

The regular monthly meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Thomas Ferrell on Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call:	(D) Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman	Present
	(R) Lisa M. Crescimano, Member	Present
	(D) MaryAnn Groot, Member	Present
	(R) John C. Adams, Member	Present

Guests in attendance: Jason Hinnners from Erie County Prosecutor’s Office, Amy Grubbe, Stephen Lippert, and Hallie Minich Lippert

Ms. Groot motioned to approve the minutes from the April 26<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Alex Jones, Director, presented the monthly bills to the board. Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the Then and Now Certificate in the amount of \$5,475 to ES&S. Ms. Groot seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Crescimano motioned to pay the bills as presented, with Ms. Groot seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

For the Director’s Report, Mr. Jones presented the preliminary expense requests for Summer Conference and asked the board members to sign them. He also stated that we mailed 800 registration readiness notices earlier this week to people tied to the 2020 National Change of Address Process and additional list maintenance. They have a few months to respond to confirm their address. If a voter does not respond, we delete their registration by July 22<sup>nd</sup>. We have a list of the 800 voters if anyone wants to see it.

Mr. Jones stated that last week we sent a newsletter to our poll workers and part-time employees. We’ve gotten a lot of positive feedback and are open to suggestions for what to talk about in the future. Eliza Link, Clerk, has taken the reigns on our social media presence. We are working on getting our Facebook page verified and having any dormant Board of Elections accounts taken down. We also completed staff reviews for 2023 a few weeks ago. We’ll probably get on a cycle where we do annual reviews in January.

Adrienne James, Deputy Director, asked the board members to provide their signatures so we can order a new signature stamp.

Under New Business was a review of candidate and issue filings. Mr. Jones noted that the Republican nominee for County Engineer, Tom Beck, recently passed away. This week the Republican Party filed their certification of selection for a replacement, who will be Eric Dodrill.

Several local subdivisions have filed paperwork to place issues on the November ballot. The deadline to submit the paperwork is in August. All four issues are renewals. Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the issue filings as listed for the November 2024 Election. Ms. Groot seconded the motion. All board members voted yes; motion carried. The approved issues are as follows:

- Village of Berlin Heights, Renewal Levy, Police, 5 mills, 5 years, 2025 due 2026
- Village of Berlin Heights, Renewal Levy, Current Expenses, 2 mills, 5 years, 2025 due 2026
- Berlin Township, Renewal Levy, Fire and EMS, 1 mill, 5 years, 2024 due 2025
- Margaretta Local School District, Renewal Levy, 3.45 mills, 5 years, 2025 due 2026

The last item under “New Business” was consideration of longevity pay for Adrienne James. Mr. Jones stated that when the board adopted the county’s fiscal policy, Ms. James was already at her five-year mark and entitled to longevity pay at that point. Mr. Jones also noted that Ms. Link recently reached her 5-year mark. He spoke with Matt Wilson in H.R. and County Administrator Hank Solowiej, who agreed she should be paid for longevity. Mr. Jones stated he went back to the pay period when the board adopted the county policy and the pay comes to \$492. Mr. Solowiej said they could do a supplement at the end of the year to ensure we have enough. Ms. Crescimano motioned to approve the longevity pay for Ms. James, with Ms. Groot seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Mr. Ferrell asked if there were any other matters to come before the board. Ms. Crescimano stated she would like to do the Pledge of Allegiance before meetings. We represent the voters who are citizens of the United States, so she moved to do the Pledge at the beginning of every meeting. Mr. Adams seconded the motion.

Mr. Ferrell stated to talk to the attorney. The chairman sets the agenda. Based upon before he came here, the board never recited it. We’ve been following past practices.

Ms. Crescimano replied that we’re not a union and there is no such thing as past practice. She has reviewed Robert’s Rules and there is nothing in Robert’s Rules that says we can’t do it.

Mr. Adams asked if there is a good reason why we wouldn’t want to recite the Pledge. Mr. Ferrell replied that it is practice. We haven’t done it before and he noted he didn’t do it upstairs.

Ms. James took a roll call vote.

Mr. Ferrell- no  
Ms. Crescimano- yes  
Ms. Groot- no  
Mr. Adams- yes

The motion did not carry.

Mr. Ferrell asked if there was anything else. Ms. Groot stated she has a couple things. One is regarding part-time employees during early voting. She reviewed the timesheets provided by Mr. Jones and is concerned the part-time timesheets have no signatures. She thinks the workers need to take responsibility in signing them. She also noted that she found some errors.

Ms. Crescimano agreed that the part-time employees should sign their timesheets. She stated that is a general accounting principle. Mr. Jones stated we would make that change for the fall.

