

MINUTES

Erie County Council

View More at
www.eriecountypa.gov



BOE ORGANIZATION MINUTES JANUARY 17, 2024

Call to Order

County Clerk Chillcott called to order the 2024 reorganizational Board of Elections meeting at 12:01PM.

Roll Call

Members Present: Charlie Bayle, Rock Copeland, Chris Drexel, Andre Horton, Ellen Schauerma, and Terry M. Scutella Absent: Jim Winarski

Others Present: County Clerk Karen Chillcott, Deputy Clerk Megan Moore, Deputy Solicitor Jay Stranahan

Hearing of the Public

Freda Tepfer, Erie: Ms. Tepfer expressed satisfaction with the complete Election Board and her hopes for fairness. Ms. Tepfer referenced her experience as a Judge of Election where she noticed many people who wanted to use the tablet at her precinct. She reported people did not want to use a paper ballot despite her personal preference for voters who are capable of using a paper ballot, and admitted it is not appropriate for her to express this to voters. She stated voters enjoyed the tablet, and she had spoken with Tonia about possibly getting a second tablet in the future General Election.

Nominations of Chair and Vice Chair for the Board of Elections

Ms. Chillcott opens the floor for nominations of Chair and Vice Chair

Ms. Schauerma motioned for the appointment of Charlie Bayle as the Chair of the Board of Elections, emphasizing the significance of having someone with experience, particularly in a presidential year, and stating the need for someone who has been "at the strings".

Motion failed 2-4 (Horton, Copeland, Drexel, Scutella)

Mr. Copeland motions for the appointment of Andre Horton as the Chair of the Board of Elections, and cited Mr. Horton's invaluable 10 years of experience in this role as a compelling factor.

Motion passed 6-0, Andre Horton, Chair of the Board of Elections.

Mr. Horton thanked his colleagues for the privilege and honor of serving as Chairman of the Board of Elections.

Ms. Schauerma motioned to nominate Charlie Bayle to be Vice Chair of the Board of Elections for the same reasons.

Motion failed 2-4 (Horton, Copeland, Drexel, Scutella)

Mr. Copeland motioned to nominate Mr. Drexel and Mr. Horton made the second.

Horton motioned to move the nominations to be closed and was seconded by Schauerman.

Motion passed 5-1 (Bayle), Chris Drexel, Vice Chair of the Board of Elections.

Comments from the New Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Horton asked for comments from the Board and Vice Chair.

Mr. Horton, appointed as the new Chair of the Board of Elections, Mr. Horton expressed gratitude to Council member Bayle for his previous leadership. He affirmed the Board's standing as the gold standard in Pennsylvania and vowed to maintain this excellence. Emphasizing the crucial role of the Board in upholding democracy, Mr. Horton committed to transparency and improvement and acknowledged the likelihood of occasional mistakes. He extended appreciation to the entire team, highlighting their dedication on Election night, and specifically thanked the Chief Clerk and office staff for their contributions.

Comments from the Board

Mr. Scutella expressed optimism about the recent proceedings, and emphasized the importance of the public to recognize there was unity despite today's vote. He underscored the collaborative nature of the work and highlighted the primary focus of serving the people of Erie County. Mr. Scutella took the opportunity to commend the Elections office. He affirmed the office's commitment to maintaining a secure and well-run operation and expressed admiration for their resilience during election night challenges. Mr. Scutella applauded the collective effort of the County Council Office staff.

Mr. Bayle expressed gratitude, extended his thanks to the individuals involved. Reflecting on his assuming the leadership following the vacancy, he acknowledged the inherent learning curve in the role. Mr. Bayle appreciated the presence of an exceptional staff and characterized them as integral to ensuring ongoing success. Confident in Erie being perceived as ahead of the curve, he highlighted achievements such as the procurement of new equipment and the

judicious use of the Election Integrity Grant funds. Mr. Bayle emphasized a commitment to continual improvement and pledged to refine processes and procedures to further enhance the office's performance. He expressed his great thanks to everyone.

Chairman Horton requested that, before entertaining a motion for adjournment, a motion for an executive session be put forth.

Schauerman made the motion to move to the executive session at 12:12pm. This was seconded by Drexel.

Return from Executive session was at 12:37pm.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 12:37pm.