

The Portage County Board of Elections met in Regular Session Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 8:30 a.m., Board Office, County Administration Building, Ravenna, Ohio to **certify issues and candidates to the May 2, 2023 Primary/Special Election, approve November 2022 chargebacks and reductions in precinct election officials, discuss public outreach, Summer Conference and referrals to the Ohio Elections Commission, and other regular business.**

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Denise L. Smith, Chair – present
Ms. Randi Clites, Member – present
Ms. Doria Daniels, Member – present
Ms. Amanda Suffecool, Member – absent

Ms. Faith Lyon, Director, present
Ms. Theresa Nielsen, Deputy Director, present

Also present:

Deborah Barber, League of Women Voter of Kent
Michael Lampa
Joshua Lampa
Glenn Broska
John Kuhar
Roger Kramer
Michelle Bragg

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Daniels moved to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2023 Board Meeting.
Second by Ms. Clites.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

Ms. Clites moved to approve voucher numbers 7344 through 7375. Second by Ms. Daniels.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Broska asked that when a person pulls a petition, that they sign and print their name and what race they are running for, so other people will know who their potential competition will be. Ms. Smith stated that the Board will take it under consideration.

Mr. Michael Lampa stated he was running for Ward 1 Council member for Streetsboro and that he put the incorrect date on his petition. He indicated that he put the November election day since he did not have any competition. Staff pointed out that the sample provided to Mr. Lampa clearly has the correct election date on it and that packet of information was provided to him when he picked up his petitions. Ms. Smith indicated that the Board is not holding a hearing today and will just be considering the petitions that have been filed for various seats.

Mr. Kuhar indicated that he only put half of his name on one section of his petition, but that everyone who he asked to sign his petition knew who he was.

Ms. Bragg indicated that she moved to Streetsboro three years ago and that she brought proof of residency from her landlord.

OLD BUSINESS:

Flood Recovery

Staff provided an update on the status of repairs after the water damage. Staff has been in touch with a disaster recovery team regarding the election equipment but has not yet received a quote. Staff reported that the letter from the Secretary of State has not yet been received.

NEW BUSINESS:

Certification of Candidates to the May 2, 2023 Primary/Special Election (90 day filers)

There were 19, 90 day candidate filings. Six of the petitions need to come before the Board.

Kent City has partisan races. The following Kent City petitions were came to the Board for review. Melissa Celko, who filed for Ward 1 Council member, added an additional 0 to her zip code in the declaration portion on one of her petitions. The balance of the petitions are in good order. Ms. Clites move to accept Ms. Celko's petitions. Second by Ms. Daniels.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Christopher Hook, who submitted petitions for Kent City Ward 4, on one part petition just said "council", without the ward number and the day of the election. If that part is invalid, would still have enough signatures to be on the ballot. There are no council at large positions on the ballot. Ms. Daniels moved to accept all part petitions as people knew what ward he was running for. Second by Ms. Clites.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

John Kuhar submitted petitions for Kent Ward 4 and on one part petition, in the candidacy section he did not include his last name. Mr. Kuhar's full name is on the top portion of the part petition and he was also the circulator. If that part petition is not accepted, he would not have enough signatures to be on the ballot. Ms. Clites moved to accept the part petition in question. Second by Ms. Daniels.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Streetsboro's charter has specific filing requirements, including a criminal conviction disclosure form. All petition filers timely filed their disclosure forms. There are three Streetsboro petitions for the Board's consideration.

