

MINUTES

Erie County Board of Elections

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Andre Horton, Chair
Chris Drexel, Vice Chair
Charlie Bayle
Rock Copeland
Ellen Schauerma
Terry Scutella
Jim Winarski

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

August 22, 2024

Call to Order

Chair Horton called to order a Special Meeting of the Board of Elections at 04:00 PM.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Horton; Vice Chair Drexel-via Zoom; Bayle; Copeland; Schauerma-via phone; Scutella, Winarski- Absent

Staff Present: Clerk Karen Chillcott; Deputy Clerk Megan Moore; Jim Czerpak; Deputy Solicitors Tom Talarico and Jay Stranahan

Hearing of the Public

Sam Talarico – Chair of Erie County Democratic Party: Mr. Talarico praised the professionalism of the Elections Office but expressed concern over a Board of Elections member's statement in a national publication alleging election manipulation by the left. He stated this claim was false, citing no evidence of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 election, as confirmed by numerous court cases. Mr. Talarico argued that such statements violate public trust and the oath of office and called for a retraction and assurance against future statements of this nature.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

June 13, 2024 Special Meeting

Copeland moved to approve the minutes from the June 13, 2024 meeting. This was seconded by Scutella and carried by a 6–0 vote.

New Business

Ms. Chillcott stated there were two new polling place changes and introduced Jim Czerpak to elaborate on the exact changes.

Consideration of change in polling locations

- **Erie Ward 4 District 2: From Gannon University-Zurn Science Building, 131 W 7th St. Erie PA 16501 to First United Methodist**

Czerpak read the proposed changes as
Erie Ward 4 District 2: From Gannon University-Zurn Science Building, 131 W 7th St. Erie PA 16501 to First United Methodist Church, 707 Sassafras St. Erie, PA 16501 and Millcreek District 4: From Erie Community College, 2403 W 8th St. Erie PA 16505 to Kury Hall, 512 Kelso Drive 16505.

Copeland asked for clarification about the second location. He questioned if the move was a return to its original location and if the problems were resolved that

**Church, 707
Sassafras St. Erie,
PA 16501**

caused the move last election. Czerpak confirmed that Kelso Drive was the previous polling place.

- **Millcreek District 4:
From Erie
Community College,
2403 W 8th St. Erie
PA 16505 to Kury
Hall, 512 Kelso
Drive 16505**

Chair asked for clarification if the first polling place change was moving right next door.
Czerpak confirmed that the new polling location for Erie Ward 4 District 2 was moving right next door.

Solicitor Talarico asked Chair Horton if there was a reason for a relocation of these districts?

The chair stated the second location change was self-explanatory as it was just returning to the original location.

Czerpak elaborated that for the first location change the poll workers stated that the space was small and more parking was needed. The Chair contributed to the discussion and agreed the space was small. He was more concerned if the institution asked for a change, but they did not ask for it.

The Chair thanked the staff for finding the suitable locations, acknowledged these moves were within the vicinity, and would limit any barriers.

Copeland stated that the move was currently to Millcreek 13 and that was beneficial.

Ms. Chillcott stated that since the time of the agenda's publication, the polling places had confirmed the changes.

The chair asked for a motion to officially confirm the changes. This was moved by Copeland, seconded by Schauerman and carried in a 6 - 0 vote.

Consideration of new purchases

Ms. Chillcott reported that there was a need for new purchases. A truck for the Elections Department, as the previous truck that was shared with the County had deteriorated. There has been one quote for a new truck at \$70,000. It was said that anything above \$25,000 would need to be brought back before the Board and put out for a bid.

Chair Horton affirmed that with all the machine units a truck was needed.

Solicitor Talarico inquired about grants that might cover such a purchase.

Bayle remarked that it had been looked into but Elections Integrity Grant would not cover a truck.

Ms. Chillcott clarified the funding would come from the Elections budget line.

Chair Horton asked where the quote was obtained.

Ms. Chillcott stated that it was from a local dealership for a new truck. It was a 2024 Chevy Express commercial cutaway 4500 with the lift gate and equipment necessary.

Mr. Chillcott stated the second purchase would be a fan for the warehouse. The cost for the fan would be \$45,000 and was not covered by the grant. The price was not a quote, and stated there was nothing in writing, but it was a shock to the Operations Department as well. Ms. Chillcott stated there would be more research on the cost of a fan for the warehouse.

Mr. Talarico stated that more research to find a vehicle was needed and this was agreed to by Chair Horton.

Chair Horton asked for more specs about the fan and for bids for a truck.

Ms. Chillcott affirmed putting the bid out for a truck and would address the fan issue and provide more details for the Board in the future.

Ms. Chillcott stated that the additional security upgrades are in progress and will be completed soon.

Questions and Comments from the Board

Schauerman asked if the Elections Department was looking at used vehicles or only new. Chair Horton stated new vehicles.

Bayle asked if financing was an option to purchase. Chair Horton wanted to make sure it was local, but also does not want to be taken advantage of locally.

Chair Horton asked for a motion to the executive session to discuss legal matters. This was moved by Copeland and seconded by Bayle.

Executive session began at 4:22PM

Return from executive session was at 5:08PM.

Adjournment

Scutella moved to adjourn at 05:09 PM.

j/k