

Huntingdon, PA
Tuesday, December 13, 2016
11:00 a.m.
46-2016

The special meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date and time in the Commissioners meeting room for the purpose of receiving comment of the 2017 proposed budget with the following being present: Commissioners Sather, Walls, and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Michelle Cerett; Solicitor, Peter McManamon; Daily News reporter, Kylie Hawn; and Visitors, Jim Cassatt, Dave Edwards and Dean Fluke.

The meeting was called to order at 11:12 a.m. by Commissioner Sather followed by prayer led by Commissioner Sather and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag led by Commissioner Walls.

Commissioner Sather reminded visitors of the rules of the meeting and stated the comment time per item would be limited to 5 minutes.

Jim Cassatt questioned the decrease in the levy amount in the proposed budget. Commissioner Sather stated that number was verified with the Tax Assessment office. He stated that decrease was due to two major tax appeals as well as properties being moved into the Clean and Green Program. Commissioner Walls stated that number could be inflated to make the budget look better but they are providing true numbers. Commissioner Thomas also stated that the decrease is due to Pictometry changes not being made timely.

Dean Fluke made comments regarding the county population and the tax parcels in the County. He also mentioned the ratio change that was made a few years ago. Commissioner Sather stated that due to the ratio change a few years ago, a mil of taxes to a typical tax payer increased from \$12.00 to \$24.00. Commissioner Thomas clarified that is related to structures, not empty parcels.

Jim Cassatt asked why the levy number for the Per Capita has remained the same for the past three years. Commissioner Sather stated that information he has received shows the population slightly increasing and the levy number was increased from 2016 to 2017.

Dean Fluke asked questions regarding the 27% uncollectible on the Per Capita tax. Commissioner Sather stated that information comes from the Treasurer's office. Dean also commented on the CYS debt status for this year. Commissioner Sather stated that was a determining factor in the budget increase. He stated the CYS budget was \$1.1 million over budget last year and while the county gets 20% reimbursement, it could take several months to receive. Commissioner Thomas followed up stating that there is no guarantee of receiving reimbursement for budget overages. He also stated that overage is largely due to increase child placements. The placements in Fiscal year 13/14 was roughly 70 children but over the past two years has nearly doubled at 139. Commissioner Sather stated the 30 unfunded laws that were implemented last year also play a large part in the budget overage.

Dave Edwards offered comment on the cost per day to have a child in placement. He asked how our cost is compared to other counties. Commissioner Thomas stated the rates are comparable to other counties. Commissioner Walls stated the foster care cost increased greatly a few years ago due to outsourcing of Foster care. Commissioner Sather followed up stating that the CYS Administrator is working on bringing foster care services back in house. Jim Cassatt asked why charges are not filed against parents who have their children removed. Solicitor McManamon stated that is up to law enforcement but CYS does take parents for child support while a child is in foster care.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Walls to adjourn the meeting at 12:17 a.m. Minutes prepared by Michelle Cerett, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary