

LUZERNE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AND REGISTRATIONS MEETING
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

CALL TO ORDER 5:23 PM

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Denise Williams announced an executive session was held on August 30, 2021 10:00-10:43 AM to discuss litigation; there were no deliberations and no votes were taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLIGENCE

ROLL CALL

Richard Nardone present virtually, Missy Thomas absent, Audrey Serniak present, Kathy Roth, , absent, Denise Williams present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve Rick Nardone 2nd Audrey Serniak, unanimous, motion carries

PUBLIC COMMENTS (4 minutes)

Walter Griffith-Concerned that people will drop off ballots without affidavits or harvest ballots.. Will watchers be allowed at drop box locations? (Denise Williams advised will check on this.)

Jess Morgan-Why doesn't the Board know if watches are legal.

Justin Behrens (Republican Party Chairman)-Republican party's stance is that we don't need drop boxes and we do need to prevent ballot harvesting.

Steve Urban-Regarding the Election Group, how involved will they be? It is up to the Board to say if they are needed and to set the conduct of the election; the executive branch is out of their lane. Rick Nardone responded that his understanding is the manager has a right to hire the consultant; we can accept or reject what the consultant suggests; he has no objections to listening to anybody or everybody; not abdicating responsibilities. Steve Urban reminded everyone that violating the election code is a misdemeanor offense.

Allen Rinkavage-Will the Board and Bureau be making the decisions? Denise Williams-yes,the consulting group will make recommendations and the Board will decide.

MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes from August 25, 2021 Rick Nardone 2nd Audrey Serniak, unanimous motion carries.

BUREAU OF ELECTIONS REPORT

Bob Morgan reported that American Security Cabinets will be providing the ballot drop boxes; the change is due to a delivery timing issue.

Pittston Library and Hazleton City Hall are two locations; additional locations will be determined after site surveys are completed.

Our EMA system can be used for outgoing communications to polling places; the Bureau is investigating cost effective two-way communication options which are compatible with county systems.

Pollworker training will be held September 27th through the week of October 25th; there will be more hands-on training with multiple machines available and a review of the judge's bag; two levels will be held, one for workers with 0-5 years experience and one for those with more than 5 years; people are encouraged to sign up early.

Denise Williams suggested that locations and hours of drop box availability be posted. She did a tally of pollworkers and training in Luzerne County and is concerned with the low turnout:

There were 186 polls.

60 polls had constables.

There were 836 total poll workers (not including constables).

253 Pollworkers attended training.

1 constable also attended a training.

583 Pollworkers did not attend a training

83 Judges of Election attended, 101 didn't

48 Majority Inspectors attended, 121 didn't

33 Minority Inspectors attended, 125 didn't

57 Machine Operators attended, 147 didn't

28 Clerks attended, 84 didn't

40 attended a training and did not work a poll.

Bob Morgan reviewed some of the requirements for pollworkers: apply and be a registered voter in Luzerne County; attend training; Judges can recruit people at the last minute to work and the Bureau can do last minute training; Judges are encouraged to notify the Bureau of workers recruited late in the process.

The Bureau will meet the September 30th deadline for written procedures and practices.

CONSULTANT UPDATE

Romilda Crocarno introduced Jennifer Morrell and The Election Group. She has hired them to consult with the Bureau and Board. They will offer a different perspective and information about techniques that have worked elsewhere. There was a productive meeting with Dave Parsnik, Bob Morgan, Eryn Harvey, and Paul Radick. The Board and Bureau will continue to make all decisions.

Jennifer Morrell advised that the Group will not touch equipment and ballots or have unaccompanied access to any facilities. She has 12 years election and audit experience and her partner, Noah Praetz has 20+ years experience. Goal is to build excellence into the future. Noah Praetz highlighted the continuing complexity of elections.

Romilda Crocamo advised there would be bi-weekly and then weekly updates.

Rick Nardone asked for 3 issues where they have helped and for goals.

Jennifer Morrell says they have worked with under resourced and understaffed offices in creating checklists and written procedures. They have also focused on chains of custody and ballot counting, to enhance the process and develop evidence that everything was handled properly. Noah Praetz added that they work with stakeholders to counter skepticism and insure commitments to election legitimacy. Jennifer Morell said they would be onsite for the next couple of months and would offer connections with resources and suggestions for future improvement. She would be working with Bob Morgan in handling day to day challenges.

Romilda Crocamo cautioned that the Sunshine Law prohibits 3 or more Board members from talking with the consultant at the same time.

Denise Williams asked about their familiarity with Dominion and PA specifically. Jennifer Morrell said they are very familiar with Dominion and she has worked with the PA Department of State on audits and has provided testimony at state hearings.

Chat questions-The Election Group has worked with Philadelphia and Delaware County. Romilda Crocamo will provide the Election Inquiry's report and the complaint spreadsheet to Jennifer Morrell. There are detailed guidelines for drop boxes on The Election Group's website.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Paula Radick advised that there is nothing further on the DA's election complaints investigation.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS REPORT

A discussion and vote on the locations for drop boxes is tabled until the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (4 minutes)

Jess Morgan-Sorry the consultants got off; she wanted to ask them why people in Fulton County didn't want to hire them and why they wanted the Arizona audit to stop.

Claudia Glennan, Salem Twp-Has been seeing a lot of campaign signs; wants to know why they are up on public right-of-ways more than 30 days before the election.

Bob Morgan said that communities regulate the signs and that PennDOT will remove signs in the medians if they prevent maintenance.

Walter Griffith-The election process allows voters to request ballots earlier than 30 days prior to

the election so campaigning should be allowed earlier than 30 days; in Luzerne County there is a lot of ground to cover. The consultants should have been given the Election Inquiry's report prior to hiring so that they could be able to say what they could do for us. Need to know how these ballot drop boxes will be watched. Appreciates all of the Board's work but has concerns about the consultants. Rick Nardone stated that the consultants do not have any power or authority to decide; they can only advise. No one will dictate to the Board as to decisions being made.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be September 29, 2021 at 5 PM. It will be a hybrid meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Rick Nardone 2nd Audrey Serniak unanimous motion carries

ADJOURNED 6:56 PM