Ms. Bragg turned petitions in for Ward 4. The Streetsboro charter has additional candidate requirements which state that a candidate must be a qualified elector living in Streetsboro for two years. Ms. Bragg knew that these issues were a concern when she filed her petitions. A legal opinion was sought from the Streetsboro Law director. Ms. Bragg filed her petitions on January 31, 2023. Ms. Bragg was registered to vote from September 11, 2008 through September 2, 2015 when she was deleted due to voter inactivity. On September 25, 2018 she electronically registered to vote giving her address as 2525 Porter Road in Atwater. On October 5, 2020 she was mailed an absentee ballot. Her absentee ballot application stated she was still registered in Atwater, but asked that the ballot be mailed to a Streetsboro address. On November 8, 2022 she voted a provisional ballot changing her voter registration to Streetsboro. The opinion from the Streetsboro Law Director indicated Ms. Bragg did not qualify to be a candidate as she had not been a qualified elector in Streetsboro for two years. Ms. Smith said that since Ms. Bragg did not meet the qualified elector threshold there was no need to address the residency issue. Ms. Daniels moved to reject the petitions as Ms. Bragg is not a qualified elector in compliance with the Streetsboro charter. Second by Ms. Clites.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Michael Lampa submitted petitions for Ward 1 council in Streetsboro. On all parts submitted, the statement of candidacy information was incorrect in that a date for an unexpired term was filled in, and no such seat exists. Additionally, the November election day was written in as the date of the election, rather than the May date. When Mr. Lampa came to our office to file his petitions, these defects were pointed out, in addition to the fact that the May election date was written on the sample provided to him when he picked up his petitions. He chose not to recirculate petitions. Ms. Smith indicated that this was not a typographical error, that the November date was put down since Mr. Lampa did not believe he would have any competition for the seat. The Streetsboro City charter sets forth the rules and forms. Ms. Clites moved to reject the petitions. Second by Ms. Daniels.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Stacey Vadaj submitted petitions for mayor and was required to have 50 valid signatures. Staff explained how signatures are checked by a bipartisan team and then if there are not enough signatures, the Directors will also check the petitions. Ms. Vedaj submitted 71 signatures and 48 were valid. Many of the signatures that were unacceptable were printed. Ms. Clites moved to reject Ms. Vadaj's petitions for lack of a sufficient number of signatures. Second by Ms. Daniels.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Ms. Clites moved to accept the remaining candidate petitions. Second by Ms. Daniels.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Staff reported that Kent City was the only location with any primaries and most of the candidates will move forward to the General Election. Ms. Smith recommended that persons who were not certified to the May ballot should consult with an attorney.

Certification of Issues to the May 2, 2023 Primary/Special Election

Staff reported that there 12 issues for the May 2, 2023 ballot and all of their paperwork is in order. Ms. Daniels moved to accept all the issues presented to the May 2, 2023 ballot. Second by Ms. Clites.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

November 2022 Chargebacks

Chargebacks for the November 2022 General Election were presented to the Board. Ms. Daniels moved to approve the November 2022 chargebacks. Second by Ms. Clites.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Staff indicated that a resolution will be submitted to the Commissioners to have the 2022 chargeback dollar amount transferred to the Election Revenue Fund.

Reduction in PEOs for May 2, 2023 Primary/Special Election

Staff presented a few precinct election official reductions for the May election for some of the larger precincts. Ms. Clites moved to approve the reductions. Second by Ms. Daniels.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Public Outreach

The Board discussed that there are many remaining unanswered questions regarding the new voter law. Staff reported that one Secretary of State Directive has been received, but that there are still many remaining questions. Staff urged caution in discussing the changes, since there are so many unanswered questions. Ms. Daniels asked about the retroactive application of the statute. The affect of Issue 2's passage on 17 year olds voting in a primary was discussed. Staff reported that no Directive has been received on

this issue. The concern is that only accurate information be provided to lessen potential confusion to the voters.

Summer Conference

The Secretary of State's Summer Conference is scheduled for June 27th and 28th. Most of those attending the conference have made hotel reservations. Ms. Lyon will not be able to attend due to a previously scheduled vacation. Ms. Nielsen will only be able to attend the first day of conference due to a previously scheduled vacation. Ms. Daniels moved to approve the attendance of the Board Members and Directors at the Summer Conference. Second by Ms. Clites.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Smith – yes
Ms. Clites - yes
Ms. Daniels – yes

Board Approved

Motion Carried

Staffed mentioned that the next OAEO Conference will be January 11th and 12th, 2024.

Campaign Finance Referrals

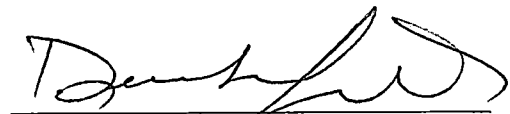
Board members were provided a list of those campaigns which were referred to the Ohio Elections Commission for late or non-filing of their 2022 Annual Report. No action required.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

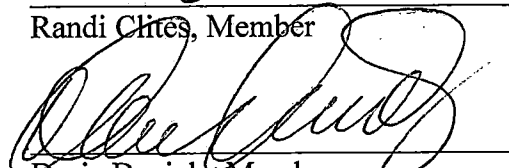
Ms. Daniels moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Ms. Clites. Meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Attest:


Faith Lyon, Director


Denise L. Smith, Chair


Randi Clites, Member


Doria Daniels, Member