

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order

Chairwoman Rennie called the meeting to order at 4:06pm.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chairwoman Mary Rennie; Vice-Chairwoman Ellen Schauerman; Carl Anderson III; Scott Rastetter

Also Present: Douglas R. Smith; Nicole Inan; Brian Shank; Andre Horton

Hearing of the Public

Freda Tepfer

Ms. Shelly Rhoades, City of Erie -Talked on accessibility. Ms. Rhoades is legally blind, and unable to see the ballot in any way. Previously she voted in Corry with little to no difficulty. She has moved to Erie (voting at Bethel Baptist), and felt that there was not an accessible option given for a private vote. She explained that when she went to vote, she signed in but then at the time for voting, her ride/her mother was asked by the Judge of Elections if she was intending to help Ms. Rhoades vote, handed her the printed ballot and told her how to fill out the circles. There was no discussion of a tablet or any other means of accessible voting. Ms. Rhoades expressed her concerns: Firstly, she enjoys a private vote; she doesn't want to share it, even with her mother. She voiced it is a fundamental right. Secondly, there was not a private location to vote when having to vote in this manner. She stated that, although they tried to keep conversation to a whisper, there were other individuals in the surrounding area that could easily overhear. She expressed that she should not have to ask for the tablet and headphones, it should be ready and offered.

Chairwoman Rennie requested Ms. Rhoades leave her personal contact information, thanked her for her comments, and ensured further follow-up.

Ms. Tepfer, City of Erie - Recruited to fill a Judge of Elections position for 5W-7D. She voiced that she was grateful for the machine operation and the inspector both being experienced, and the tips that she received from her out-going Judge of Elections on setting up early, and things she did ahead of time. She also announced that she will be the Judge of Elections in her voting district in May. She said that, having gone through the process of opening and close the polls, taking seals off, filling out forms, and recording seal numbers, that there is no way for a Judge of Elections to be unaware of the tablet - it is part of the

process. She expressed that, at her location, they had two people utilize the tablet - one with an intellectual disability and a coworker that was having difficulty filling out the ballot. She echoed Ms. Rhoades comments that it should be easy to use accessible equipment. Ms. Tepfer thanked the staff for their work and the opportunity to learn.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

None

Election Report

Mr. Smith reported that Erie County started slowly on Election Day. Contributing to that was likely the 19,959 mail-in/absntee ballots turned in by voters. Turnout was 39%, when those numbers combine with 48,958 Election Day Ballots.

Counting Group	Ballots	Voters	Reg. Voters	Turnout
Election Day	48,958	48,958		27.63%
Mail-in	19,959	19,595		11.26%
Provisional	191	191		.11%
Total	69,108	69,108	177,195	39.00%

Problems on Election Day were generally small, though several were significant enough to mention:

- Ballots at 6-12 (Grover Cleveland School) would not scan when the polls opened. Workers used the emergency ballot box until the problem was solved around 9am. Warehouse Manager Czerpak opened a new pack of ballots and they scanned. We counted the un-scanned ballots by hand at the Courthouse.
- Warehouse Manager Czerpak replaced a scanner at Millcreek 13. A sensor became clouded with material.

Sheriffs were called to remove a Machine Operator from Millcreek 4. The individual refused to remove political clothing after a complaint. Mrs. Rennie spoke with him for 15 minutes, showed him the statute, but he refused to remove his hat or leave. Millcreek Police escorted him out. We filed no charges.

Election Evening went well, except that Judges in Springfield and Erie 5-8 did not bring back their memory cards from the precinct scanner. Erie 4-7 arrived last, sometime after 10:30pm. There was a complaint that Erie 6-9 closed early, but no voters were disenfranchised. There will be follow-up with judges and continued emphasis of the fundamentals at training.

Pre-Canvassing process was smooth. The team of 10 volunteers (about half served before) from the community opened 15,000 ballots on Election Day and the remaining 4354 on November 3.

Printing Costs:

Date	Description	Amount
10/27/2021	Ballot Mailings-Process Cost	\$ 24,772.00
10/5/2021	Instruction Sheets for Ballot Mailing	\$ 851.00
10/4/2021	Ballots - Election Day, Mail-In, Absentee	\$ 74,902.00
9/16/2021	Test Deck	\$ 1,534.00
9/9/2021	Blank Ballot Stock	\$ 281.00
9/9/2021	Envelopes for Fall 2021 Election Ballot Mailing	\$ 6,183.00
		\$ 108,523.00
	10-27-21 Postage	\$ 26,530.36
		\$ 135,053.36

Costs for the spring were \$147,515 for 16,000 larger ballots.

Upcoming areas of interest include a mail-sorting machine from Fluance. Display in December. Also Electronic Poll Books for future consideration.

The entire Department did an outstanding job this cycle:

Nicole Inan- Deputy

Jill Pennsy-Mrs. Awesome

Warehouse-James Czerpak, Manager

Per Diem assistants: Joe Villella, Richard Fullerton and John Skrzypczak

Voter Registration –Tonia Fernandez, Manager

Amy Hasabnis, Sue Sheffield, Angela Watson, Abby Williams

Per Diem Assistants: Pam Arnold, Richelle Denning, Randall Sutter

Special Thanks to Chairwoman Rennie, Vice Chair Schauerman, Scott Rastetter and Carl Anderson III of the Erie County Election Board.

Clerk of Elections**Questions and Comments from the Board**

Mr. Anderson thanked the Board for their work and professionalism in this process. He emphasized the importance of the work that the Election Board does in a fair and impartial manner. He complimented the staff and the ability to get so much done in such a limited amount of time; he commented on the commitment of the staff in the process. Mr. Anderson also commented on the citizens to be heard comments of Ms. Rhoades, stating that everyone should have a proper experience when they vote. He expressed that when choosing this equipment, Council made sure to specifically choose machines with accessibility options. He apologized for her experience, and thanked her for bringing it to the Board's attention.

Chairwoman Rennie inquired to the location of the proposed equipment. Mr. Smith explained that the equipment would essentially be small enough to be housed directly in the Registration Office. It is an 8ft x 3ft footprint, and expect to have a demo to ensure its capabilities and special requirements.

Chairwoman Rennie also extended her gratitude to the election staff, registration, council staff, etc. Chairwoman Rennie voiced that the past few

elections have set our staff above being "grace under pressure." She commented on what brings people out to vote is confidence in the process, and in Erie County, they can because of exemplary staff, poll workers, and alike.

**Certification of Results
from 2021 General
Municipal Election**

Final Unofficial Results at
<https://eriecountypa.gov/voting/ElectionNightResults/ecresults.htm>

Link also found on Home Page at www.eriecountypa.gov

Secretary Degraffenreid has ordered a recount for the office of Judge of the Commonwealth Court. That office will not be certified. Recount to begin on Wednesday the 17th in room 112, Erie County Courthouse.

Chairwoman Rennie discussed the Office of Judge of Commonwealth Court; verifying with Mr. Smith that that race would be certified at a separate meeting upon recount.

Mrs. Schauerman moved to certify the result, with the exception of the Judge of Commonwealth Court, seconded by Mr. Anderson; passed 4 to 0.

Adjournment

Mrs. Schauerman moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 4:34pm.