

February 11, 2014

ERIE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS – Reorganization Meeting

Mr. Smith, Clerk of Elections, called to order a Reorganization Meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections at 5:45 p.m. in the Erie County Council Caucus Room.

Mr. Smith, Clerk of Elections, called the roll:

Members Present:     Mr. Breneman  
                              Mr. DiMattio  
                              Mr. Fatica  
                              Dr. Foust  
                              Mr. Horton  
                              Mrs. Loll

Members Absent:     Mr. Leone

Also Present:         Douglas R. Smith, Clerk of Elections

Nominations for Chairman of the Election Board

Dr. Foust nominated Mr. Fatica as chairman of the 2013 Election Board; this was seconded by Mr. Breneman. Dr. Foust then moved to close the nominations, and Mr. Fatica was elected as Chairman of the Election Board in a unanimous roll call vote.

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Nominations for Vice Chairman of the Election Board

Mr. Fatica called for nominations for Vice Chairman. Dr. Foust nominated Mr. Leone; Mr. DiMattio seconded and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote. Dr. Foust moved to close the nominations, which was seconded by Mr. DiMattio. Mr. Leone was elected as Vice Chairman of the Election Board in a unanimous roll call vote.

Minutes

Mr. Breneman moved to approve the minutes of both the October 21, 2013, and November 21, 2013 meetings. Dr. Foust seconded.

Mr. Fatica thanked Mr. Smith and Mrs. Breter for putting the minutes together. There were recommendations contained in them that were quite extensive. Mr. Fatica commented that thanks have been given to the people who served in their stead back in November.

Mr. Fatica then noted that particular attention should be given to Page 2, noting that Mr. Smith is establishing a protocol for ballot review utilizing people outside of the Voter Registration office to give another set of eyes to the review.

Dr. Foust asked Mr. Smith to expand on this protocol. Mr. Smith stated he received a form from the Department of State that is helpful in that it breaks down into a very specific process, how to look at every single office as you go through review. Mr. Smith commented on possibly having members of the Board or perhaps other individuals who are outside of the Election Office to look at the ballots.

Dr. Foust then asked if there were any issues involving the Temporary Election Board and Mr. Smith stated that they really did an excellent job. They were diligent, attended the recount for Mr. Aliota, and really rolled with some difficulties with the ballot. Attorney McNair was quite helpful, and they all did a spectacular job. They were very committed and really left most of their politics at the door.

Mr. Fatica commented that in talking with the temporary board, they had no idea how the process worked and were impressed with how professional it ran and how transparent. Dr. Foust agreed, stating he has been through recounts before and they are not fun. He stated that it is heartwarming that the process is in fact open and transparent, and that is why the results were so easily accepted. He stated it is a credit not only to the Board, to the day to day administration of the voting office to make sure it stays that way.

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Mr. Fatica stated that he was here when the recount occurred and there was ample latitude for both sides to comment what was going on. It confirms that everything was handled the right way and the outcome was agreed upon.

Mr. Fatica then commented that he spoke with Ben Speggen from the Erie Reader and he asked if they could come in and see how the process works and develop a series of stories. Mr. Fatica felt that would be a great idea and invited Mr. Speggen to come in on Friday.

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Fatica asked Mr. Smith if there was anything else he'd like to report. Mr. Smith stated that petitions do start on February 18, 2014. One interesting wrinkle regarding the State election is that there are now on-line petitions that are being made available to State candidates and committee people. They are putting them on 8x11 paper and Mr. Smith is hoping that they allow the counties to follow that lead for the local election, which would make it much easier and convenient. Dr. Foust asked if the format for petitions is created by the office or if it is a State form. Mr. Smith stated it is a State form and is dictated by the state.

Mr. Smith also passed along that there was a challenge sent to him of Kristy Elchynski, the Republican Party Chair in Corry. She apparently uses an address on Main Street there, and the challenge is that this is her place of business and not her home address. There is something in the Election Code for a challenge like that. Mr. Smith sent Ms. Elchynski a letter, along with the challenge from Jeffrey Onink. Mr. Smith stated he will keep the Board informed on this challenge.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Deneé M. Breter, Council Secretary

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