

The pre-election meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Thomas Ferrell on Monday, November 4th, 2024 at 4:00 p.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 Hinnars from Erie County Prosecutor's Office and Amy Grubbe

Adrienne James, Deputy Director, reviewed the numbers for absentee voting. 20,118 absentee ballots were sent this election. The breakdown is as follows:

- Four Accessible
- 46 Curbside
- 84 Handcarry
- Three Hospital
- 12,290 In Office
- 7,411 Mail
- 143 Nursing Home
- 79 UOCAVA Email
- 58 UOCAVA Mail

19,492 ballots have been returned. Ms. Crescimano and Mr. Adams commented on the better flow for early, in person voting. Ms. James stated this election we had the most early voters we've ever had. Yesterday we processed 442 early voters in four hours.

Alex Jones, Director, presented the overvoted absentee ballots to the board. The top right corner of the ballot indicates what the person overvoted on. The board members took some time to review the ballots.

Ms. Groot stated she knows there is no way to erase pen, but it clearly looks like on one they were trying to correct what they marked. It almost looks like whiteout. Ms. Crescimano stated she can't make that determination. Mr. Adams stated it was hard to say for sure. Ms. Groot stated that it was the same with another ballot. If you look at their other marks, the others are definitely darker whereas the other candidate mark is very light. Ms. James asked if we wanted to put those two ballots in the middle to vote on separately. Ms. Groot said the other two would definitely vote no. The board members commented on how it was hard to make sense of some ballots with arrows and where they were pointing. They agreed not to count those overvotes.

Ms. Groot motioned to not count the overvoted ballots in specific races, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Mr. Ferrell asked if there was anything else. Ms. Groot asked if the polling locations are the same as they were in March; Mr. Jones said yes. Ms. Grubbe stated she would be here tomorrow as an observer. She also asked if anyone calls the Board of Elections to ask for a ride to the polls, to let her know. They have volunteers that are giving rides tomorrow. Ms. Grubbe also asked the position on political attire at the polls. Ms. Crescimano stated that to her, if you can tell who it's for, then you shouldn't be wearing it. Mr. Adams stated that the Secretary of State's opinion is that attire cannot mention candidates or issues by name. However, you cannot stop them from voting. Ms. Grubbe asked if there were signs posted at the polling locations saying no political attire. The board members confirmed that was correct. Ms. Grubbe stated that a few weeks ago during early voting, a voter came in with a hat with a candidate's name on it. She also suggested that we should have someone out in the lobby during early voting to help direct voters.

Ms. Groot stated that she knows we train our poll workers, but do we train our voters? She knows it's too late for this election, but can we train them on how to mark a ballot correctly? Mr. Jones stated there's instructions at the top of the ballot, but people still overvote. Mr. Ferrell commented that it can be hard for people to fill in the bubbles if they have medical conditions.

Mr. Ferrell asked if the Health Department location would be okay. Mr. Jones stated we would have signs out, and the Sheriff will have someone posted there since it's a higher traffic location. Law enforcement is aware of the high traffic locations, such as the Health Department, Faith Church, and The Chapel.

Ms. Crescimano motioned to recess, with Ms. Groot seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board recessed at 4:18 p.m.

On Tuesday, November 5th at 7:00 p.m., Ms. Groot motioned to reconvene, with Mr. Adams seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. James presented one overvoted ballot to the board. She and Mr. Jones remade the ballot because the voter clearly crossed off one choice and marked another for the same race. The board members reviewed the ballots. Ms. Groot motioned to accept the remade ballot, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

At 7:30 p.m., the polls closed. Mr. Jones and Ms. James checked the dropbox, then uploaded the absentee results. As the poll workers returned the memory sticks from the election day polling locations, they uploaded election day results, too.

At 9:53 p.m., the board reviewed the unofficial results. Total ballots cast is 39,641. Election Day ballots cast are 19,993. Absentee ballots cast are 19,648. Turnout is 73.06%. The board members, director, and deputy director signed the Unofficial Certification of Results page. Ms. Groot motioned to accept the unofficial results to send to the Secretary of State's office, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Groot motioned to adjourn, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Alexander W. Jones, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman