

**BERKS COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2023 – 12:15 P.M.**

Lucine Sihelnik, Chair
Honorable James E. Gavin, Vice Chair
Honorable Jill Gehman Koestel
Anne Norton, Chief Clerk
Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor – not present
Cody L. Kauffman, First Assistant County Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER: 12:15 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Judge Gavin, the Board approved the minutes for the November 27, 2023, Special Election Board meeting as presented.

Agenda Items

1. Review and Discuss Unlawful Voting Complaint

First Assistant County Solicitor Cody Kauffman shared that the Election Board, the District Attorney's Office, and the Attorney General's Office received a complaint about a social media post by a Berks resident, claiming he was able to request, fill out and submit a mail-in ballot in his wife's name for the 2023 Primary.

Election Services reviewed the voter records and found that the resident and his wife both applied for mail-in/absentee ballots in the spring of 2023, but neither voted by mail-in or absentee ballot for the 2023 Primary or 2023 Municipal Election. Mr. Kauffman spoke with the resident after receiving the complaint and the man said he stood by his statement, claiming it was an observation of what he would be able to do.

Mr. Kauffman clarified that the online comment did not say it was something the resident could do, but instead says it was something he did. Mr. Kauffman said it is a violation of the state election code for any person to sign an application for a ballot or submit a mail-in ballot that is not their own. Mr. Kauffman said that based on the information presented, he recommended the matter be referred to the District Attorney's office for further investigation.

On the motion of Judge Gavin, seconded by Judge Koestel, the Board approved referring the matter to the District Attorney's Office for further investigation.

2. Review Candidates' Petitions to Cumulate and Cumulate Write-In Votes Cast during the November 7, 2023 General Election.

Mr. Kauffman gave a brief overview of how write-in votes are counted and can be cumulated. Write-in candidates automatically get credit for any write-in votes that

match the way their name appears on their voter registration. A write-in candidate must file a petition to cumulate any perceived variations of their name to have those votes counted. The Election Board must review the petitions and make determinations as to which variations will be counted. Mr. Kauffman said determinations should be based on clear voter intent. If a vote is only for the candidates last name, it can be counted if there is no one else with the same last name running for that office. **[Note: The approval of a petition does not mean that individual won an elected position. To win, the candidate must have more votes than any other candidate in that race.]**

The Board reviewed the following 25 petitions to cumulate write-in votes:

- i. Judge Gavin motioned to approve David J. Reimer, Mayor, 2-year term, in Leesport, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- ii. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Carolyn L. Dunlap, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Centerport Borough, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- iii. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Randy R. Dunlap, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Centerport Borough, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- iv. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Michael G. Grim, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Shoemakersville, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- v. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Alan D. Cook, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Centerport Borough, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- vi. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Michael J. Caron, Member of Council, 2-year term, in Sinking Spring Borough, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- vii. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Thomas J. Moorhead, Township Supervisor, 6-year term, in Bethel Township, as presented, except as to the following:
 - a. Tom More (1)
The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- viii. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Edward J. Murray, Auditor, 6-year term, in Union Township, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- ix. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Carissa M. Waltenbaugh, Member of Council, 2-year term, in Bechtelsville, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- x. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Carissa M. Waltenbaugh, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Bechtelsville, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xi. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Christopher D. Faro, School Director, 4-year term, in Antietam School District, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- xii. Judge Gavin motioned to approve William D. Howze, School Director, 2-year term, in Antietam School District, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xiii. Judge Koestel motioned to approve William D. Howze, School Director, 4-year term, in Antietam School District, as presented, except as to the following:
 - a. Owze (1)
 - b. William D (1)
The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.

- xiv. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Robert Melendez, Mayor, 4-year term, in the City of Reading, as presented, except as to the following:
 - a. Rovetomeledez (1)
 - b. Rover (1)
 The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xv. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Quinton J. Roma, Auditor, 6-year term, in Washington Township, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xvi. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Daniel Haney, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Topton Borough, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- xvii. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Jennifer Lopez, School Director, 4-year term, in Antietam School District, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xviii. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Keegan K. Worley, Member of Council, 2-year term, in Wernersville, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- xix. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Dennis Baver, Member of Council, 2-year term, in Bernville Borough, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xx. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Scott Wilson, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Wernersville, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xxi. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Scott Wilson, Member of Council, 2-year term, in Wernersville, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- xxii. Judge Gavin motioned to approve David Okonski, School Director, 4-year term, in Antietam School District, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xxiii. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Kathy E. Hassler, Member of Council, 4-year term, in Topton Borough, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.
- xxiv. Judge Gavin motioned to approve Peter R. Schwarze, Auditor, 6-year term, in Jefferson Township, as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Koestel.
- xxv. Judge Koestel motioned to approve Kacie Edlyn Rodriguez, School Director, 2-year term, in Wyomissing School District, as presented, except as to the following:
 - a. Maria Rodriguez (1)
 The motion was seconded by Judge Gavin.

3. Breaking of Ties

Ms. Norton explained that, as a result of the petitions to cumulate write-in votes approved in Agenda Item 2, there were 23 contests with ties that needed to be broken. Ties are broken by drawing balls that are numbered from 1 to 16 from a bag. The lowest number drawn wins the position. The drawing is done in order of Party of the Governor. If candidates are of the same party, the drawing is done alphabetically. The drawings were done in order of the offices listed on the ballot (see attached Listing A for results and winners).

