

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

26-2020

The regular meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date and time in the Commissioners Office with the following present: Commissioners Sather, Walls and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman; Solicitor, Peter McManamon; Warden, Duane Black and visitor, Dean Fluke. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the following individuals were present via GoToMeeting: CYS Director, Shannon Walborn; CYS Fiscal Tech, Chris Riling; Planning Director, Jim Lettiere; Treasurer, Susan Harry; News Reporter, Kylie Hawn and visitor, Connie Berrier.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner Sather. Chief Clerk Heather Fellman conducted roll call of all call-in participants and discussed policies and procedures for public comment during the meeting. All participants will be muted for the duration of the meeting except during public comment periods. During public comment periods, participants will be unmuted individually to ensure that everyone is heard. Prayer was led by Commissioner Thomas and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Commissioner Sather.

It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the minutes of the July 14th Public Meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes) to approve the payment of bills.

There was one addition to the agenda: Heather Fellman, Chief Clerk, is requesting consideration of approval to attend the EAP Compass Leadership Academy Webinar series. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas reminded residents that this year is a census year. The deadline to participate in the census is October 31, 2020. It is important that all residents participate. For each person that opts out of the census \$2,000 in funding for the area is lost every year. You can complete the census online, via telephone, or using a paper form. The Broad Top area and the southern end of the county are lagging behind in completion of the census. Commissioner Thomas urges everyone to participate. Commissioner Thomas also urged everyone to continue to follow CDC guidelines to stop the spread of COVID-19. Please wear your masks as we do not want to see the County or the State shut down again. Commissioner Thomas also announced that the Broadband Task Force study has been completed. The County is broken down into six regions and it will take approximately \$1 million for each region to be lit up with broadband coverage. Hopefully in the near future we will see the Commissioners taking action to help provide broadband services to the residents of Huntingdon County. Commissioner Walls announced that the Census Bureau is paying \$15-\$17 per hour for census takers. He further announced that last week the Daily News ran a story on the recycling drop-off areas in Smithfield and how it was getting overrun with trash. Thank you to the public for responding to that news story and for managing the problem well by picking other days to drop off recycling to help cut down on the problem. Please also remember that our recycling sites no longer take glass and it will end up in the landfill at a charge to the County if it is not taken to a facility that can process it. Commissioner Sather announced that last Wednesday, July 25th, federal funding through the CARES Act was received by the County. This funding is in the amount of approximately \$4.2 million and has to be used by December 30th for COVID-19 response. Zelenkofske Axelrod and Susquehanna Accounting and Consulting are both involved in ensuring appropriate use of the funds.

Under Public Comments, Dean Fluke commented that in the previous meeting he had asked a question again about who signs the checks and why is it only one department head that is submitting these requests to the board. Over the past few meetings there have been multiple requests for purchase of service agreements and Mr. Fluke cannot understand why the County Commissioners would want to be involved with the elected school boards of the County. They are two separate entities. Ms. Cooper asked for the consideration of approval for the registration at a state conference in State College. They approved the request at \$800. The Daily News reported it as \$1400. Which is correct? Many people from this area are employed in State College. Is an overnight included in that? As a taxpayer I have a legal right to attend these meetings and to ask certain questions. As elected officials it is your

duty to answer the questions and not skirt the issue. Commissioner Sather responded that there were about three or four different questions in Mr. Fluke's comment and that he would address them each individually. The first is the school boards. The Commissioners have no authority or responsibility working with school boards. Commissioner Thomas responded that he believes Mr. Fluke was referring to the bussing contracts for the children in foster care. These are mandated transportation contracts. If a child is placed in foster care in a home outside of their school district they sign a contract with CYS, the school district, and the State to provide transportation to that student. Commissioner Sather commented that that leads into the second question about the 20 agreements that were out there and who signs the checks. Those were renewal agreements, similar to in previous years, for partnering agencies to provide services on an as-needed basis. The third point was with the Register and Recorder's presentation from last week. As an elected official, she does not need to ask for permission to attend her conference. It is a budgeted expense and she has a right to attend those continuing education conferences by virtue of her elected status. Commissioner Walls affirmed that it is part of the County Code that elected officials have the right to attend their continuing education conferences and their association meetings. As to the school board, as Commissioner Thomas stated, we are required to help provide transportation to children placed in foster care. The county is responsible for one third of that cost. That is a state mandate and it has been that way for several years.

Treasurer Susan Harry, under public comment, announced that her office has begun processing antlerless deer license applications effective July 13th. By the end of the day she expects to have approximately 9,000 applications. She expects to be caught up with everything that has been mailed to her office by the end of the day. She offered her thanks to the staff who have been helping to get these applications processed.

Warden Duane Black, under public comment, announced that the jail has completed its census as of this morning. Commissioner Thomas commented that some areas are doing really well with reporting and other areas are lagging. Warden Black further asked about Commissioner Thomas's broadband announcement. He wanted to know if Mill Creek Broadband is going to receive any of the funding to get broadband online. Commissioner Thomas commented that it is possible once they submit. Warden Black asked if they will expand. Commissioner Thomas commented that the way this is set up is that they are forming an entity for the six counties involved in the Broadband Task Force. The local providers, those are the companies that we will be reaching out to to help supply the service within each county. Most of them are so small they just cover small areas. They don't have the financial backing to provide services. Commissioner Walls commented that they are looking for proposals from the Broadband Cooperative to see what they think they can do and if we can fund it.

There were no items to be addressed by the solicitor.

Under new business, Chris Riling, CYS Fiscal Tech, requested consideration of approval for a purchase of service agreement with Peter McManamon, Attorney, for solicitor services. This is for fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 and it is a renewal from last year. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Duane Black, Warden, requested consideration of approval for the resignation of Travis Rogers. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Duane Black requested consideration of approval to hire Tracy Worthy for the position of part-time Corrections Officer. He has previously served as a Corrections Officer in the Huntingdon County Jail and is a good employee. His start date will be July 22, 2020. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Jim Lettiere, Planning Director, requested consideration of approval for a construction agreement on the Mapleton CDBG-Funded sidewalk project in the amount of \$88,610. The notice of award had been approved by the Commissioners at a previous meeting. Commissioner Walls asked if there is a match. Mr. Lettiere responded that it is fully funded by CDBG. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Consideration of approval was given for Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman to attend the EAP Compass Leadership Academy. The EAP is our Employee Assistance Program. These courses will take place via webinar. Total cost is \$750 for six hours of training. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

The Commissioners voted to enter into executive session. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

The Commissioners voted to leave executive session. The executive session was from 9:59AM to 10:10AM. Discussions were held and no decisions were made. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

There were no Matters for Action, Information, and Discussion.

There were no Veteran's Burial Allowances.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Walls to adjourn the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather N. Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary