mr. Ferrell inquired whether the payout could be done by the first pay period in December. Ms. Salyers passed out some paperwork regarding the budget, and the board took some time to review those papers and discuss.

Mr. Smith again expressed concern that we are not properly budgeting for this. Mr. Krabill stated that he spoke with one of the county commissioners, who told him that they understand they can't set a hard budget and hold the Board of Elections to it, because we don't know exactly what's going to happen. They set a budget, but then they can change it. The commissioner also indicated to Mr. Krabill that the budget is set each year depending on what kind of year it is. For example, we will get more money in an even year, especially if it is a presidential election, than we would in an odd year. They will set the budget, but they can make changes as reality dictates. Mr. Krabill then stated that he was comfortable with passing the policy as written, because even if something happens, we can make an amendment to that policy. He also stated that it was important to have something in writing for when budget negotiations do come up, so that we have something to work from.

Mr. Ferrell asked Mr. Smith if he would be more comfortable if we made the policy effective when the county 2021 budget is passed, which would probably be the end of March. Mr. Smith stated yes.

Mr. Krabill made the motion to adopt the policy as shown, but with one change: making it effective at the end of March 2021, or whenever the 2021 budget is passed. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion. Mr. Smith stated that his only issue was that the policy states that the money should be paid out the first pay period in December, but employees could still accrue more time after that. Mr. Ferrell suggested taking out the "first pay period in December" language. Mr. Smith wrote out some amended language, and Ms. Salyers stated that she would type it up. Mr. Krabill then withdrew his motion so that Mr. Smith could make the motion using the amended language.

The proposed policy change as edited by Mr. Smith is as follows:

"The Board approves the capping of deferred compensation hours at 160 hours per year. If within the year from January 1st to December 31st there is more than 160 hours for any employee they will paid out by the end of the calendar year, either in compensation pay for the employee, deposited in their Ohio Deferred Compensation account, or a combination of the two (a pre-determined amount in compensation pay and a pre-determined amount in their Ohio Deferred Compensation account, at the decision of the employee.)"

Motion to adopt this policy change effective with the 2021 budget was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. A roll call vote was taken.

**Mr. Smith- yes
Mr. Krabill- yes
Mr. Ferrell- yes
Mr. Monaghan- yes**

Motion carried.

Motion to affect the same payout for calendar year 2020, out of the 1500-433900 account was made by Mr. Krabill. Mr. Ferrell added that he wished Mr. Krabill would add the language “due to the extraordinary circumstances of the 2020 election.” Mr. Krabill stated that was fine. Motion was seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Ms. Salyers stated that she had a couple of “Then and Now” certificates for the board to sign, to pay for the ballots and for extra envelopes. Motion to sign the then and now certificates was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Next, Ms. Salyers stated she had an update on the fax machine and copy machine. The current fax machine we cannot get a toner for, so she asked Bob Matney from Netpoint if we could hook fax capabilities up to our copier. Mr. Matney stated that we did not have that capability. So, Ms. Salyers contacted Blue Technologies, who handles our copier, who informed her that the lease on the current copier has expired. Currently, we are paying \$190 a month for this copier. According to Blue Technologies, to lease a new copier which has color copying, scanning, and faxing capabilities, would be \$168.13 a month. To lease to buy out would be about \$183 a month. The board agreed they did not want to lease to buy, because technology changes so much. The board also agreed that they wanted to see at least two other quotes, one from Accurate Business and one from RS Business Machines, before deciding on leasing a new copier.

Ms. Salyers stated that the board received a public records request for security camera footage from the office on a specific day, for a certain time. She stated that Accurate Business pulled the footage and charged us \$212.50. Ms. James, Deputy Director, emailed Gery Gross, who informed her that the footage is public record, and that the requestor should be asked to pay the cost for pulling the footage. Ms. Salyers asked the board how they wanted to do that—should the person just write a check? Mr. Ferrell stated no and suggested a money order. He also stated that we should have gotten set up for PayPal years ago; it would have been easier. Mr. Smith stated that when this person asked for this, we probably should have told him about the money. If he doesn't pay us, we might still have to get it to him. Mr. Ferrell agreed, at least until we have a policy in place. Mr. Smith suggested contacting Gery Gross and asking if he has a policy regarding public records that we can use.

Next, Ms. Salyers asked the board about the dropbox situation. She asked if the board was planning to get a new dropbox for outside, and, if so, could we put the old dropbox in our basement, under double lock and key, to store our backup servers? Mr. Krabill stated that he wouldn't do anything yet until the legislature makes a decision about the dropbox. They're the controlling authority. Ms. Salyers asked if we could just take the servers and put them in the basement for now, without the safe, but still under double lock. Mr. Smith inquired they're not downtown? Ms. Salyers explained no, because we were going to put them on the second floor of the building downtown, but if a tornado went through, those servers would be gone. She also stated that the Secretary of State's office was fine with us putting the servers in the basement. Mr. Ferrell stated he thought that was okay.

