

June 8, 2015

## ERIE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS – Regular Meeting

Douglas Smith, Clerk of Elections, called to order the 2015 Regular Meeting of the Erie County Board of Elections at 9:00 a.m. in the Erie County Council Caucus Room. The meeting then recessed at 9:01 a.m. pending the arrival of members who were delayed due to unforeseen circumstances.

The meeting reconvened at 10:32 a.m.

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

Members Present: Mr. DiMattio  
Mr. Horton  
Mr. Breneman (via telephone)

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Douglas R. Smith, Clerk of Elections

### Hearing of the Public:

None.

### Other Business:

Mr. Smith gave the following report as a 2015 post primary overview:

#### **“2015 POST PRIMARY OVERVIEW**

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The 2015 Erie County Primary was challenging as much for events before Election Day as during. Mechanical issues with our 650 scanning machine led to a long delay in completion of absentee ballots. Testing was interrupted by readings which were not appropriate and which seemed to suggest counting problems for absentee ballots on the horizon. Printer problems followed as necessary parts were on backorder further delaying our ability to finish our ballots during the month of April. An outside printer was employed at a fairly reasonable cost but problems with the print ruined the opportunity for time savings.

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Parts arrived for the ballot printer the next day which allowed the mailing of absentees within tolerances provided by the Election Code. The staff did a very good job in their preparations for the Primary including the prepping, packing and delivery of election supplies. Jim Czerpak and Kim DeLand delivered desired results for our election pretesting of software. VR Senior Clerk Patty Messenger worked closely with fellow Clerks Wilt and Hughes to instill as much procedural knowledge as possible before her impending retirement June 12th. Poll Worker Coordinator Sandy Hughes once again did a thorough job of filling necessary slots around the County and handling the training at the 911 Center which was provided over a five day period containing three classes per day. Changes in our training procedures are coming for the General including a change in location due to the availability of classrooms when needed by Elections.

Election Day was very busy early but most problems were solved by 10am. Election supply bags for Erie 3-2 (Salvation Army) and 3-4 (Kingsley United Methodist) were delivered to the wrong Judges. The error was not discovered by the Judges until Tuesday morning. New emphasis will be placed on Judges checking their bags when they are delivered the weekend prior to the election. This caused a delay in opening both polling places of about 15 minutes. North East Township 2 had the ballot for North East Borough on their Master PEB which caused a thirty minute delay in the opening of their polls. Ms. DeLand will follow up on that issue. Paper ballots were provided to waiting voters while supplies were delivered from the Election Office. A delay in the opening of the Church for Millcreek20 (new Pastor) caused some worry for an inexperienced staff. Also candidate Damon Hopkins was handing out flowers with his name on them. Some Judges or Constables mistakenly believed they could not be taken into polling places, which generated phone calls from the Hopkins Campaign staff. There were no serious staff shortages reported at polling places. The County's Roaming Poll workers were once again invaluable in solving procedural and administrative issues all day. Training by Hughes and Czerpak was instrumental there. Ms. DeLand delivered a working election in terms of software which is to her credit and key to the County's ability to maintain Voter confidence.

Pollworker training is treated very seriously by the Elections Department. Sandy Hughes devotes about a month and a half before each election to preparation and planning. Jim Czerpak's contribution as a hands on trainer has significantly cut down on issues on Election Morning and Evening, when voting machines are opened, then closed by Judges. There were few problems with the closing of polls. Conneaut Township did however fail to close some of their machines which prevented us from proving results until the next day. Ms. DeLand was able to get approval from the State so no great problem was generated by the missing 200 or so votes. Millcreek 22, where another new team was operating, forgot their flash memory cards in the voting machines. They did have their unofficial results so

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there was no impact on Election Night. The school had closed so there was no ability to retrieve the cards until the next day. Vendor support from ESS was once again very helpful. While it costs the County about \$4,600 per election; the benefits are significant in terms of trouble shooting, staff training and general smooth operation. The most important thing received for the money is the security of knowing that no technical issue could derail our process for very long. The ESS team ultimately solved the 650 problem mentioned earlier which allowed to avoid a hand count of absentee ballots.

There are two legal matters for the Board's attention. Solicitor Talarico has advised that the Board not certify Ebert Beeman as a candidate for Waterford Township Auditor. Mr. Beeman received 14 write-in votes; however, his status as a convicted felon involving crimes of financial deceit, disqualifies him under the State constitution. Judge DiSantis ruled to the same effect in his local decision.

Solicitor Talarico also advised the Board not to certify Eddie Whiteman, of Millcreek Township, as a candidate for constable in McKean Township. Mr. Whiteman received write-in votes in McKean Township for constable; however, he does not live in McKean and thus would not qualify as a candidate.

Election Board Chair DiMattio, along with Members Andre Horton and Jay Breneman, kept the operation in the Revenue Office moving at a fast clip which allowed the processing of Judges' payroll faster than any election in current memory. Our Election Night Court House operation continues to improve due to team effort, individual execution and sufficient manpower.

Douglas R. Smith,  
Erie County Clerk of Elections".

Upon completion of the report, Mr. DiMattio advised the board that Rep. Bizzarro has introduced legislation regarding same day voter registration, and he asked if there is any indication that this will move forward and if so, when it might take effect.

Mr. Smith responded that it is in committee at this time. He has spoken with Doug Hill of CCAP, who does not expect that it will come out of committee. Mr. Smith commented that it may help some people to have same day registration, but it could result in delay of election results as much as ten or more days. The state would have to certify the individual, then certify the election. This ultimately would be up to the legislature to decide.

Mr. Horton commented that in contrast to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Erie County might have some minor changes, but not significant. He would favor the

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move if it would get more people out to vote. He would be disappointed if it didn't get out of committee.

Mr. Smith then went on to discuss election classes being held at the 911 center. He stated that training is increasing and it has become difficult to get the space needed for classes. He has reached out to Casey Wells, Executive Director of the Erie County Convention Center Authority, to get the lowest possible cost of using the convention center. Reasons for the move include stress on the staff to get to the 911 center, as well as the need, because of distance, to get there very early in the morning and remain late in the evening, as well as keeping staff in office during training. He stated that there are approximately 300 participants in the classes, which include Judge of Elections classes and Roamer classes. There are approximately 25/30 people per class, with three classes per day.

Both Mr. DiMattio and Mr. Horton asked if there was another county facility could be used at no cost. Mr. Smith countered, stating that parking is an issue, having enough space, leaving materials set up from day to day until classes are done. Mr. DiMattio commented that the ECCCA would not exist if it weren't for the County and thus should be able to use a facility.

Mr. Leone commented that the Convention Center should not charge the County anything for use of a facility and stated he would contact his representative on the authority.

Mr. Horton then made a motion to certify the 2015 Primary, with the exclusion of Ebert Beeman for Auditor in Waterford Township and Eddie Whiteman for Constable in McKean. This was seconded by Mr. Breneman and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Deneé M. Breter, Council Secretary