

The regular meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date and time in the Commissioner's Office with the following present via GoToMeeting: Commissioners Sather, Walls and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman; Solicitor, Peter McManamon; CYS Director, Shannon Walborn; Planning Director, Jim Lettiere; Community Development Administrator, Stacia-Fe Gillen; Public Defender, Fred Gutshall; Probation Director, Len Hahn; Treasurer, Susan Harry; Lee Zeger from CES Engineering; visitor, Dean Fluke and Daily News Reporter Kylie Hawn.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner Sather. 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 Sather and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Commissioner Walls.

It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the minutes of the November 17<sup>th</sup> 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 were three additions to the agenda. The first addition was a request to appoint RTTC Board members. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes). The second was a request to appoint to the JVBDS Citizens Advisory Board. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes). The third was a request to add the Act 13 agreement between Huntingdon County and Mount Union Borough. It was moved by Commissioner Wall, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas reminded the public to keep wearing their masks. We are currently in a surge of COVID cases. Follow the CDC guidelines, follow social distancing. We do not want to overwhelm our hospitals. Remain diligent and do your part to stop the spread. Commissioner Sather reiterated the need to follow precautions. This is the time to keep others in our prayers and thoughts.

Under public comments, Jim Lettiere requested a fourth addition to the agenda. Stacia-Fe Gillen would like to add consideration of approval for a notice of award for the Todd Township Municipal ADA Project. Information has been received by the Commissioners' Office on this item. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

There were no items to be addressed by the solicitor.

Under new business, Fred Gutshall, Public Defender, requested consideration of approval for the Department of Corrections State Parole Hearings Contract. If somebody needs a parole violation hearing or revocation hearing, those hearings are held wherever the prisoner is located at the time the hearing is necessary. Up until now, if somebody happened to be in SCI Smithfield or SCI Huntingdon and needed a state parole hearing, Huntingdon County would take care of those hearings. Earlier this year the Department of Corrections decided to localize those hearings. They are going to try to have all of the hearings at SCI Smithfield. It is required by law that the Public Defender's office in the county where the hearings are held is responsible for covering those hearings. The Department of Corrections recognizes that this is going to be a tremendous burden on our office so they have offered us the sum of \$220,000 to assist in covering those hearings. I am going to contract with enough attorneys to get the hearings covered. The money, according to the contract, is to be used however the county sees fit to make sure we meet this obligation. This is not something that we have a choice in. We will have to cover the

hearings and these funds are to help with that. Commissioner Sather commented that this is an obligation and responsibility of the counties in which the hearing is held. Attorney Gutshall responded that that is correct. Commissioner Walls commented that it is good that the state is going to offer us this funding but the contract says that either contract can terminate but that does not mean much to the County because we are going to be bound to do this anyhow. Attorney Gutshall commented that that is correct. Commissioner Walls further commented that if we do not like the terms of the contract and we would back out of it, the state would take the money away but we would still have to provide the services. Attorney Gutshall commented that that is accurate. Commissioner Thomas commented that the county has always had a good working relationship with the Department of Corrections. He commented that he always gets nervous about reimbursements from the state because we have in the past received IOUs in lieu of payment but the DOC has been a good partner of the county. They have provided us savings of \$280,000 on the prison meals and helped us secure masks at the beginning of the pandemic for all employees and inmates. Still I have great concern on collecting the \$220,000 because it is the state. The state controls the Department of Corrections budget, but I believe the folks they have in place down there now will do everything to make sure we get this money. We are obligated to do it. Here is where we run into problems. We bill the other counties for this and sometimes it is really hard to get the money off the other counties. It comes, but sometimes it comes a year after we provide the service. Attorney Gutshall responded that that is correct. Some counties are better about this than others. Years ago we sued Philadelphia because they were refusing to pay the majority of the bills. We won that lawsuit and I give credit to BMZ law that headed the lawsuit. I think it is a credit to the DOC that they recognize that they cannot just do this without trying to help us in some way. Commissioner Sather commented that being the SCI and Corrections Industries here in Huntingdon County are a major employer, it has been a good reciprocal relationship. Whenever the need had arisen we reached out to them as well as possibilities for containment and solutions regarding COVID. I would like to enhance that relationship if at all possible. I am concerned, as my colleagues are concerned as well, in terms of the continuation of the department providing payment to the county. I would like to see that continue for a longer period. Commissioner Walls asked Attorney Gutshall if he has been provided with figures of how many individuals go through these hearings every month. Do we have any idea of the workload? Attorney Gutshall responded that they are guessing that it is enough that it would require hearings every day of the week pretty much all day. It will require quite a few contracts for us to be able to fulfill this obligation. The money is necessary to try to achieve that. It is a heavy workload. I do not think that we know what the workload will be yet. This will also include female prisoners, which is a change as well. Commissioner Walls commented that on the clerical end there will be a heavy workload for the filing and billing. This will be quite a large job for the county. Commissioner Thomas commented that although this a three-year agreement he feels confident that the Department of Corrections will work with us if for some reason we need more funding once we see the workload. Attorney Gutshall agreed. Dean Fluke commented that there is a lot of responsibility that should fall on the County Commissioners on what each contract is. Things like that need to be transparent and I hope to see something when they implement. The county should be responsible for where the money went and how much went and how many hearings were held and where. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Len Hahn, Probation Director, requested consideration of approval to accept the resignation of Robert Leeman, Adult Probation Officer, effective December 3, 2020. He has accepted an offer of employment elsewhere. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Consideration of approval was given to ratify the CYS CARES Act Building Renovation Contract. This contract is for \$71,964 to Mid-State Construction of Altoona. Lee Zeger, from CES Engineering, provided additional details on the project. It did go through a public bidding process. It was publicly advertised. Mid-State was the only contractor that attended the pre-bid meeting. Three contractors requested plans for the project. One submitted a bid. Mid-State was the low bidder on the project. All bid paperwork met the requirements and the project fell within the expected budget. Commissioner Thomas wanted to make sure that the public is aware of what this renovation involves. This is for the second floor of the new building that we have purchased to ensure privacy, security, and COVID social distancing. Commissioner Thomas also offered his thanks to Shannon for the wonderful job she did representing CYS and the county on the news last night. Commissioner Sather also wanted to let the public know of the deadline for this project. Because it is using CARES Act funding, this project must be completed by December 30<sup>th</sup>. Shannon Walborn further commented on the building project stating that this project will help reduce foot traffic and will keep workers separated to stop the spread of COVID-19. It will provide a waiting area with a secure entrance so that health and safety concerns can be addressed. This gives us the ability to screen people before they enter the office area using our COVID questionnaire and allows us to check temperatures. Mr. Zeger commented that the contract is written for the work to be completed by the December 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Commissioner Thomas commented that we are holding off moving CYS up to the second floor so that the contractors will not have interactions with the employees or anyone up there. Dean Fluke asked if this will add anything to the years of payment on the mortgage. Currently the mortgage is set to be paid off in 15 years. Commissioner Sather commented that this contract is being paid through the CARES Act funding provided by the federal government that is passed through the state in accordance with Act 13. It can only be used for certain