Ms. Groot noted that on the timesheets, it would say that they worked until 2:13. She wondered why we don’t just give them the 15 minutes. Ms. Crescimano stated it is in six-minute intervals. Ms. Groot replied that she reviewed the timesheets and it’s not. Ms. Groot thinks we should let the part-time employees know how we want them to round.

Ms. Crescimano suggested checking with H.R. She thinks it is supposed to be in six-minute intervals. She also stated that people should be paid according to what the Fair Labor Standards Act says.

Ms. Groot stated she would like to go into executive session regarding pay for a full-time employee. Ms. Crescimano stated that unless she knows more about it she won't vote to go into executive session. Mr. Adams asked if it was for a specific person. Ms. Groot stated it's something she came upon not looking for it. Ms. Crescimano replied that doesn't give her enough information. Mr. Ferrell suggested talking with Mr. Hinners.

Mr. Hinners stated that if there is going to be a motion for executive session, it has to fit under one of the required reasons. Ms. Crescimano iterated that unless she is told what it is specifically for, she will not vote for it. Ms. Crescimano then asked Ms. Groot if she wanted to go out in the hallway so she can tell her what it's about. Mr. Hinners stated we would need a motion to recess.

Ms. Groot motioned to recess, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board recessed at 9:22 a.m.

Ms. Groot motioned to reconvene, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board reconvened at 9:24 a.m.

Ms. Groot motioned to go into executive session to discuss a matter of personnel. Mr. Hinners stated a reference to personnel is not appropriate. It has to fall under one of the following: appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, compensation, or investigation of charges or complaint against a public employee. Ms. Groot then motioned to go into executive session to discuss compensation of a full-time employee. Mr. Hinners added this would be pursuant to Section 121.22(G)(1) of the Ohio Revised Code. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. Ms. James took a roll call vote.

Mr. Ferrell- yes

Ms. Crescimano- no

Ms. Groot- yes

Mr. Adams- no

The motion did not carry. Mr. Ferrell stated that Ms. Groot could discuss it in open session, but Ms. Groot said not today. Mr. Ferrell asked if there was anything further.

Mr. Adams stated he was asked to review the personnel manual, which he did, but he is not sure what specifically is to be looked at. Ms. Groot said that's what the work session is for, so we can discuss it. Mr. Adams said he assumes there are issues in the county handbook that Ms. Groot has taken note of and wants to discuss. Ms. Groot stated yes, and do we want to make a policy for the Board of Elections on those issues.

Mr. Adams asked when we adopted the county policy. Mr. Jones stated November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Mr. Adams asked if we did this because we thought it was good to go across the board. Mr. Ferrell stated no. Ms. Crescimano stated that it was done because two of the Republican board members thought it should have been done.

Mr. Adams asked if we have run into issues. Mr. Ferrell stated yes, and gave the example of working late hours and Saturdays during early voting. Mr. Ferrell also stated that other county departments use the county policy as a guideline but have their own work rules.

Mr. Adams suggested asking the staff if there should be changes. Mr. Ferrell stated that is what the work session is for. Mr. Adams asked if the work session must be public. Both Mr. Ferrell and Ms. Crescimano confirmed that it does. Ms. Groot stated she thinks that Mr. Adams should read the policy book and see if there is anything he wants changed. It shouldn't just be her.

**Mr. Adams asked the staff if there was anything they saw in the handbook that needs to be addressed. Mr. Jones replied that there are certain things that fall outside the scope of the handbook that we can have a conversation about. One example is the SOS office mandating us to work holidays when other county offices are closed, like on Columbus Day. Typically, the board gives us another day off in lieu of Columbus Day, such as the day before Thanksgiving. Do we want to vote on that on a year-by-year basis, or make it a formal policy? Mr. Ferrell gave another example of being off the week between Christmas and New Year's.**

**Ms. Crescimano asked how much comp time everyone still has. Mr. Jones said he can email that to the board. Ms. Link noted that we used to have a smaller policy book that we could pull from. Ms. James said she would email the old policy book to the board. Ms. Link also suggested talking with other Boards of Elections around us to see if they have additional policies.**

**Mr. Adams stated it sounds like a big process. He thinks things are running very smoothly, but that doesn't mean you can't look at it. He stated he would not be in favor of major revisions unless they were extremely warranted. Ms. Groot stated there's nothing major, just some minor points she thinks need to be addressed.**

**The board members then discussed the upcoming board meeting calendar. They decided to tentatively schedule a special meeting on July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11:00 a.m. for the purpose of holding a work session.**

**Ms. Crescimano motioned to adjourn, with Ms. Groot seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. The board adjourned at 9:42 a.m.**

**Alexander W. Jones, Director**

**Attest:**

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**Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman**