

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

6-2022

The regular meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date and time in the Commissioner's Meeting Room with the following present: Commissioners Sather, Walls and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman; Solicitor, Larry Newton; Deputy Chief Clerk, Tracey Rhodes; CYS Director, Shannon Walborn; Prothonotary, Sarah Snare; EMA Director, Joe Thompson; Planning Director, Jim Lettiere and Daily News Reporter, Kylie Hawn.

There were no attendees via GoToMeeting.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner Sather. 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 previous meeting.

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

There was one addition to the agenda: An addendum to the Jail Medical Services Agreement with Dr. Minor. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes) to add this item to the agenda.

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas urged residents to help get the county back to normal by getting the COVID vaccine and the booster, if eligible. He also encouraged residents to allow their children to be vaccinated against COVID. He commented that he hopes everyone will do their part to help keep everyone safe.

There were no public comments.

Under items to be discussed by the solicitor, Solicitor Newton noted that Dr. Minor has been the physician at the jail for a number of years. The most recent agreement expired on 9/15/2021. The addendum will renew year to year until terminated by either party with 60 days written notice.

Under new business, Shannon Walborn, CYS Director, requested consideration of approval to hire Johanna Rinker for the open Clerk Typist Position effective 2/28/2022. She has passed all required pre-employment screenings. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Shannon Walborn requested consideration of approval for herself, Claudia Conrad and a program specialist to attend the PA Children and Youth Administrators meeting in March. This meeting will be held in State College, so no hotel stay will be necessary. Ms. Walborn will attend for three days and Ms. Conrad will attend for two. The total cost is \$400. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Sarah Snare, Prothonotary, requested consideration of approval to hire Rachel Miller for the last open Deputy Clerk position. She has passed all of her pre-employment screenings and her proposed start date will be 2/9/2022. 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 of the technical proposal report and engineering agreement for the replacement or rehabilitation of the New Fording Bridge. Mackin Engineering is the consulting firm on the project. The Commissioners expressed their preference for the bridge to be replaced and the original 1889 bridge to be moved and repurposed elsewhere in the county. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested consideration of approval for Resolution 3-2022 authorizing Commissioner Sather to be the signatory for the reimbursement agreement between the county and PennDOT for the costs associated with paying an engineer and for the construction work. It is programmed on the TIP. The total project cost is \$1,517,000. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested consideration of approval for a lobbying certification form affirming that none of the Commissioners have lobbied any member or employee of Congress for the appropriation of any federal funds associated with this bridge. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Consideration of approval for the addendum to Dr. Mark Minor's agreement with the Jail to provide medical services for inmates. This agreement expired in September of 2021. The addendum extends the agreement to September 15, 2022 and allows for auto-renewal from year to year unless cancelled by either party with 60 days written notice. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Joe Thompson, EMA Director, presented an update on COVID-19. We are still in a high rate of community spread but numbers are beginning to look more encouraging. The average number of new cases per day in the county was 54. The percent positivity is down to 20% which is only slightly above the state which is at 18.4%. The total number of positives since the beginning of the pandemic in Huntingdon County is 11,109, which accounts for about 25% of the population. 234 have died since the beginning of the pandemic. 10 have died this week. The hospital is averaging 9-10 patients. There are currently 9 with 2 in the ICU. The total number of vaccinations for Huntingdon County stands at 23,830, which is about 52% of the population. SCI Smithfield reports 99 positive inmates and 18 staff. SCI Huntingdon reports 14 inmates and 14 staff. Prisons have suspended in-person visitation until March. There is nothing significant to report from the schools. The Department of Health reports a total of 58 COVID cases among school-aged children and 12 among children 4 and under. Juniata College reports a total of 31 cases for this semester. Long-term care facilities are still doing well. The PA Department of Health is establishing four long-term care regional support sites to help relieve pressure on the healthcare workers in hospitals. One of the regional support sites will open at the Lutheran Home in Hollidaysburg. It is expected to be open for about 90 days. That is the initial plan. The idea is that that facility will open and provide additional space in the hospitals. A contracted company is supplying clinical staff and the National Guard will supply non-clinical staff. The Department of Health is also requesting federal emergency medical services in the form of ambulance strike teams. There will be 10 ambulances coming to the state to support those sites and help provide additional relief to the healthcare system. The purpose for these ambulances will mostly be for inter-facility transportation. One new development we are following is the State EMS COVID-19 recovery grant program that is working its way through the legislature in Harrisburg. The initial details are that it can be used by EMS agencies to provide services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial amount is \$25 million. It

has passed the Senate. The vaccine remains widely available and testing continues to be available. COVID-19 tests are also available over the counter. Commissioner Thomas commented that it is encouraging that the numbers are coming down but the number of deaths is horrific. Commissioner Sather commented that the deaths are a tragedy but they also do not provide a full picture. Those are the deaths of people that have died directly because of infection with COVID-19. There are also people who have died because of lack of access to preventative healthcare because of the strain on the healthcare system over the past two years. Commissioner Thomas commented that the sad thing is that a lot of those deaths were preventable if politics could have been kept out of science. Commissioner Walls commented it is encouraging to see that we are getting some help with transports. Joe Thompson commented that this is the most open Board of Commissioners that he has seen in communicating all of this COVID information to the public.

There was nothing discussed under matters for action, information and discussion.

There were 2 Veteran's Burial Allowances.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather N. Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary