

LUZERNE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

AND REGISTRATIONS MEETING

MINUTES January 27, 2022

CALL TO ORDER 5:08 PM

EXECUTIVE SESSION

January 21, 2022, 1:00-1:25 PM the Board and outside counsel to discuss litigation; no deliberations took place

January 24, 2022 1:00-1:57 PM to discuss potential litigation; no deliberations took place

PLEDGE OF ALLIGENCE

ROLL CALL

Audrey Serniak here, Patrick Castellani here, Denise Williams here

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve Audrey Serniak 2nd Patrick Castellani, unanimous

PUBLIC COMMENTS (4 minutes)

Mark Rabo, Hazleton-would like to see a policy adopted as to what is expected of the voters using the drop boxes; it should be posted on the website in Spanish, also; parking is an issue at the Ward 2 Hazleton polling place; the form used to allow someone to drop off a ballot for another person does not have to be notarized

Walter Griffith-the Bureau has been very helpful in assisting the verification of tax collectors

MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of January 12, 202 made by Patrick Castellani 2nd Audrey Serniak, unanimous

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Paula Radick notified Election IQ that we would not ratify the contract.

Motion to not ratify the contract with Election IQ made by Audrey Serniak 2nd Patrick Castellani; Audrey Serniak yes, Patrick Castellani yes; Denise Williams no; 2 yes, 1 no, motion carries

BUREAU OF ELECTIONS REPORT

Poll worker training letter status-Mike Susek reported that the Bureau is inputting poll worker information into the same data base used to communicate with workers; since there will be a letter sent to poll workers advising them of elections and training available, he suggested that be

included; the Board agreed

Licensing Bureau relocation status-Angela Gavlick advised that the goal is mid-February

Voters not in the poll book-Eryn Harvey advised that the Department of State investigated; about half the names were in the books so possibly poll worker error; the other half's status changed before the election, possibly they were canceled

Special Election-Mike Susek said the Bureau is still confirming polling places, reaching out to poll workers and Dominion; the ballot will come from the Department of State by March 6, 2022; some ballot prep work can be started before that;there will be a drop box.

Ward 2 Lackawanna College has responded as maybe and he will follow up; ;ogic and accuracy must be conducted; wants ballots in public's hands week of March 21, 2022; Bureau employees will work evenings and weekends as needed.

Drop boxes for the special election-should there be more than one? The city hall location has been confirmed; Mark Rabo has suggestions for an additional box; Audrey Serniak thought there may be confusion for voters if there are additional boxes for the special election which are then pulled for the primary; Patrick Castellani said we should be consistent for all elections.

Consultant for the website-not in the budget; the current website has been updated with 2022 election information.

Status for directives 7 & 9-tabled until after the primary.

Mail in/absentee ballots-the Bureau is working with purchasing on the bids received; Denise Williams asked if there could be ballot tracking; Mike Susek says the ballot tracking available is not as robust as package tracking; the SURE system tracks when the ballot was mailed to the voter and when it was received at the Bureau.

Mail in/absentee ballot application mailing-about 54,000 pieces need to be mailed by February 7, 2022.

Certification of political parties for Luzerne County-determines which parties can nominate candidates (Libertarian, Green, Democratic and Republican) and needs to be submitted to the Department of State by February 15,2022.

The Election Group report-A report was not part of the contract; Mike Susek can do a report; Patrick Castellani suggested that we find out the consultant's cost to do it.

Races and questions for the primary-amendments to the state constitution; governor, Lt. Governor, house representatives; state reps, Democratic committee seats; Pittston will have ballot questions.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS REPORT

Meeting dates for 2022:

January 12, 2022 (already held) (Thursday) January 27, 2022

February 9, 2022 February 23, 2022

March 9, 2022 March 23, 2022

April 27, 2022

May 11, 2022

June 22, 2022

July 20, 2022

August 10, 2022 August 24, 2022

September 7, 2022 September 21, 2022

(Monday) October 17, 2022 October 26, 2022

December 14, 2022

Quorum-Paula Radick gave the opinion that with the 2 vacancies, 2 members are a quorum; a member of the opposing party is not needed for a quorum.

Write in candidate accumulation process-Denise Williams advised there is no process for accumulating names; there is nothing on our website; it is not mandatory to offer to accumulate names, it's done as a courtesy; some counties do it and have forms on their websites, others do not; the election code allows a candidate to accumulate by petitioning the courts within 5 days after certification.

Paula Radick advised that the accumulation process comes from old case law. If the Board wants to do this we should have a form and it should be listed on the website.

Audrey Serniak said the 'courtesy lists' were never complete, there were always additional versions of names.

Denise Williams said that many write in candidates did not have enough votes to effect the outcome and could have been counted in the 'scattered' category.

Patrick Castellani said he has a problem with interpreting gray areas.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (4 minutes)

Mark Rabo-regarding Ward 2 in Hazleton, Lackawanna College leases parking for students, there are only 5-6 off street parking spaces, he suggests going back to Hazleton Apartments; a second drop box should be for all elections; suggests a video demonstrating filling out a mail in ballot, also in Spanish, be posted on the website; doesn't believe the court intended counties cumulate.

Walter Griffith-not happy that there are only 3 board members; said board members can serve until their replacements are appointed; we need an opinion on this. Campaign finance reports are due Monday, there should be something on the website allowing to do this electronically.

Applications for mail in ballots can be mailed February 14,2022. Regarding the polling places, political signs should no be posted on private property, they should be on the road; the Board needs to issue a declaration. Perhaps input from the political parties should be sought regarding cumulation.

Mike Susek-the Bureau is opened; it's best if people phone first but if they come in, security will let the Bureau know they are there.

Denise Williams-she has inquired of Council regarding Board appointments; they do not have to declare a vacancy if terms expire and they have 60 days to appoint.

Walter Griffith believes the 2 members are still on the Board unless they submitted a letter of resignation.

The Office of Law needs to research this.

Written question from Valdez-Is the Board aware of any complaints of minorities unable to vote?

The Board is not aware of any problems in this area.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Made by Patrick Castellani 2nd Audrey Serniak, unanimous

NEXT MEETING

February 9, 2022 at 5 PM

ADJOURNED 6:58 PM