

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

3-2021

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; 911 Director, Chris Stevens; District Attorney, Dave Smith; EMA Director, Joe Thompson; Probation Director, Len Hahn; Barb Covert and Michelle Heane from Employment and Training 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 Walls and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Commissioner Thomas.

It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the minutes of the January 12th 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 no additions to the agenda.

Under announcements, Commissioner Walls asked the newspaper to please include this announcement in their meeting coverage. We continue to have trash dumped outside the receptacles for recycling at almost all of the Huntingdon County recycling locations. Municipal employees are cleaning these messes up. Dumping trash outside of a dumpster is littering and once it gets wet it is no longer valuable for recycling so it creates an additional cost for the county to dispose of that. We urge folks to obey the regulations and only put trash in dumpsters. If there is not room in the receptacles, please take it home and bring it back at another time. It is your tax dollars that support this. If abused, these facilities may go away. Commissioner Sather expressed his appreciation to county offices. Throughout the pandemic, County Offices have remained open. It is recommended that members of the public call in ahead of time to make an appointment if they are not able to access the services they need remotely. Thank you to the offices for continuing to serve the public during these unprecedented times.

There were no public comments.

There were no items to be addressed by the solicitor.

Under new business, Barb Covert and Michelle Heane from Employment and Training requested consideration of approval for the signing of the 4th quarter MATP report. Commissioner Sather expressed his appreciation for keeping the services open during the pandemic. He commented that there was not a whole lot of reduction throughout the year. Ms. Heane commented that mileage was increased \$.25 per mile with additional parking and tolls, so that put our trip rate up a little bit. MATP in Harrisburg thought this was wise to do considering the pandemic to encourage consumers to use their own transport instead of using paratransport services. We have also implemented a cell phone for on-call over the weekend, and 8-4:30 times on Saturday and Sunday for services relating to early morning appointments on Monday or winter cancellations due to weather. Ms. Covert also commented that there was a lot of telemedicine over this time. Essential trips for things like chemotherapy and radiation treatments, dialysis, all of those continued without interruption. Commissioner Walls expressed his thanks to CareerLink and healthcare providers who weathered this and those that made medical transportation an option to continue. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Len Hahn, Probation Director, requested consideration of approval to hire for the position of Adult Probation Officer. Zachary Zimmerman has passed all of his pre-employment screenings and his appointment has been approved by the Courts. His start date would be January 25, 2021. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Len Hahn requested consideration of approval for an owner county agreement renewal for Central Counties Youth Center (CCYC) for the year 2021. This is the juvenile detention facility that the Court sometimes utilizes when we need to remove a juvenile temporarily from the community if there is a new arrest, violation of probation, or pending placement. We do not use this facility very often, but unfortunately sometimes it is needed. Commissioner Sather added that Huntingdon County is one of five owner counties for this facility. The five counties are Huntingdon, Mifflin, Clinton, Centre, and Clearfield. Commissioner Sather is Chair of the CCYC Board. The 2021 financial commitment is \$151,865. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

