

LUZERNE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATIONS MEETING MINUTES

LUZERNE COUNTY COURTHOUSE COUNCIL ROOM

JULY 12, 2023

CALL TO ORDER 5:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

ROLL CALL

Alyssa Fusaro yes, Jim Mangan yes, Dan Schramm yes, Audrey Serniak yes, Denise Williams yes

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Alyssa Fusaro moved to remove item #11 because Board needs legal opinion from the Office of Law and possibly an outside attorney as to whether or not the referendum is making a structural change to the charter

Attorney Paula Radick said she was going to suggest the item be removed so that the Office of Law could receive information and possible changes from Council's attorney

2nd Jim Mangan

Dan Schramm yes, Audrey Serniak yes, Alyssa Fusaro yes, Jim Mangan yes

Denise Williams yes; unanimous

Alyssa Fusaro moved to accept the amended agenda 2nd Jim Mangan, unanimous PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes)

Linda Joseph, Wilkes Barre City-whether or not to count write in votes without the shaded circle has been inconsistent due to inconsistent laws and legal advice; the Board didn't count for this primary; court opinions have said that writing in a name indicates intent; Board has discretion; these votes should count

Walter Griffith, Trucksville, County Controller-the Board needs to see a budget for the Election Integrity Grant for review and suggestions; perhaps the electronic poll books can be financed through the grant; campaign finance reports website is active; heavy lift and a work in progress, thanked Bureau and Management for all their hard work; commended Board for removing referendum from the agenda

Alyssa Fusaro thanked Walter Griffith and Bureau for all their work

Romilda Crocamo, West Hazleton, County Manager-thanked Walter Griffith for his help with the campaign finance reports, worked as a team; will identify the projects using the EIG and make them public on the website; the production of the EIG has been handed off to the person responsible for writing the county's grants; regarding the operation procedures and after discussions with DA Sanguedolce she has reached out to Attorney Timothy Gates who has experience in these matters and is in the process of contracting with him to produce the manual, there is money in the budget for an outside consultant;

regarding the memorandum, she has a job to do and will do it and doesn't need a memorandum to make her do the job; she will work with everyone; declines to sign it; giving us her word

Audrey Serniak-thanked Emily Cook who she knows did a lot of work on a procedure manual for the Bureau

Allen Heninger, Dallas Township, Judge of Elections-the green handbook should be given at training instead of being placed in the judge's bag so that it can be reviewed; write in votes with unshaded dots should be counted; use the ballot marking devices to cut down on adjudication work; paper ballots at the polls cause a lot of problems

Robin Kochin, Dallas Township-hopeful that spirit of teamwork will lead to a successful election; would like to know how much of the EIG is used for voter role clean up; Rimbeck is controversial, what services did they provide; the DA report handed everything back to the Board, Bureau and Management; what training for staff has been implemented; how have the workers been bolstered, will the written procedures be followed

Alyssa Fusaro-the \$3 million payment to Rimbeck from the EIG was for the Agilis mail sorter

Anita Davis, Plains Township-the referendum question if not phrased properly could be misleading; one party would appoint all Board members; noted all the off the wall and crazy accusations made during the paper problem election; people working for our good should not be threatened; questioned must be framed in an unbiased manner

Karen Pieta, Wilkes Barre City-when will the referendum be discussed

Denise Williams-it will have to be put back on the agenda, maybe next meeting

Several emails regarding the referendum were received with requests to read to the meeting; Paula Radick advised holding them until the question is discussed

## MINUTES

Jim Mangan moved to approved the minutes from May 3, 2023 2nd Alyssa Fusaro, unanimous

Denise Williams moved to amend and approve the minutes from May 16, 2023 (election);

May 19-June 5, 2023 (adjudication) under no date 97 the vote was 4 yes and 1 no; under undelivered ballots 168 should say 'returned mail in ballot with in undelivered ballot pile'

2nd Jim Mangan, unanimous

Denise Williams moved to amend and approve the minutes for June 5, 2023 header should say ' certification of the election' with a date of June 5, 2023 and time 100 PM, delete next meeting label 2nd Jim Mangan, unanimous

## ITEMS

### #1 Election Integrity Grant

Denise Williams asked if the locks to the warehouse were going to be updated

Emily Cook advised that project has been delayed because it is a major overhaul and will be

done in September; the locks were changed with the recent change in Bureau leadership; Bureau leadership and the Sheriff's Department have keys, Buildings and Grounds do not

Denise Williams asked if the Board would have to sign the EIG paperwork\

Emily Cook advised that the application is due August 1-15, 2023 and the Bureau would get back to us

## #2 Electronic Poll Book RFPs

Emily Cook advised the bids close on July 17th; the RFPs are posted and we will be able to review everything

Alyssa Fusaro advised Title 25 requires the Board to approve large purchases

## #3 Campaign Finance Reports

Most of this has been discussed

Alyssa Fusaro-amount of work involved is unbelievable and got a bit messy at times; would like it put on the agenda that the fines collected go to the treasurer's office and not be collected by the Bureau

Paula Radick-money should go to the treasurer, Bureau should not be collecting money; ; they should go to the treasurer and bring the receipt to the Bureau

Denise Williams-reports have to be up to date for candidates to receive certification to be on the ballot  
Jim Mangan-this should be part of the SOPs being produced

Emily Cook-working to overhaul the previous systems; working on a database that can be maintained and is searchable; streamlining process,; training for candidates and employees

Jim Mangan-maybe work with the party chairs

## #4 Election Board Clerk

Jen Pecora-named Eryn Harvey as her designee

Alyssa Fusaro-reminded everyone that per Title 25, the Board names their own clerk #5 Bureau Leadership Training

Cross training for leadership is needed in case someone is not available

Emily Cook-big need; refusing training has been an issue; no one is above training

Romilda Crocamo-agrees there needs to be back up; this needs to occur countywide and will be working with Tim Gates on this; people have been put on notice that they can't back out of commitments at the last minute

## #6 Meeting Time Change to 6 PM

Both the Bureau and Sheriff are ok with this

Alyssa Fusaro moved to change the Board of Elections meeting start time from 5 PM to 6 PM

2nd Jim Mangan

Audrey Serniak yes, Alyssa Fusaro yes, Jim Mangan yes, Dan Schramm yes,

Denise Williams yes, unanimous

## #7 Memorandum of Understanding

Romilda Crocamo says there is no need for the memorandum; her word is good enough

Alyssa Fusaro-give her time to follow through on her promises

#### #8 Write in Votes with Unshaded Circles

Denise Williams-court opinion says to count

Audrey Serniak-court says they are to count

Alyssa Fusaro-Title 25 says not to count but court give benefit to the voter

Paula Radick-should follow court orders for Luzerne County unless something changes in the future

Jim Mangan-if they take the time to write in a name, the vote was intended

Denise Williams-need to set the filters to review all under votes

Denise Williams moved that going forward the Board will count all write in votes with unshaded circles  
2nd Jim Mangan

Alyssa Fusaro yes, Jim Mangan yes, Dan Schramm yes, Audrey Serniak yes,

Denise Williams yes, unanimous

#### #9 Government Employees and Candidates on the Ballot as Poll Workers

Denise Williams-no candidates who were on the ballot worked the polls; there were a few people who were employees or elected officials who worked; there is a question on the poll worker application

Jen Pecora-we could communicate with municipalities with lists of poll workers to check if people are appointed or elected or employed; there are always last minute changes to poll workers

Alyssa Fusaro-admins could have a check list of things to review with poll workers

Emily Cook-a centralized data base of poll workers has been created;that process is ongoing; could add that question to the process

Jen Pecora-law prevents some employees from working the polls Paula Radick-this has been discussed in the past

Denise Williams-contacting the municipalities may be too much work

#### #10 Written Standard for Recruitment of Poll Workers

This was covered; an SOP will be done as part of the written standard and procedures being done

Denise Williams-this should eliminate ad hoc decisions and provide consistency and transparency

#### #11 Charter Amendment Referendum

Removed from the agenda

#### #12 SOP for Stocking and Sealing Voting Machines

#### #13 SOP for 2% Audit Process

#### #14 SOP for Chain of Custody, Sealing and Sealing Card for Red Bags

#### #15 SOP for Bureau Leadership's Precanvassing Instructions to Workers

Denise Williams-Board had to take the lead in instructing workers during precanvassing; felt as if this was overstepping

Alyssa Fusaro asked that these all be included in the written procedures being created PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes)

Linda Joseph, Wilkes Barre City-county council referendum totally irresponsible, need stability, consistency and knowledge; county council members not there observing, Board not paid and doesn't even receive a lunch stipend; encouraged to vote no; scattering-understands the process but thinks all write in should appear

Audrey Serniak-explained that with our current system it has always been impossible to list all the write in names; they system doesn't do this for the in person votes; prior to this procedure the Board would start listing names and get half way into the review and realize that we wouldn't be able to finish in time, we would then start scattering; an IT member was able to come up with a process to do a statistical analysis to determine which races could be counted as scattered without effecting the outcome; have to be efficient; hoping that the updates to the voting machines will allow for listing all write in votes

Emily Cook-system uses an image of the ballots; unable to pull a report with names

Walter Griffith-need to make it clear to voters whether the BMDs will be used or paper ballots for the upcoming election; people didn't file campaign finance forms because they didn't realize they had to, need more outreach; campaign finance is difficult to understand

Robin Kochin-encouraged that management and Bureau is here in person; a lot of good discussion; Judicial Watch lawsuit report on voter roll clean up was due June 30th, besides death

and failure to vote what are other reasons for being removed from the rolls; ERIC is still being used and it is ineffective; Fractal Technology has full visibility

Alyssa Fusaro-many reasons for people coming off; the Bureau is doing its job Audrey Serniak-report only once a year but this is an ongoing process

Emily Cook-the process is ongoing; State uses ERIC

Allen Heninger, Dallas Township-Bureau should consider a post election debriefing for JoEs

(Emily Cook-questionnaire will be going out next week); finding poll workers is not an easy job, need legislature to get involved to increase the pool of available workers; public holiday, increased pay, pay tax exempt

Jen Pecora-will be sending out a post election debriefing

Susan Bartholomew Palmer, Wilkes Barre-questioned missing unused ballots in the November election, number of ballots provided did not match the number on the judge's checklist

Emily Cook-typo on judge's checklist; unused ballots are destroyed

Denise Williams-all were reconciled; Board takes the reconciliation process seriously

## Emails

Denise Williams-not comfortable not reading the emails submitted because other people have commented on the referendum and doesn't want them to be forgotten when this issue comes up

Lisa Napersky, Fairview Township-opposes referendum changing the Board of Election; 3 separate questions should be presented as 3 separate questions

Jay Notartomaso, West Wyoming-opposes, the question contains multiple issues and needs to be presented that way, wording is confusing and inaccurate

Andrea Glod, Wilkes Barre-opposes referendum; increases turnover in Board when that is a problem; works against free and fair elections

Michael Mirabito, Forty Fort-Council does not have the right to impose its own rule over the Board of Elections; introduces partisanship into election process

Karen Wagner, Mountain Top-opposes; feels that large amendment hides attempt to control the Board; too much money spent on legal challenges as it is

Katarina Gereda, Kingston-question is too long and too confusing; 3 separate questions, aspects go beyond the main question

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Alyssa Fusaro 2nd Dan Schramm, unanimous ADJOURNED 7:28 PM