

The pre-election meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Thomas Ferrell on Monday, November 6th, 2023 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) Nancy C. McKeen, Member	Present

Guests in attendance: Jason Hinnners from Erie County Prosecutor’s Office and Amy Grubbe

Alex Jones, Director, gave a summary of absentee voting. He stated that comparatively for an odd year, we had a tremendous turn out for early voting. So far, the number of voters we are crediting for early and absentee voting are as follows:

- Hand Carry: 69
- Accessible Ballot: 1
- In Office: 5,421
- Mail: 1,776
- Nursing Home: 97
- UOCAVA Email: 9
- UOCAVA Mail: 3

Adrienne James, Deputy Director, presented overvoted ballots to the board. The first category consists of 12 ballots that are not true overvotes, but rather things like hesitation marks or timing marks being off. Ms. James and Mr. Jones remade the ballots how they believe the voter intended to vote, and paperclipped the “bad” ballots on top of the remade ones. The board members took a few minutes to review the ballots. Ms. Crescimano motioned to accept the remade ballots as presented, with Ms. Groot seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

The last category consists of nine ballots that are true overvotes. If the board members agree that the ballots are true overvotes, then Ms. James and Mr. Jones will run the ballots through the high-speed scanner with the overvote counter turned on so that it will not count the races that are overvoted. The board members took a few minutes to review the ballots. Ms. Crescimano motioned to accept the overvoted ballots as presented, with Ms. Groot seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried.

Ms. Groot motioned to recess, with Ms. Crescimano seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board recessed at 4:12 p.m.

On Tuesday, November 7th at 7:00 p.m., the board reconvened with all members present and Amy Grubbe present as a guest. Mr. Jones stated there are currently no ballots for the board to review. We’ll check the dropbox at 7:30 p.m., and if there are any ballots to review at that time, we will present them to the board.

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

At 10:25 p.m., Ms. James presented the unofficial results to the board. She stated that voter turnout in Erie County is 52.65%. For the Huron Board of Education race, there are still some write-ins that are unassigned, but the vast majority of them will be assigned as “uncertified” because the voters did not write in the name of a valid write-in candidate. The board members, director, and deputy director took a few moments to sign the unofficial certification of results signature form to email to the Secretary of State’s office.

Ms. Groot stated that she drove by or visited 26 polling locations today and would like to share some of her observations, which are as follows:

- **Oxford Township Garage (Oxford Township):** This location had a steady stream of voters. The workers there think that next election, they will need more privacy screens.
- **Castalia Village Hall (Castalia Village):** Ms. Groot drove by the village hall around noon and noted it was congested with limited parking.
- **Milan Administration Building (Milan Village):** Ms. Groot said she drove by and saw a Vote Here sign but no campaign signs. Possibly there was no place outside the 100 feet to place the signs.
- **Health Department (Sandusky M):** The Health Department has undergone a lot of changes. There should be more signage to indicate that voting is around the back. Without more signs, new voters going to the health department may be confused.
- **Ebenezer Baptist Church (Sandusky J and N):** The voting room was quite a distance from the front door. Voters had to go down several hallways. There used to be voting on the east side of the building.
- **Castalia United Church of Christ (Margaretta Township #3 and #4):** There was another activity going on in the church in the room where voting usually takes place. That room is accessible, but the room where voting took place this election was not. There was a voter using a wheelchair who had trouble accessing the room.

Ms. Groot asked if the board members ever see the notes and suggestions made by the poll workers. Ms. James stated she would scan them and email them to the board members.

Ms. Grubbe stated she had some questions from when she was observing at the Board of Elections. She said it sounds like the PEOs (precinct election officials) are no longer required to call the board if they're processing a provisional voter. She asked if this is a policy change and why.

Mr. Jones replied that VLMs (voting location managers) are still required to call us if they are assisting a provisional voter with an address change. That is most of the calls we receive regarding provisionals. New this election is that VLMs are no longer required to call us if the voter is voting provisionally due to an expired ID. The voter is in the right place and they're saying they live where they're registered; they just don't have a valid ID. In August we received quite a few of those calls, and we didn't have the staff capacity to take all of them. Now, we have instructed the VLMs that if it is a case of an expired license, they can process the provisional without calling us, because there is nothing we can add to the conversation.

Ms. Grubbe asked how many provisionals there were. Mr. Jones stated 402. Ms. Grubbe asked if that is a normal number compared to past elections. Mr. Jones stated it is quite a bit. Ms. Crescimano asked how many provisionals were due to expired licenses. Mr. Jones stated it was primarily address changes. Ms. Crescimano stated that for address changes, the VLMs still need to call. Mr. Jones confirmed that was correct. He stated that we received many phone calls about address changes today, and we processed about 100 people in office who had to vote provisionally due to an address change.

Ms. Grubbe asked if we separate the provisional ballots by countable and not countable, and by reason that the person voted provisionally. Mr. Jones replied that yes, when we present the provisionals to the board, they will be separated by cause. He then gave three examples. The first example was someone who votes provisionally because they were registered in Erie County but moved to a different precinct. In that case, the board would be able to count that provisional. The second example was someone who is not registered to vote anywhere in Ohio, which the board would not be able to count. The third example was a voter who is registered to vote in another Ohio county. In that case, we contact the other county to see if the person voted there, which informs us whether we can count the provisional ballot.

Ms. Grubbe commented on the voters who were removed from the rolls in September. She also stated she heard labels of confirmation or provisional status. She asked what that is and what the process is if one of those people shows up to vote.

Ms. James replied that if someone is in provisional status, that means we mailed them an acknowledgement notice after they registered, but the acknowledgement notice was returned to us as undeliverable. When that happens, we are required to place those voters in a provisional status. As long as they show valid ID and complete the provisional ID envelope correctly, then their provisional ballot would be eligible for counting. Ms. Grubbe asked if there were several of those voters today; Ms. James stated there were.

Ms. Grubbe asked what a fleeing voter is. Ms. James replied that a fleeing voter is when a voter feeds their ballot into the scanner but they leave before the message appears on the scanner, and instead of the usual "Thank you for voting" message, it says it can't accept the ballot due to an overvote. Ms. James stated she received a phone call from a VLM about this today. She told the VLM to place the ballot in the auxiliary bin while she called the Secretary of State's office to see what the solution was. The person from the SOS legal department said that it was considered a fleeing voter, and the ballot could not be counted. Ms. Grubbe asked what precinct it was. Ms. James stated it took place at the Mylander Pavilion, which hosts Sandusky E and G. She is not sure what precinct it was.

Ms. Grubbe commented on how part-time board employees were addressing people who came into the office to vote today. The part-timers said there is no voting being done here today, but there actually is. There is voting downstairs and provisional voting in the office. Ms. Grubbe thinks the verbiage needs to be a bit clearer. She also commented on the check-in computer that used to be in the lobby and how that helped alleviate traffic. Then, she asked if there would be any notice to people that our office would be open on Friday. Ms. James replied that it would be on our website and that we would contact the Register. She also said signs would be posted on our door. Ms. Grubbe asked for a list of PEOs, their positions, and their party affiliation. Ms. James stated she would email that.

Ms. Crescimano motioned to adjourn, with Ms. Groot seconding. All board members voted yes; motion carried. Board adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Alexander W. Jones, Director

Attest:

Thomas M. Ferrell, Chairman