requirements and all work must be completed by December 30<sup>th</sup>. These federal funds are stand-alone. There is no match. It is a federal pass-through directed to what the immediate needs are. It has nothing to do with the 15 year period. Mr. Fluke further commented that the public should be aware of these changes. Commissioner Sather responded that that is the function of these public meetings. Commissioner Sather further commented that Ms. Walborn represented that county and CYS well in her recent appearance on the news and thanked her for her hard work. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

The 2021 Proposed County Budget was presented for public inspection. It will be displayed for 20 days prior to approval at a public meeting. There is no tax increase this year and it is a balanced budget. Commissioner Thomas commented that a lot of work went into the preparation of this budget. He also reminded the public that last year we hired Susquehanna Accounting and Consulting Solutions which has been a huge asset for the budget in the last couple of years. Commissioner Sather commented that the budget will be available for public inspection in the office by appointment only or you may access it online at [www.huntingdoncounty.net](http://www.huntingdoncounty.net). Mr. Fluke commented that with a 20% increase last year there should not be a need for an increase this year. Commissioner Sather reiterated that there is not a tax increase this year. Kylie Hawn asked if there will be a public budget hearing this year. Commissioner Sather responded that we will hold an open discussion on the budget for the public at the regularly scheduled public meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup>. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the public presentation of the 2021 Proposed Budget.

Stacia-Fe Gillen, Community Development Administrator, requested consideration of approval for a notice of award for the ADA municipal restrooms project in Todd Township. This is a CDBG project funded in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to fix the municipal building and make it ADA accessible. We held the second bid opening on November 5, 2020. Bids were received from three bidders and was reviewed by staff at the Planning Office and Mr. Zeger, the engineer on the project. The lowest bid was not responsive so we moved to the next one. The second lowest bidder was Runk LLC. Their bid was for \$60,450. Commissioner Thomas commented that this has been a work in progress for a long time and he is glad to see that it is moving forward. Commissioner Walls commented that he is glad to see CDBG funding going to smaller communities. It makes a great impact and is something they would not be able to do themselves. We are glad to be able to help these smaller areas in this way. Commissioner Sather commented that seeing the usage of CDBG monies in this manner is very appropriate. It is hard for the smaller municipalities to acquire monies of these sorts to get projects completed. He offered his thanks to Stacia-Fe and the Planning Department for their work on this project. Dean Fluke asked if the 20% that we paid extra this year will be in the budget next year too. Commissioner Sather commented that we have moved on from budget discussions and are now acting on a notice of award to Runk LLC for a CDBG project. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Jim Lettiere, Planning Director, requested consideration of approval for an agreement between the County Commissioners and Mount Union Borough Council for Act 13 Marcellus Shale Legacy Funding for the Mount Union Community Garden Project. This project involves the creation of a fenced community garden on approximately 100x150 feet of land owned by the Borough. There will be 16 8x16 foot raised garden plots or 32 8x8 foot plots. One of these plots will be used for the local food pantry. The total cost of this project is \$9,000. After execution of this agreement, there is a one year period in which the project must be completed and the Planning Department will follow up regarding completion and payment of the project. Commissioner Walls urges Mount Union Borough to ensure that this project continues going forward in subsequent years. There have been other projects like this one where individuals have lost interest in the project after a year or two and the plot ends up growing up in weeds. This is a good opportunity for Mount Union Borough, but I would urge the community to follow through on it. Commissioner Sather commented that it is good to see community involvement. This would be a good step forward with everybody participating and it is available to all. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Consideration of approval was given to appoint two individuals to the Rural Transportation Technology Committee (RTTC) Board. Steward Neff and Debra Clark were appointed to this committee for a two year term. Commissioner Thomas commented that what this committee does is propose projects to the coordinating committee, which works with Penn DOT, for consideration. When you see the outreach going out for municipal bridge projects and other things, contact the Planning Director. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Consideration of approval was given for the reappointment of Wendy Melius to the Juniata Valley Behavioral and Developmental Services (JVBDS) Citizens Advisory Board for a term of three years. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

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

There were four Veteran's Burial Allowances.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather Fellman, Deputy Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary