

## COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION

August 21, 2023

### Present at the meeting were

#### Commissioners:

Brenda L. Watson – Vice Chairman  
Larry F. Reisinger – Secretary  
William R. Bunt - Solicitor  
Shannon Hines – Chief Clerk

#### Present from the Press: None

**Present from the Public in Person or via WebEx:** Kristine Adkins, LeAnn Behrendt, Frank Campbell, Noah Cline, Tyler Dombroski, Gail Feigler, Jason Finnerty, Rich Fultz, Kristie Gantt, Jeff Garman, Charlie Garner, Sarah Geesaman, George Gochenaur, Erica Grafmyer, Christine Gustafson, Gabe Guthrie, Dave Hammar, Douglas Hockenberry, Nicole Kelly, Randy Kessler, Scott Kliggenberg, Art Lindsay, Bill Lyons, Crista Lyons, Amber Martin, John McNaughton, Robbyn Metz, Rich Pluta, Dave Pundock, Faith Pundock, Robert Ressler, John Sledzinski Jr., Marty Smith, Wes Smith, Rob Troxell, Ashley Weaver, and Josh Wilson

Commissioner Watson opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. on August 21, 2023 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' Conference Room. The meeting was recorded by the County and Randy Kessler.

**Announcements/Updates:** Commissioner Watson stated that the meeting was the Commissioners' business meeting and not a question-and-answer session. She said attendees will be allowed to make comments but anyone speaking over one another will be asked to leave the meeting. She further said a reassessment townhall will be held on September 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Family Life Center in Newport. Commissioner Watson said the Commissioners will continue to hold one evening meeting per month and meetings for the months of September, October, and November are being coordinated. She stated that additional details will be forthcoming. She commented that concerns regarding other issues have been raised by the public and the Board is committed to addressing those issues as well.

Commissioner Reisinger said Governor Shapiro signed into law a property tax rebate program. He said the program will now cover an additional 175,000 individuals and is income driven. He commented that it allows seniors to apply and receive up to \$1,000 towards their property taxes. He stated it is the first time this law has been expanded since 2006.

Commissioner Watson commented that she attended the Perry County Fair last week and it was wonderful to see the kids with their animals.

Commissioner Reisinger said he is the Treasurer of the Fair Board and commented that it was a very successful event. He thanked everyone that attended the fair.

**Public Comments:** George Gochenaur said if you cannot ask questions then there is no reason to open your mouth.

Douglas Hockenberry said that at the August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, Commissioner Allen said ARPA applications would continue to be accepted and this was not included in the meeting minutes.

Randy Kessler stated that he records the meetings and was recording today. He said former Commissioner Gary Eby was given over five minutes to speak at the last meeting, and everyone else was held to three minutes. He stated this is a double standard. Mr. Kessler also said that when Mr. Eby was asked if he would answer

questions, he used the word “honey” when speaking to another attendee and further said he spoke on behalf of the Commissioners even though Mr. Eby said he was not speaking on their behalf. Mr. Kessler said it seemed like there was an intentional effort made by Mr. Eby to defend the way in which COVID Relief funds were applied by the County. He said Mr. Eby blamed the press for not getting information out regarding the funding, but Mr. Kessler said it is the Commissioners’ duty to get the information out. Mr. Kessler read a statement made by Lloyd Byers at the last meeting in which Mr. Byers said he had not seen the names of the individuals speaking out on the ballot and said they could run for office. Mr. Kessler said citizens have the right to request answers and evening meetings even if they do not run for office. Mr. Kessler quoted Mr. Eby’s statement from the last meeting regarding using federal ARPA funds for the reassessment. He said this use of ARPA funds does not make sense to him when businesses lost tens of thousands of dollars.

Erica Grafmyer asked who is reviewing and approving the ARPA applications that are being submitted. She also questioned how applicants would be notified about their applications.

LeAnn Behrendt stated Robbyn Metz had submitted questions on August 14<sup>th</sup> and asked if the Commissioners could address any of the questions or provide clarification since they have had ample time to review the questions.

Robbyn Metz said she had submitted Right to Know requests for basic information such as a County organization chart, reserve balance, treasurer report, and vision statement which should be on the County website. She commented asked if the County is exploring other things other than broadband due to changes in technology. She further stated that it seems like the companies may be moving forward to do broadband projects without County funds. Ms. Metz said federal money is still our money and ARPA funds cannot be used to offset tax reductions or delay a tax or tax increase. She said a reassessment falls into this category. Ms. Metz thanked the Commissioners for the townhall and evening meetings. She also commented that the Commissioners should have gone out for competitive bid for the reassessment to ensure they were getting the best price for the people of the County. Ms. Metz further stated that she did not understand why aerial photography could not be used to complete the reassessment instead of going to every single property, as this would cut down on the cost of the project. She asked why do the reassessment now, as West Perry School District had 40% of the district deemed in the poverty level. Ms. Metz said it was sad and the County is taxing people out of their homes.

Ashley Weaver said it was the first meeting she had attended and she was glad she had not brought her children. She said the way people were being treated at the meeting was unconstitutional as the Commissioners are a servant to the people. She said there needs to be transparency and based on the comments in the room it seems like taxes will be out of control. Ms. Weaver said she will be participating in future meetings.

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Reisinger made a motion approve the minutes from the August 14, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

**Employee Service Recognition:** Commissioner Watson recognized Kristine Adkins for 10 years of committed service to Perry County.

**Meeting Business:** Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the following FY 2023 CDBG funding allocations:

- Newport Borough – Curbs and Sidewalks Project \$108,586
- New Buffalo Borough – Sewer Plant Upgrade \$108,586

Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-07 authorizing the submission of Perry County's FY 2023 CDBG application. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-08 CDBG Fair Housing Resolution. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-09 CDBG Compliance Officer and Grievance Process. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve Cumberland-Perry Drug & Alcohol Commission contracts (attached). Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the MH/IDD contracts for Mental Health for fiscal year 2023/2024 in the total amount of \$28,200 (attached). Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-10 Supporting the US Semiquincentennial (AMERICA250PA). Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-11 Appointment of Brenda Watson to the Southcentral Local Elected Officials (LEO) Board. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the 2023/2024 Children & Youth In-Home contracts (below). Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

- Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center- (Rate Increase \$5.00) -\$175.00/Consultation.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the Records Improvement Fund request from the Conservation District in the amount of \$560. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the FY 2022 - 2027 Supervision Funds Agreement for Probation. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

**Employee Status:** Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the termination of Eliezal Heredia, Part Time Correctional Officer at the Perry County Prison, effective August 11, 2023. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the promotion of Lauren Leinbach to the position of Ag Program Lead in the Conservation District effective August 22, 2023 at an hourly rate of \$25.18. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the following to the position of Part Time Correctional Officer at the Perry County Prison effective August 22, 2023 at an hourly rate of \$20.83:

- Brian Smeltz
- Jason Heenan

Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** None

**Public Comments:** Randy Kessler again stated that at last week's meeting Gary Eby was allowed to speak for five minutes, and everyone else was held to three minutes. He said Mr. Eby defended the choice to spend \$60,000 to scan old County records, while businesses are struggling. Mr. Kessler said the County is sitting on \$8 million dollars of ARPA funds, without a strategic plan and businesses continue to struggle. He said Mr. Eby stated that if a business received CARES Act funding, they are not eligible to receive ARPA funding. He said if this statement is true, he has documents showing that Cross Country Coaches received CARES and ARPA funding. Mr. Kessler further said that it seems as though Solicitor Bunt has advised the Commissioners to not answer questions and said there is obviously something to hide. He told attendee to continue to send in Right to Know requests and then bring the information to the meetings.

Erica Grafyer asked if Vision would be at the townhall meeting. She said the Commissioners should consider pausing the reassessment until all the questions can be answered. She commented that she hopes there will be answers provided at the townhall.

Robbyn Metz stated that she appreciated Randy Waggoner speaking with her about the reassessment. She said the current environment is the wrong time to do the reassessment. She commented that she is very skeptical that only a third of the property taxes will go up. Ms. Metz said Mr. Waggoner explained how reassessment would affect the school districts, but questioned when the Commissioners had reached out to the school districts to alert them of this project. She said there needs to be more planning for the future.

Sheriff Dave Hammar said he appreciated everyone's passionate convictions at the meeting and appreciated the way everyone conducted themselves at the meeting.

Jeff Garman said he spent several months with the West Perry Business Manager going over the school budget. He asked if there was someone in the County that would be willing to sit down with members of the public to go over the County budget. He further questioned if all the details were provided on the County website.

Art Lindsay asked what the future was for high-speed internet. He further asked if the County could put some pressure on Brightspeed as their customer service is horrible. He said it is impossible to work from home.

Robbyn Metz said to check out T-Mobile as she has had success with their service.

Erica Grafmyer commented that she switched to T-Mobile and has also had good service.

**Comments from the Press:** None

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to adjourn at 10:36 a.m. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

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Shannon Hines, Chief Clerk

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Larry F. Reisinger, Secretary

## Cumberland-Perry Drug & Alcohol Contracts

Provider	Service	22/23	23/24	Rate increase	Percent Increase
Perry Human Services	Vivitrol CRS	\$33,842	\$33,842	\$0.00	0%
Egleville Hospital	3.5 High Adult Activity 823B	\$389.00	\$429.00	\$40.00	10%
	3.5 High Enhanced Activity 823B	\$413.00	\$452.00	\$39.00	9%
	3.7 Intensive Activity 823A	\$450.00	\$495.00	\$45.00	10%
	3.7 Intensive Enhanced Activity 823A	\$525.00	\$525.00	\$0.00	0%
	3.7 WM Activity 823A	\$418.00	\$500.00	\$82.00	20%
	4 (Medically Managed) Activity 834B	\$525.81	\$525.81	\$0.00	0%
	4 WM (Medically Managed) Activity 834A	\$525.81	\$525.81	\$0.00	0%

## FY 23/24 MH/IDD Contracts

Provider / Summary of Services	Contract #	Status	Previous Contract Total	Current Contract Total	Increase / Decrease
PERRY COUNTY (PRISON) New/Renewal for FY 23-24 MH Services - Transitional and community integration (half of salary/benefits for counselor at prison)	MH23-0019	No Change	\$ 28,200	\$ 28,200	\$ -
<b>Total All Contracts</b>				\$ 28,200	