

## COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION

March 14, 2022

### Present at the meeting were

#### Commissioners:

Brian S. Allen – Chairman  
Gary R. Eby – Vice-Chairman  
Brenda L. Watson - Secretary  
William R. Bunt – Solicitor  
Shannon Hines – Chief Clerk

#### Present from the Press: Jim Ryan

**Present from the Public via WebEx Video/Telephone or In Person:** Nick Birbeck, Amanda Brookhart, Frank Campbell, Wayne Campbell, Kristie Carl Gantt, Noah Cline, Stan Good, Dave Hammar, Barry Leiby, Taira Little, Catriona Mickey, Rich Pluta, Bob Ressler, Andrew Ryan, Marty Smith, Alyson Thebes, Rob Troxell, and Randy Waggoner

Commissioner Allen opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on March 14, 2022 with the Pledge to the Flag and a moment of silence. The meeting was conducted in person and via WebEx telephone/video conference in the Commissioners' Meeting Room. The meeting was recorded by the County.

**Announcements/Updates:** Commissioner Eby, as a member of the Perry County Health Coalition, stated that the West Perry School Board would be holding an important meeting that night. He encouraged individuals to reach out to the school board members to voice their support for the Sadler Health Clinic that would be on the school campus. He commented that this voluntary clinic is both an asset to the students and to the community.

Commissioner Watson seconded Commissioner Eby's comments and said it is an extremely important service and also encouraged residents to voice their support.

**Public Comments:** Wayne Campbell asked if the Commissioners, or the Planning Commission, had taken into consideration zoning for solar panel operations. He stated that solar companies look for areas with access to transportation and utilities and Perry County has these two items. He commented that he is part of the Pennsylvania State Grange and they recently conducted a panel discussion at the Farm Show regarding solar operations. Mr. Campbell said the State Grange is currently working with legislators on a bill to stop class 1 and 2 farmland from being used for solar operations. He commented that there are approximately 420 proposed solar operations in the state and that equates to about 80,000 acres of land. He also stated that he is a Tuscarora Township Supervisor and his township is looking to add verbiage on their election ballot asking township residents about implementing a fire tax. He said his concern is the small amount of manpower for the local fire companies and asked if any of the federal funding could be used to implement a scholarship for new firefighter trainees that could help pay for training and equipment. Mr. Campbell said that the 300 hours of required training makes recruiting new firefighters difficult.

Randy Waggoner, Chief Assessor, stated that he quotes from the Clean and Green law when individuals contact him about solar operations. He said that the Clean and Green regulations allow for alternative energy sources, but dictate that the majority of the energy generated must be used on the property. He commented that if it is not, it is a violation of Clean and Green and it is a rollback on the entire property. Mr. Waggoner said that several of the solar companies he has spoken with have said they will add language in their contracts with property owners to pay the rollback taxes. He said this shows that solar companies want to come into the area but property owners should be informed.

Wayne Campbell said that in the solar contracts there are clauses on who will pay the reclamation when the contract ends. He commented that the money made over the course of the contract could go back into the cost of getting rid of the solar panels. He said he only knew of one company that recycles the panels.

Stan Good asked what prevents a person from selling land for a development. He said individuals don't want developments, but they also don't want solar either.

Barry Leiby presented certificates and a plaque to the Commissioners for helping to establish the Toys for Tots program in the County. He thanked Commissioner Watson for volunteering during the distribution day.

Bob Ressler stated that in December he had applied for a grant through the Department of Health and he had just received the award in the amount of \$10,000. He said it was for providing drug overdose information. Mr. Ressler said he would be applying for another grant.

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Eby made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 7, 2022 Commissioners' Meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

**Approval of the Warrant List(s):** Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the warrant lists in the total amount of \$447,898.36. Commissioner Eby seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

**Meeting Business:** Commissioner Allen present certificates of service to the following employees:

- Andrew Ryan (5 years)
- Catriona Mickey (5 years)
- Amanda Brookhart (15 years)
- Clyde Niblack (5 years)
- Adam Briggs (10 years)

Commissioner Eby made a motion to approve the HOME Program contract with DCED. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

**Employee Status:** Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the transfer of Joshua Lahr to the position of Case Administrator Clerk in the Domestic Relations Department effective March 27, 2022 at an hourly rate of \$19.27. Commissioner Eby seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Allen reminded everyone that there would be no Commissioners' Meeting on the week of March 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Solicitor's Report:** None

**Public Comments:** Commissioner Eby commented that the point on firefighter training is a point well taken. He said the Board of Commissioners had previously approved over \$250,000 of CARES Act funding to fire and EMS organizations. He also said that fire and EMS organizations are eligible to apply for the SAFER grant, which emphasizes training and retention. He said the grant writer is working on a SAFER grant for a County Department currently. Commissioner Eby said these are highly competitive, nationwide grants. He said he wished that the Fire Association and EMS Association would look at appropriating funds for scholarships and for training for these critical services. Commissioner Eby stated that Perry County exceeded our neighboring class 3 counties in providing funding to fire and EMS organizations.

**Comments from the Press:** Jim Ryan commented that former Commissioner Brenda Benner had attended the Howe Township meeting and talked about the County's ad hoc committee and finding a location for senior citizen housing. He asked if the Commissioners could provide more information on this project.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to adjourn at 10:24 a.m. Commissioner Eby seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

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Shannon Hines, Chief Clerk

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Brenda L. Watson, Secretary