4. MDJ and Row Offices Ballot Certification Report

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Judge Gavin, the Board approved the submission of the MDJ and Row Offices Ballot Certification Report to the Department of State. The report includes the results of the Magisterial District Judge and Berks County Row Officer races.

5. Approve the Execution of Campaign Expense Report Compliance Form

On the motion of Judge Gavin, seconded by Judge Koestel, the Board approved the execution of Campaign Expense Report Compliance Form to be submitted to the Department of State.

6. Final Certification

On the motion of Judge Gavin, seconded by Judge Koestel, the Board certified the results for the Municipal Election held on Nov. 7, 2023.

Judge Koestel thanked the Office of Election Services for doing a wonderful job, especially with the last-minute change to count and include the undated and incorrectly dated mail-in and absentee ballots. She noted that even though the certification was later than originally planned, it was completed in time for elected officials to be sworn in according to their legal timelines.

Commissioner Sihelnik echoed those sentiments and thanked internal and external legal counsel and all the candidates who were awaiting the certification.

Judge Gavin emphasized the importance of the Board's vote, noting that school districts were waiting for the final certification to swear in their new school boards.

Election Director's Report

Ms. Norton noted that the staff would immediately be preparing and sending out the certificates of election to the winners. She added that the school boards could pick them up in the office that afternoon. She also highlighted that some of the staff would be holding an outreach event at a local high school next week and that the staff is continuing to work on packing up and organizing the supplies and archive documents from the last election to start preparing for 2024.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment: On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Judge Gavin, the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Anne Norton, Election Board Chief Clerk

LISTING A - 2023 Municipal Election

Breaking of Ties: Results and Winners

Race/Term	Write In Candidate(s) as registered in SURE (Winners in BOLD)	# Drawn	
School Director - Conrad Weiser ASD Region 1, 4 Yr.	Schwambach, Jason	12	
	Sodomsky, Daniel	10	
	Barth, Michael	5	*present
	Dotzenroth, James H.	7	
	Kreider, Rustin	9	*present
	Kreisher, Roger A.	11	

Member of Council Mt. Penn Boro, 2 Yr.	Garcia, Yrisol	1	
	Kindlick, Michael	10	
	Lemus, Erik	7	
	Morales, Jeffrey N.	9	
	Hess, Calvin G., Jr.	12	
	Korinchock, David	8	

Member of Council Wernersville Boro, 2 Yr.	Wilson, Scott	16	
	Worley, Keegan K.	11	

Tax Collector West Reading Boro, 2 yr.	Alicea, Juan Carlos	6	
	Miller, Dale J.	1	

Auditor Brecknock Twp., 6 Yr.	Kulberda, Lee Alan	3	
	Spang, Zoey	12	

Auditor Centre Twp., 6 Yr.	Maiden, Thomas J.	1	
	Smith, Phillip	16	
	McMurty, Roxanne N.	10	

Auditor Douglass Twp., 6 Yr.	Bauman, John L.	16	
	Schlegel, George Carl	5	

LISTING A - 2023 Municipal Election

Breaking of Ties: Results and Winners

Race/Term	Write In Candidate(s) as registered in SURE (Winners in BOLD)	# Drawn	
Auditor Exeter Twp., 6 Yr.	Hernandez-Campos, Kimberly	11	
	Vollmer, David L., Jr.	1	
Auditor South Heidelberg Twp., 6 Yr.	Dotzenroth, Jr., James H.	12	
	Farman, Sabo L.	5	
Auditor Ontelaunee Twp., 6 Yr.	Hueske, Derek	6	
	Saft, Dana	12	
Auditor Robeson Twp., 6 Yr.	Mahan, Mary Ellen	8	
	Brunacini, Gino	6	
	Jeschke, Briget	12	
Auditor Spring Twp., 6 Yr.	Buchert, George	14	
	Doherty, Donald	2	
	VanCamp, Shawn	3	
Auditor Tilden Twp., 6 Yr.	Schwinger, Deborah	7	
	Yeager, Jonathan N.	4	
Auditor Upper Bern Twp., 4 Yr.	Kauffman, Autumn	6	
	Ross, Diane M.	10	
Auditor Douglass Twp., 4 Yr.	Schlegel, George Carl	2	
	Richard, Eden, Jr.	11	
Auditor Robeson Twp., 4 Yr.	Brunacini, Gino	12	
	Peters, Todd R.	3	
	Jeschke, Briget	13	

LISTING A - 2023 Municipal Election

Breaking of Ties: Results and Winners

Race/Term	Write In Candidate(s) as registered in SURE (Winners in BOLD)	# Drawn	
Auditor Spring Twp., 4 Yr.	Doherty, Donald	2	
	VanCamp, Shawn	9	
	Rutkowski, Daniel	13	
Auditor Amity Twp., 2 Yr.	Campbell, Andrew	15	
	Beitz, Harold R.	7	
	Callan, Eoin	1	
	Foell, Timothy	10	
	Ondey, Gregory	6	
	Yerger, Patrick	9	
Auditor Upper Bern Twp., 2 Yr.	Kauffman, Steven L.	16	
	Ross, Diane M.	15	
Auditor Brecknock Twp., 2 Yr.	Kulberda, Lee Alan	15	
	Spang, Eric	2	
Auditor South Heidelberg Twp., 2 Yr.	Dotzenroth, Jr., James H.	4	
	Farman, Sabo L.	7	
Auditor Jefferson Twp., 2 yr.	Ream, James K.	10	
	Boltz, Holly J.	8	
Auditor Richmond Twp., 2 Yr.	Dreistadt, Kenneth	11	
	Haas, Sebastian	5	