Mr. Smith asked, getting back to the dropbox issue, if we could look into getting one that looks like an old mailbox. Ms. Salyers stated that she could look into that, but not today. Mr. Smith stated that our goal would probably be to get it out on the curb. He also stated that we would have to coordinate with the county commissioners since it's not our property. Mr. Krabill asked if we should put the box on the little island outside. Mr. Smith inquired if we had cameras out there. Ms. Salyers stated, no, we would have to get them. Mr. Krabill stated that it would need to be on the driver's side.

Mr. Monaghan stated that there is a dropbox for the water department, and inquired about putting our dropbox next to that one. Mr. Ferrell responded that we wanted a drive-up drop box. Mr. Smith stated that we needed to take into consideration the various potential locations we could use and the cost. For example, what is the cost of putting a camera on the island versus on the curb? Mr. Smith also asked if the box needed to be surveilled all year, or just during election time. Ms. Salyers confirmed that it needed to be all year. She also stated that she would call around and inquire about getting an outside dropbox. The board members suggested that she call Sandusky Steel.

Ms. Salyers then stated that we would need to set up a time to discuss the budget. She asked if there was a time that works for everyone, as she really wants all the board members to be there. Mr. Krabill responded that as long as it was a couple of weeks out, he could typically clear his schedule. Ms. Salyers also gave an update on the board members' email addresses, and stated that they would need to talk to either Bob or Seth at Netpoint Consulting to get their email set up and passwords changed. She also stated that she would need to get the head of the county commissioners to sign a paper saying that the Board of Elections needs its own domain for email.

Ms. James, Deputy Director, stated that she put a tentative board meeting schedule for 2021 in the board members' folders. She arranged the meetings based on 2020's schedule, and already reserved the rooms upstairs with Alicia. She also stated that the meetings on August 2, 3, 16, and 18 would only happen if there was an August Special Election. Motion to adopt the calendar and post it on the website was made by Mr. Krabill, seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion carried.

Ms. James then explained the audit process. She stated that staff would be auditing by voting machine, and that they would be auditing the election day ballots from Sandusky A, Sandusky H and I, Sandusky K and L, Castalia Village, Huron Township 1 and 2, and Perkins Township 4. This amounts to a little over five percent of the votes cast. She also stated that the races to be audited were President, Justice of the Supreme Court term commencing 1/1/2021, and the contested county commissioner race.

Motion to go into recess during the audit was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board went into recess at 10:16 a.m.

Motion to back into regular session was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board resumed regular session at 3 p.m.

Ms. James reiterated the voting machines and the races that were audited, and stated that the numbers match exactly with what ES&S stated we have. Motion to accept the results of the audit was made by Mr. Monaghan, seconded by Mr. Krabill. A roll call vote was taken.

**Mr. Krabill- yes
Mr. Smith- yes
Mr. Ferrell- yes
Mr. Monaghan- yes**

Motion carried. Staff passed around the audit paperwork to the board members for them to sign.

While the board members were signing, Mr. Monaghan stated that he wanted Ms. Salyers to gather some numbers regarding the 2020 budget. First, he wanted to know the beginning balance for the 2020 budget. Next, he wanted to know the amount of money left in each account after we pay all of our December bills. Third, he wanted to know how much money we spent because we are no longer permitted to use the county IT department—in other words, how much money did we spend on Netpoint?

Mr. Monaghan also stated that he received some numbers from the finance department, and our budget is projected to decrease next year by 17 percent. However, the last time we went from presidential year to a non-presidential year, the budget only decreased by 13 percent.

Ms. Salyers reiterated to the board members that she wanted all of them present during the budget talks. She also stated that she was working on figuring out the CARES and HAVA grant, and that it was difficult because the county finance department took some of that money and placed it in different accounts, because she was new. Mr. Monaghan stated that Ed Widman from the finance department stated that we do have enough money to pay our bills.

The board then engaged in some more cross talk about the budget and the difficult year 2020 was, but stated that the office did a good job. Mr. Ferrell inquired about performance evaluations, and Mr. Krabill stated that H.R. had some sheets for that upstairs. Ms. Salyers stated that she could do performance evaluations, but she couldn't think of anything negative to say about the staff.

The board members stated that, regarding the payout, it should be done as soon as possible, to avoid going on 2021's tax year. The board members also inquired about the time staff was taking off for the Christmas holidays. The staff explained the days they were taking off and how they would account for that (either personal, vacation, or comp time.)

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Krabill. Motion carried. Board adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Lori J. Salyers, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman