

Phillipsburg Town Councilman Todd Tersigni has yet to concede election to Mayor Harry Wyant Jr.

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By **David Foster | The Express-Times**

Time is running out for failed Phillipsburg mayoral candidate Todd Tersigni to order a recount, a county official said Thursday, as he continues to refuse to concede Tuesday's election loss.

"We don't care if he concedes or not," Warren County Clerk Patricia J. Kolb said.

"He has 10 days to order a recount and we have 10 days to certify the election."

After unofficial results came in Tuesday night, showing **incumbent Mayor Harry Wyant Jr. had bested Tersigni by 226 votes**, Tersigni claimed he would order a recount if his supporters wanted him to.

Tersigni's concerns arose over two voting **machines that were replaced in Phillipsburg during the election after one froze and another had calibration issues.**

Tersigni, a town councilman who ran as an independent candidate for mayor, claims he needs some questions answered before he concedes to Wyant, a Republican who won an unprecedented fourth term as Phillipsburg mayor.

In an e-mail sent Thursday to The Express-Times, Tersigni said he wants to know if malfunctioning voting machines affected the election results, if voting machines malfunctioned outside Warren County on Tuesday, where the machines are stored, if the machines were tested before the election and who is authorized to repair the machines.

"When there are some reasonable answers to these questions that correspond to the reported vote totals, then I will concede," Tersigni stated in the e-mail.

Warren County Board of Elections Administrator William Duffy said Tuesday that 40 votes were cast on the polling machines before they were replaced.

Kolb, the county clerk, said Tersigni is welcome to visit her office and inspect the results before the election is certified Nov. 18 but that she hasn't heard from him.

Tersigni would not comment Thursday on whether he plans to contact county officials about a recount or if he knows he has 10 days to do so.



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Phillipsburg mayoral candidate and town Councilman Todd Tersigni is photographed Tuesday night at home in town.



Wyant said Tersigni's failure to concede to him is a first for him.

"No opponent has never called and wished me well and conceded the night of



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Phillipsburg Mayor Harry Wyant, left, smiles Tuesday evening at his home after reading early results pointing to winning his fourth term.

the election,” Wyant said of his three previous mayoral victories.

Wyant added that his Democrat opponent, Phillipsburg police Sgt. Richard Halley, called and wished him well Tuesday night after the results came in. Wyant went on to say he would have called Tersigni to concede had the result been reversed.

“In one respect it doesn’t surprise me,” Wyant said, noting Tersigni hasn’t reached out to him since the two years he has been on council. **“It’s very unprofessional to not reach out to an opponent who won the election and offer to work with him for the next term.”**

Councilman Randy Piazza, who on Wednesday dropped a complaint against Tersigni for allegedly putting his campaign signs up too early, said he is unsure why his peer hasn’t conceded.

“The outcome of the election was quite clear,” Piazza said Thursday. **“Wyant was the winner.”**

Piazza stated Tersigni did not thank him or show emotion in Clinton Township Municipal Court after he dropped the sign violation complaint.

Tersigni’s refusal to concede on election night is not a first in New Jersey.

Republican Dick Zimmer did not concede to Democratic rival Rush Holt in New Jersey’s 12th Congressional District race in 2000, according to John Weingart, associate director at Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

Weingart noted Zimmer ordered a recount, which showed he had lost, then conceded.

“The concession is not legally significant,” Weingart said. **“It is a gracious thing to do that provides clarity and closure on the matter of who wins the votes and is an expression of confidence and bravado.”**