David Smith, District Attorney, requested consideration of approval to hire for the position of Temporary Trial Coordinator. This position will exist through the end of 2021. Sarah Snare would start in this position effective January 20, 2021. Salary is subject to approval by the Salary Board at a later date. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Thomas, no; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Joe Thompson, EMA Director, provided COVID-19 updates. Huntingdon County remains in the substantial level of community transmission. This is the highest and most concerning category, although there is some encouraging news that our daily positive testing numbers are going back down. There have been over 3500 positive tests to date in Huntingdon County and unfortunately over 90 deaths. The Department of Health is reporting that we are approaching 1300 partial vaccinations and over 200 full vaccinations administered in Huntingdon County. The vaccine is here and being used but this is not time to let our guard down. It is still important to wear masks, wash your hands and observe physical distancing. The daily hospitalizations are going up a little bit. The number of ER visits still remain high. The hospital is busy and they have an above average number of patients. We are in touch with our County educational facilities and long-term care facilities on a regular basis. There have been a number of changes and challenges that they have been through. We are fortunate enough to have some PPE supplies for emergency responders and county facilities. Some pharmacies have approval to give the vaccine including Rite Aid. Places that we know will have it include Penn Highlands Hospital, Broad Top Medical Center's Primary and Family Care Facility in the Wal Mart Plaza and the Mount Union Medical Center. We currently remain in the 1A category for vaccinations. This means that it is primarily healthcare workers receiving the vaccines at this point. Please remember that the designations for who is getting the vaccines first is coming down by order of the federal government to the state. The state is managing that. Still this week, anyone in healthcare that has not received the vaccine can contact one of those facilities. I would suggest anyone that is over age 75 and has not been vaccinated, please contact one of those facilities as well. By the end of the week I believe we will be moving into the next phase of vaccination, phase 1B, which will include individuals over 65 with medical conditions. We expect to see wide distribution beginning in March and April. We may not need the mass vaccination clinic but we are prepared if we do need it. Huntingdon County is on the list to have another testing facility brought in by the state. We do not have exact information on that yet. The Huntingdon County Jail is now up and running pretty much as normal. If you have any questions about whether you should receive the vaccine, please contact your healthcare provider. For those who are looking to get the latest information, I would refer you to the PA Department of Health, either the toll-free phone number 1-877-PAHEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or the website health.pa.gov. As we receive new information, we will do our best to keep the information flowing. Commissioner Thomas thanked Mr. Thompson for the update. One of his main concerns of getting the shots to those that want it is getting information to the elderly residents living on their own about how to arrange to get it and when. Mr. Thompson responded that his office is working on that with the news media, social media, and the Area Agency on Aging. Commissioner Sather said that the Commissioners would like to welcome Mr. Thompson back to the public meeting on a regular basis to help get this information out to the public. Mr. Thompson's calm, reasoned approach is reassuring and appreciated. We want to make sure everyone is served during this difficult time.

Chris Stevens, 911 Director, requested consideration of approval for the PEMA 911 Statewide Interconnectivity Funding Award. The grant agreement is for 2021 and Huntingdon County will be receiving \$367,280.81 for 911 projects. The projects are broken into five categories, four of which are routine yearly maintenance and the fifth is a regional CAD project with the Southern Alleghenies Area Cooperative. \$212,451.76 is our share of the regional CAD plus all new CAD hardware for the Huntingdon County 911 Center. There is no copayment or repayment. This is a 100% grant. Commissioner Walls asked Mr. Stevens to explain for the public what the regional CAD is and what it does. Mr. Stevens responded that as Pennsylvania transitions to the next generation 911, PEMA is requesting

that the interconnectivity between counties is improved and regional services become more prevalent. What the regional CAD will do is supply one CAD server for our group, which is Lincoln County, Fulton County, Bedford County, Centre County, Somerset County, and Cambria County. It will interconnect the computer dispatch system of all the counties so that information is more freely shared. As PEMA is pushing for more integration, our region has been working well together to meet their requirements. Commissioner Walls commented that one benefit is redundancy and a better guarantee of better emergency services dispatching for our residents. It is also saving taxpayer dollars. The County is not having to pay out of the general fund to update those old components of the 911 system. Mr. Stevens commented that if we had to replace the computer system out of the general fund, it would cost the taxpayers approximately \$110,000. Working with our region and PEMA we are able to continue to operate the 911 Center with no Huntingdon County general fund money. Commissioner Thomas commented that it is important to note that without the rewrite of the 911 Code in 2015, none of this would be happening because we would not have the money to put into these projects and even the maintenance going forward with the new equipment. We have received several of these grants since 2016. I remember the days when the County had to have a line item in the budget to help fund 911 because the fees we got from PEMA would not do it. Hopefully that rewrite last a while and the legislators will read this newspaper and continue to look at the needs of the 911 system in the future. Mr. Stevens expressed his hope that they will keep the funding formula and payment schedule as it is currently written without any changes. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Consideration of approval was given for Resolution 3-2021 to authorize access for the Deputy Chief Clerk to the dotGrants System for required annual liquid fuels reporting. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Consideration of approval was given for the intergovernmental agreement between PennDOT and Huntingdon County to authorize access to the PennDOT system. Commissioner Thomas commented that this access is necessary because we are using federal funds through the TIP for an upcoming bridge project. The engineering is starting this year on that project for the New Fording Bridge in Todd Township. To get those funds and do the reporting through PennDOT we need this document also. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, 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 10:19 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather Fellman, Deputy Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary