

LUZERNE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
AND REGISTRATIONS MEETING  
MINUTES APRIL 21, 2021

Call to order 5:01 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call-Kathy Roth here, Richard Nardone here, , Audrey Serniak here, Missy Thomas here

Approval of Agenda

Interviews for Chair moved up to after the Board report  
Motion to accept Kathy Roth 2<sup>nd</sup> Audrey Serniak; approved

Minutes

Motion to approved April 14, 2021 Kathy Roth 2<sup>nd</sup> Rick Nardone; approved unanimously

Open Discussion for the Board

Missy Thomas received a phone call regarding drop boxes and if locatons were voted on and an email asking if the same machines used in the last election will be used this time-yes the same machines will be used

Rick Nardone discussed the drop boxes with Bob Morgan; there is a box at Penn Place and 3 additional boxes; Rick questioned if this was a management decision. Romilda Crocamo said the Board voted on the 3 boxes and their locations at the last meeting; this can be revisited to change the number of boxes and the locations. No final precedent was set. Missy Thomas asked about procedures; Bob Morgan advised they boxes would be emptied once a day by two sheriffs deputies; Romilda Crocamo stated the boxes would be inside and there would be security.

Public Comment (4 minutes)

Walter Griffith, Trucksville-IT is muting the room except for public comments. This is a violation of the Sunshine Law because people have the right to call-out violations during the meeting. The agenda is incomplete as there are no draft of minutes or reports attached. Regarding the drop boxes, who will watch to make sure that person is depositing their own ballot or has the affidavit for any additional ballots. Believes that drop boxes shouldn't be in city halls because candidates for office are working there; feels it is a conflict.

Mark Rabo, Hazleton-He has problems with the location of the drop boxes . Thanked Rick Nardone for bringing up his concerns. Understand that security measures can't be disclosed but he would like neutral locations (fair playing field) and better surveillance.

Sheila Saidman, Kingston Borough-She is thrilled with the drop boxes and would like more. Feels they are needed because of the slow mail. She doesn't see a conflict in the locations being in city halls.

Claudia Glennan, Salem Township-The drop boxes were put in before Covid to facilitate getting the ballots in. There were no drop boxes in the post office; the mail arrangements were to expand accessibility for voting. Feels security cameras are adequate.

Brian Shiner, Kingston Borough-Drop boxes were not in the post office; the sheriff deputies picked up the mail. His concern is that the drop box discussion was not on the agenda and should have had public comments; says the vote was invalid. The candidate interviews listed on the agenda require public comments.

Stephen J. Urban, Wilkes-Barre City-echoes sentiments regarding drop boxes: he doesn't like that they're in city halls; there should be consistent hours they are available. The Board has Title 25, the Board has powers we don't know we have; management doesn't tell the Board what to do, the Board tells management what to do. Advised the Board to read the law and not to let management dictate to us. The Board should determine the chain of custody of the ballots, can get our own clerk, access to SURE, budget, adjudicating the vote. Don't be taken advantage of by management.

Sheila Saidman-Cautioned the Board that Romilda Crocamo works for the county, not the manager. The Board should be clear about their powers. It is not as easy as Mr. Urban says.

Mark Rabo-Sorry he mis-spoke about the drop boxes being in the post office.

Romilda Crocamo-On the issue of the interviews, the updated agenda was not posted so the Board will have to amend the agenda to have public comments after the interviews

The Board went into executive session at 5:38 PM and returned at 6:15 PM.

Romilda Crocamo announced that during the executive session the Board discussed personnel and confidential matters; there were no deliberations. We would now proceed with the interviews for Chair, public comment and the vote.

Interviews for Chair Position-Rick Nardone conducted the interviews

John Bingham

1. Understands position is voluntary with no compensation-Correct
2. Work in a non-partisan manner-the job is the cornerstone of a constitutional republic
3. Learn the county codes, etc. and is willing to do the research-Absolutely, job # 1
4. Will he have the available time? Yes, has flexibility
5. Familiar with Robert's Rules of Order-member of fraternal organization and has the book
6. Comfortable responding to the press? Yes
7. Any problems taking the oath-No objections

Mr. Bingham focused on his more recent job history on his resume

His sales management skills would transition from a private to public position. He worked with diverse sales groups and leadership positions that required broad skills

Has taken leadership 2 day seminars and 8 week course

Trevor Kacedon

1. Volunteer position-Yes
2. Conduct himself in a non-partisan manner-Yes, absolutely
3. Do the research-Yes
4. Time available-Yes
5. Robert's Rules of Order-Has served on boards so is familiar with them
6. Public and press-Has experience
7. Oath-OK with taking the oath

Current positions concerned with farming throughout the world and bringing products to market; brought in to significantly change the process of bringing products to market; it was a team effort but he led by giving objectives and tools needed. He came to PA from NJ and Utah; the company plant is in Pittston.

Tracey (Fonzo)

1. Understands volunteer position-Yes
2. Non-partisan-Understands
3. Do the research-Yes
4. Has the time?-Has time
5. Robert's Rules of Order-Very familiar with them, has used them in meetings
6. Public speaking and the press-Comfortable, part of her current job
7. Oath-OK

Employee of leasing company; primary objective is to rent apartments; uses different platforms to obtain contacts. She sets goals for herself and seeks to meet them. Prior job was as a manager of a nursing company with 40 employees, 20% part time, 80% full time, and 80 clients. To resolve conflicts she would speak with all parties and use training and possibly change the assignment; business grew by 20 employees and 35 clients over 9 years

Denise Williams

1. Volunteer position-Absolutely
2. Conduct herself in a non-partisan manner-Yes, primary bar to set and expects to be called-out if she isn't; party affiliation put aside while doing the job
3. Do the research-She has read the bylaws, charter and administrative codes, election code
4. Time available-
5. Robert's Rules of Order-Has been researching and would like guidance until she is up to speed
6. Public speaking and the press-Doesn't seek it out but comfortable with it; would not overreach; would seek guidance regarding Sunshine Law and what could be said
7. Oath-Absolutely

Employment dealing with planning groups and parents; example of a conflict was a controversy that a parent had with the curriculum, had a conversation that led to understanding; worked with Fair Districts because she sees gerrymandering as a big contributor to political divisiveness; transparency and non-partisanship are very important; regarding criticism and public comments the public has the right to ask questions and the Board needs to listen and address concerns; the law must be followed; the agenda needs to be accurate.

Break requested by Audrey Serniak; 7:04-7:10PM

## Public Comments on Candidate Interviews

Mark Rabo-interesting group of candidates; question Romilda Crocamo whether the last candidate could serve under the state ethics act; the candidate has been partisan in her criticism; the rest of the candidates are all interesting and would serve well

Romilda Crocamo responded that the Office of Law does not represent the State Ethics Commission; Denise Williams would be cured if she resigned her leadership position in Fair Districts

Brian Shiner-agrees with Mark Rabo on Denise Williams; she is too politically active and too partisan; not appropriate

Denise Williams responded that she would resign her position with Fair Districts if necessary; pointed out that other Board members have been involved with Fair Districts and Represent Us

Walter Griffith-Thanked Rick Nardone for doing a great job interviewing the candidates but he didn't give Tracey Fonzo's last name, good candidate; John Bingham is hands above the others; Trevor has excellent qualifications; while others have been active he finds Denise Williams's trying to shut down public comments disconcerting ; has cautioning concerns

Sheila Saidman-she is a member of Fair Districts and sits on County Council; take Denise Williams at her word; never heard that she wanted to shut down public comments; has been critical in comments; outstanding people willing to give back

Claudia Glennan-echoed what Sheila said; a lot of people can be politically involved; Rick Nardone did an impressive job; Fair District non-partisan

Stephen J. Urban-Rick Nardone did a great job with the interviews; has reservations about Denise Williams; hopes for a fresh start for the Board; need to partner-up with management; need a more neutral Chair than Ms. Williams, thinks John Bingham the best candidate

Audrey Serniak-pointed out that members have served as party committee persons (herself and Keith Gould); she is a member of Fair Districts which is a non-partisan organization; the comments Denise Williams wanted to shut down were not public comments but the comment section for members of council; council members come before the Board as members of the public; issue is whether you can put your partisanship aside to serve on the Board

Romilda Crocamo announced that Maureen Pascal also applied but could not be considered due to her service as a poll worker (paid position) and her employment with Misericordia University (county contracts)

## Nominations Opened

Denise Williams was nominated by Rick Nardone and Audrey Serniak

There were no other nominations

## Nominations Closed

Motion to close nominations by Rick Nardone 2<sup>nd</sup> Kathy Roth

Roll call: Kathy Roth aye, Rick Nardone aye, Audrey Serniak yae, Missy Thomas aye

## Chair Appointment

Motion to name Denise Williams chair made by Rick Nardone 2<sup>nd</sup> Missy Thomas

Roll call: Kathy Roth aye, Rick Nardone aye, Audrey Serniak aye, Missy Thomas aye

There were no Solicitor, Bureau or Board reports

The question of whether or not to hold an election for DA in November will be on the next agenda

Denise Williams thanked the Board, considers it a privilege and honor and promised to serve all of the citizens of Luzerne County. She will resign her position with Fair Districts if necessary because she doesn't want any conflicts. Thanked all who applied, anyone of them would be a good choice.

Next Meeting will be held virtually April 28, 2021 at 5PM

Motion to Adjourn Rick Nardone 2<sup>nd</sup> Kathy Roth

Missy Thomas said Rick did a great job; all the candidates were great; told Denise Williams we will make it easy

Adjourned 7:38 PM