

Public Comment for Oct. 12, 2021 County Council Voting Session Meeting

Williams, Denise <Denise.Williams@luzernecounty.org>

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To: Luzerne County Council Meeting Public Comments <LCCMPC@luzernecounty.org>; Luzerne County Council Members <LCCM@luzernecounty.org>

To: Members of the Authorities, Boards, and Commissions Committee & Luzerne County Council Members

My name is Denise Williams and I am the Chairperson of the Luzerne County Board of Elections.

The County Council will soon be interviewing candidates to fill the current vacancy on the Board of Elections. I am writing to request the ABC's Committee members and council members take some things into consideration when interviewing, nominating and voting for future candidates.

First, applicants must be made aware of the responsibilities and time commitment expected of them prior to becoming a member of the Board of Elections. There is so much more than being available/present for the 5 PM Wednesday meetings. I, personally, spend many hours a week addressing Board of Election work. I hope that the other members are equally dedicated.

It is imperative to ask each applicant if they will commit to being present for the 5 PM Wednesday evening meetings. If they are employed, are they able to be present at that time?

The applicants must also be made aware that the Board members need to be present for the adjudication process after each election. This would mean being available during the daytime hours for the 1 1/2 to 2 weeks after each election. All members have a responsibility for this aspect of the Board's role. This adjudication time commitment must be part of the equation in determining new members.

As Council members know, it is not just about "being present" for meetings and for adjudication. Much of the work is done before and after the meetings. Preparing for a meeting, doing the necessary homework required to research agenda items, and preparing for informed discussion and votes on agenda items is crucial. Candidates should be asked if they have the time and are willing to commit to being an "active" member of the Board of Elections, a member who will commit to this necessary work, research, and planning needed for meetings, issues and votes.

The Board serves all citizens of Luzerne County, citizens from all political affiliations. There is no place for partisanship on the Board of Elections.

As Chair of the Board, I, personally, have made the following commitments in my service on the Board to the other Board members and to all citizens of Luzerne County:

1. A commitment to fair, impartial, and accurate elections
2. Service on the Board through the lens of non-partisanship
3. Encouragement of a philosophy of continued improvement and transparency
4. Examining the facts of any matter presented and following the Pennsylvania Election Laws/PA Dept. of State Guidance in making informed decisions

I have asked the other Board members to let me know (at anytime) if they think I am not living up to this bar that I have set for myself.

I believe that these are ideals that the citizens of Luzerne County expect Election Board members to emulate and aspire to in service as a Board of Elections member.

Respectfully,

Denise Williams
Chair, Luzerne County Board of Elections

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