

APPROVED
PROCEEDINGS OF THE OTTAWA
COUNTY CLERK'S ASSOCIATION
APRIL 16, 2021

The Ottawa County Clerk's Association met virtually, to comply with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services directives due to COVID-19, on Friday, April 16, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. and was called to order at 12:00 pm by President Chris Saddler.

Members & Guests Present:

Jennifer Mokma, Blendon Twp.
Theresa DeGraaf, Port Sheldon Twp.
Theresa Frank, Wright Twp.
Chris Saddler, Robinson Twp.
Sara Talsma, Olive Twp.
Connie Langeland, Polkton Twp.
Jan Redding, Wright Twp.
Skip Keeter, Park Twp.
Jill Gruppen, Hudsonville City
Helen Dietrich, Chester Twp.
Lorrain Dietrich, Chester Twp.
Brenda Katerburg, Holland City
Laurie Larsen, Grand Haven Twp.
Margaret Shay, Spring Lake Twp.
Carolyn Boersma, Spring Lake Twp.
Kate Kraak, Zeeland Twp.
Candy DeHaan, Jamestown Twp.
Jenny Sias, Robinson Twp.

Debbie Wierenga, Ferrysburg City
Pamela Holmes, Zeeland City
Kristi DeVerney, Grand Haven Twp.
Anna Darwin, Grand Haven City
Cindy Humphrey, Zeeland City
Daniele Dykens, Park Twp.
Kathy Buchanan, Crockery Twp.
Lona Cook, Tallmadge Twp.
Maryann Fonkert, Spring Lake Village
Steve Daitch, Ottawa County
Justin Roebuck, Ottawa County
Jody Hansen, Allendale Twp.
Diana VanSlyke, Hudsonville City
Jeanne Knol, Georgetown Twp.
Sue Dalman, Holland Twp.
Linda Browand, Grand Haven City
Roger Victory, State Senator
Sue Ogden, Spring Lake Twp.

Senator Victory discussed several concerns the Association had regarding the proposed election reform. Specifically, the following bills:

1. SB 286- Prohibits voters from using ballot drop boxes after 5pm on the day prior to the election and also after 5pm on Election Day. Many addressed concerns of limiting availability to the voters, creating barriers to voting.
2. SB 285- AV Ballot I.D. requirements outlined; must have photocopy of identification card or a provisional ballot to be issued to absent voters

without identification for election purposes. Association is concerned with the barrier to voters this mandate creates, as well as sea of documents clerks will now be tasked; specifically storing and retaining said documents.

3. SB 306- Election officials/SOS to prepare a report of clerks who are not current with training and to post said report to secretary of state website. Association members addressed concerns of inaccurate e-learning center records of BOE. OCCA is not opposed to holding clerks accountable, but would like to see something in the bill that election officials must inform clerks, and allow them time to get trainings caught up prior to making report public.
4. SB 276- This bill allows for photographing/video recording of tabulators accepting ballots. The Association is concerned with voter privacy and the potential for voter intimidation. There is no “safe” way to record ballot tabulation without the risk of exposing a voted ballot, a voter’s name, or their identity.
5. SB 289- This bill requires a majority vote in each chamber for certain federal election-related funding. The Association seeks clarification; Does this pertain to all agencies, or just elections?
6. SB 310- Prohibits the secretary of state from sending or providing absent voter ballot applications. Members of the association are concerned with the provision on page 7, line item 24 and 25 which specifically identify a link that would route voters to a direct application on the SOS website. This pdf link has been very helpful in the past, and would be beneficial to remain available to voters. Also, clarification was requested whether this prohibition pertains to all organizations, or just the secretary of state? In addition, several suggestions and comment were provided to Senator Victory including eliminating organizations sending “you didn’t vote yet” notices to voters. Clerk’s offices were flooded with phone calls of concerned voters thinking their vote was not received/tallied. Another suggestion included eliminating the dual March and November AV application. This was confusing to voters and invoked a retention nightmare for clerks.

Discussion was had around the potential legislation of eliminating the May and August election and combining them into one primary election to be held in June. Some members were in favor indicating this would help alleviate conflicts of Coast Guard Festival congestion, Audits, and saving schools money. This move would also put Michigan more in alignment with other states. Some members were concerned with the impact this new election date would have with Memorial Day;

specifically having to be open the Saturday of the holiday weekend. Some questioned whether it would be more beneficial to host the combined elections in May rather than June. Various pros and cons were highlighted.

The Association thanked Senator Victory for his dedication, hard work and for the opportunity to present some of their concerns from a local municipality perspective.

OCCA Business:

OCCA 21-001 Justin Roebuck, with support from Candy DeHaan, moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed.

OCCA 21-002 Laurie Larsen, with support from Carolyn Boersma, moved to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2021 OCCA meeting. The motion passed.

OCCA 21-003 Carolyn Boersma, with support from Laurie Larsen, moved to approve the February 2021 Treasurer's report indicating a balance of \$10,248.91. The motion passed.

County Clerk Updates:

1. The May election is fast approaching. All the appropriate testing has been done.
2. Election worker training is live. It seems to be running smoothly, but please let county know if there is a need for in-person training. These trainings appear to be helpful and may be utilized after Covid-19 season.
3. Post-Election Updates:
 - a. The audit report was done and completed by the county.
 - b. Last year opened a positive opportunity of transparency. This report is one of those examples.
 - c. Ottawa County thanks and appreciates all the hard work and dedication to each and every person involved in the 2020 elections in Ottawa County.
 - d. The County hopes to continue transparency in the future by continuing the audit reports. It provides a clear means of communication. Ottawa County excelled at the 2020 elections, but there were some things that could use improvements. One example given was more AV applications were received than ballots given. Local units need to remember to remove if the voter doesn't return their ballot.
 - i. Some members would like to see personal evaluations from the county pertaining to audit reports. Is it possible to provide direct feedback on pros and cons of how each jurisdiction did directly to the local units?

Discussion Point: Board Meetings- How are you conducting them now?

General discussion was had around who is hosting virtual board meetings vs. in-person meetings.

President Saddler inquired as to ideas for future discussion topics. One idea was to talk to other representatives about the election reform legislation.

Justin Roebuck provided an update on the status of the senates plan. Also, he provided an overview of how other states do things that would be of concern to clerks. He inquired as to:

1. Associations preference of local clerks on having the county clerks remove deceased individuals from QVF.
2. If Association would like more legislative update emails from his office.
3. If Association would like to be a part of CEO calls.
4. Thanked Brad Slagh for doing a great job trying to understand the process and for reaching out to constituents for input.

Steve Daitch provide overview of conversations with Election Center legislative committee members at the federal level. They are experiencing similar scenarios where local input was not sought prior to drafting different legislation. He finds this concerning.

OCCA 21-004 Candy DeHaan, with support from Justin Roebuck moved to adjourn at 1:40 p.m. The motion passed.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jody Hansen, OCCA Secretary