

COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION

August 28, 2023

Present at the meeting were

Commissioners:

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

Present from the Press: Paul Wyatt

Present from the Public in Person or via WebEx: Malinda Anderson, LeAnn Behrendt, Andrea Bowersox, James Brady, Frank Campbell, Kristie Gantt, Jeff Garman, Sarah Geesaman, Jan Gibboney, George Gochenaur, Erica Grafmyer, Dr. Pat Gutheil, Dave Hammar, Damon Hartman, Douglas Hockenberry, Randy Kessler, Art Lindsay, Bill Lyons, Robbyn Metz, Dave Pundock, Faith Pundock, Robert Ressler, Mary Ellen Roberts-Campbell, Megan Sellers, Marty Smith, Wes Smith, Michelle Thebes, Rob Troxell, Randy Waggoner, Josh Wilson, Marc Wilson, and Jonette Zeigler

Commissioner Allen opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on August 28, 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, Megan Sellers, and Randy Kessler.

Announcements/Updates: Commissioner Allen stated that there would not be a meeting on September 4th due to the Labor Day holiday.

Commissioner Reisinger said evening Commissioners' meetings would continue. He stated that the following meetings would be held:

September 18 – Shermansdale EMS Building
October 16 – Blain Fire Hall
November 20 – Duncannon Borough Building

He confirmed that the meetings would begin at 7:00 p.m. and the information would be posted on the County website.

Public Comments: Erica Grafmyer asked if the Board was taking questions. She questioned if the reassessment townhall scheduled for September 20 would be advertised to the public and where it would be advertised. Ms. Grafmyer commented that Robbyn Metz submitted questions on August 14 and asked if answers could be given to those questions. She further stated that Commissioner Allen stated on August 7th that ARPA applications would continue to be accepted and asked if that was true.

Malinda Anderson, New Bloomfield Borough President, stated that on July 20 a PP&L pole on the square had been hit by a tractor trailer and currently there is no power in the square. She said it will affect the upcoming street fair.

Damon Hartman, Public Works Director for New Bloomfield Borough, said that all sidewalk lighting in the area is down. He said PP&L will be replacing the pole in the next 2-3 weeks. He further stated that the electrical panels will no longer be able to be on the pole and will need to be relocated. Mr. Hartman commented that he will need to coordinate with the County on the relocation. He said now is a good time to look at the

traffic pattern in the square to assess if there are any actions that could be taken to address the issues with tractor trailer traffic and he may need the County's support in communications with PennDOT regarding this.

Faith Pundock asked what the Election Integrity Grant Program was, what it is used for, and how much money the grant was for. She further questioned if Commissioner Watson is the only decision maker on the broadband RFQ's. She asked if the broadband vendor that is selected will be running underground wires or on poles. She said the broadband RFQ was pushed back.

Douglas Hockenberry said that at last week's meeting it was stated that financial and budget information would be posted on the County website and asked when it would be available to the public online. He commented that Gary Eby stated at the fair meeting that if you received CARES funding you were not eligible for ARPA funding. Mr. Hockenberry stated that there were two businesses that received both funding sources and asked how this happened.

LeAnn Behrendt questioned if Randy Waggoner has a schedule set through Vision to go out to municipalities to present about the reassessment. She said on there was a glitch in the meeting minutes regarding the Vision contract and the November 11th minutes are not available. Ms. Behrendt further asked who the vendor is for the website.

George Gochenaur questioned if all the ARPA money in the County's possession has been allocated. He asked that once a plan is announced for use of the ARPA funds if it would be public information.

Robbyn Metz stated that at last week's meeting it was announced that it was not a question-and-answer session and she felt admonished by this statement. She said the Sunshine Act allows for the public to ask questions, but does indicate that questions do not have to be answered. Ms. Metz commented that it is a good practice to answer questions and promotes transparency. She also said it saves time and money by reducing right to know requests. She read a statement regarding leadership and said you cannot be nasty and expect to be respected just because of your title. She said she has seen nastiness on both sides and said we are all connected. Ms. Metz said the Commissioners were elected and the public trusts them to make decisions and answer questions. She further stated that she hopes the townhall will open the dialog.

Megan Sellers said it was her first meeting as she had heard that the County's elected officials were disrespecting the public and not hearing them out. She further stated that it is our right and duty to abolish a government that is not listening to its constituents. Ms. Sellers said election integrity is important and the lack of awareness of what the grant is when asked is not good. She requested that the Election Integrity Grant Program that is on the agenda be tabled because she has data showing that removing the voting machines would cost tax payers less money. She said she would count every vote and it is an illusion that you can vote out elected officials. Ms. Sellers again requested that the Election Integrity Grant Program be tabled. She asked if the funds tied to the grant was coming from the HAVA grant.

Art Lindsay said the Commissioners better get started on advertising the townhall as it is only a few weeks away. He stated that Commissioner Watson stated that a third-party vendor was involved with the broadband project and asked if there was a contract with them. He further questioned how much the contract was for and if there was a not to exceed amount. Mr. Lindsay said there should be a not to exceed amount so that the County can hold them to a fixed dollar amount.

Randy Waggoner, Chief Assessor, stated that he has been to 14 municipal meetings to date and has 3 more scheduled. He further said that he does not advertise the meetings as he is a guest of the municipality at their meeting. He commented that he would provide a listing of the meetings he has attended to anyone without filing a Right to Know request.

Malinda Anderson asked if she would like to have Mr. Waggoner at a New Bloomfield Borough meeting should she make a formal solicitation to him.

Randy Waggoner said to send an email to him to schedule.

Paul Wyatt stated that mention of the townhall was in last week's paper and will also be in the coming issue.

Jeff Garman said that everyone is not against the Commissioners, but they do want information and answers. He commented that Comcast seems to be the best broadband and questioned why Comcast cannot come into the County. Mr. Garman also said he knows that election machines are not to be connected to the internet but doubts that is the case.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Reisinger made a motion approve the minutes from the August 21, 2023 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 totaling \$1,012,473.51 and noted that \$76,164.97 was ERAP funds. Commissioner Reisinger seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Meeting Business: Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the following 2024/2025 Children & Youth budget. Commissioner Reisinger seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the quote from Hilton's Lock & Security for ADA door openers at a cost of \$6,940. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the proposal from Clear Ballot for municipal election services. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the Election Integrity Grant Program contract. Commissioner Reisinger seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Employee Status: Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to accept the resignation of Inez Thornton, Deputy Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts in the Prothonotary's Department, effective August 22, 2023. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to accept the resignation of Rachel Foster, Caseworker in the Children & Youth Services Department, effective September 1, 2023. Commissioner Reisinger seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to accept the resignation of Hilary Caldwell, Office Manager in the Probation Department, effective September 1, 2023. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Solicitor's Report: None

Public Comments: Erica Grafmyer said she was happy Commissioner Allen was back and thanked him for answering some questions. She said the way you treat people dictates that way you will be treated in return. She further stated that until answers are given the questions will continue. Ms. Grafmyer asked what process is

place for the ARPA applications that are being submitted. She questioned who will be approving the applications.

Rob Troxell said the County website states that the Broadband RFQ reopened on August 10 and will close September 25. He asked if this is correct.

Randy Waggoner complimented Paul Wyatt for his accurate article regarding the reassessment that was published in the County newspapers.

Faith Pundock questioned how the deadline for ARPA applications could be August 31 when it was stated there was no plan in place for recently submitted ARPA applications. She also asked what is Clear Ballot. Ms. Pundock questioned if the Election Integrity Grant program funds was coming from HAVA.

Sarah Geesaman, Election Director, stated that the Election Integrity Grant funds come from DCED and Clear Ballot is the voting machine vendor.

George Gochenaur stated that Treasurer Jan Gibboney should be involved in some of the decision making with the Commissioners. He said he would be an asset to the current Board of Commissioners and those that are incoming. He commented that a monthly Treasurer's report should be provided.

Robbyn Metz stated that the reassessment was not advertised properly and stated that many people cannot access the County website due to broadband issues and many people do not read the newspaper. She asked how the reassessment would be advertised moving forward. She said the town hall should be opened to include COVID funding information. Ms. Metz stated that based on the news a shut down is being discussed and urged the Commissioners to address questions regarding the COVID funding.

Megan Sellers said she was shocked by how the meeting was happening and had just witnessed Commissioners rubber stamping the Election Integrity Grant program and Clear Ballot. She said the Commissioners could have fixed the election issues by passing a referendum to remove the voting machines. Ms. Sellers said she will be asking for a referendum in the future and if the Commissioners do not want to do it, she would.

Art Lindsay asked if the Hilton ADA door quote that was just approved was for yearly maintenance or a new door. He further asked if they were broken and noted the cost of almost \$7,000.

Marty Smith, Maintenance Director, said it was for new ADA doors at a location that does not have them and commented that he had solicited three quotes.

Randy Kessler said the County received invoices for ariel mapping each year and noted an upcharge for change finder. He commented that this would show changes based on the ariel mapping. He stated that the GIS mapping site is very outdated and questioned how the mapping is not updated each year. Mr. Kessler said he has asked several times who the vendor for the County website minutes was and asked if an answer could be provided. He said who is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the minutes.

Sarah Geesaman said that poll workers are paid.

Comments from the Press: None

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to adjourn at 10:50 a.m. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Shannon Hines, Chief Clerk

Larry F. Reisinger, Secretary