

COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION
October 2, 2023

Present at the meeting were

Commissioners:

Brian S. Allen – Chairman via telephone
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: Mary Ann Brownawell, Doug Brubaker, Frank Campbell, Sue Carbaugh, Jack Carroll, Rich Fultz, Kristie Gantt, Charlie Garner, Sarah Geesaman, Jan Gibboney, Dr. Pat Gutheil, Dave Hammar, Randy Kessler, Bill Lyons, Darla McNaughton, Robbyn Metz, Dave Pundock, Faith Pundock, Robert Ressler, Marty Smith, Wes Smith, Annie Strite, Alyson Thebes, Robin Tolan, Rob Troxell, Randy Waggoner, Josh Wilson

Commissioner Watson opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. on October 2, 2023 with the Pledge to the Flag and a moment of silence and noted that Commissioner Allen would be participating by telephone. The meeting was conducted in person and via WebEx telephone/video conference in the Commissioners' Conference Room. The meeting was recorded by the County, Paul Wyatt, and Randy Kessler.

Announcements/Updates: Commissioner Watson stated that she had attended the Daughters of the American Revolution event over the weekend and said it was informative.

Public Comments: Bob Ressler, Coroner, stated that the District Attorney's Office held a press conference last week announcing that one of the County's unidentified bodies had been identified as Michael Holober of Virginia. He said the Pennsylvania State Police put a lot of work into the case to solve the homicide and his office provided the DNA information. Mr. Ressler said he will now be working on identifying a female homicide victim from 1979.

Sheriff Hammar said that the new District Attorney, Clay Merris, was sworn in that morning.

Sarah Geesaman, Director of Elections/Voter Registration, commented that the last day to register to vote is October 23rd, the last day to apply for a mail-in ballot is October 31, and election day is scheduled for November 7th.

Charlie Garner asked if there would be another reassessment town hall meeting.

Randy Waggoner, Chief Assessor, said that as part of the contract there will be three additional meetings, timed close to when notices go out. He further stated that these meetings will be spaced out geographically around the County.

Charlie Garner asked when residents will be notified of their reassessed values, because it seems like some people already know their values.

Randy Waggoner commented that no one knows what their reassessed values are. He said he was aware there was a Facebook post in which an individual said she had received her reassessment value. Mr. Waggoner stated that the notice she had received was the change of assessment notice because of a building permit from the

Assessment Office. He said his office explained this to the resident but another post correcting the mistake was never posted. Mr. Waggoner said formal notices of value will go out in three groups in 2025.

Randy Kessler asked when the County will be awarding the ARPA funds. He said that \$3.5 million of the ARPA funds would be dedicated to an infrastructure bank and asked what ideas there are for the remaining funds. He commented that the County has grants for a new building and questioned if the County would limit the cost of a new building to the grant funding amount. Mr. Kessler asked if the County needs additional money over the grant amount for a new building, would they borrow funds or use surplus dollars to cover the difference. He further questioned if the new building would stay in Bloomfield Borough or be located elsewhere.

Robbyn Metz stated that during the town hall it was asked twice why the County did not ensure that the reassessment press release went out. She said that Vision answered the question, but they are not a County employee. She commented that she and Randy Kessler sat on the town hall question review panel and had a pre-town hall meeting to lay out the ground rules for questions. Ms. Metz said the number one question was why was the press release not put out. She stated that during that meeting, a Vision representative stated a subcommittee was formed and that group decided not to put out the press release. Ms. Metz further said that the question panel decided that only duplicate questions would not be asked and the Commissioners agreed to this. She stated that she does not understand how a subcommittee, consisting of a Commissioner, members of the Assessment Office and Vision staff, has the authority to decide not to issue a press release and not inform the public. Ms. Metz said she is making the public aware of this issue and it seems like the subcommittee had oversight of the press release and should have ensured it was sent out.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Reisinger made a motion approve the minutes from the September 25, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Meeting Business: Robin Tolan, from Cumberland-Perry MH/IDD Office, said her office is the coordinator for the Human Services Block Grant plan. She said the plan covers the areas of mental health, intellectual & developmental disabilities, substance use services, human services development fund, and homeless assistance program. Ms. Tolan stated that Cumberland and Perry counties are in a joinder for mental health, intellectual & developmental disabilities, and substance use services and the details are in the Cumberland County plan. She commented that the human services development fund and homeless assistance information in in the Perry County plan. She said the priorities for the mental health portion of the plan include: maintain the level of services, implement crisis intervention services, suicide prevention initiative, make community organizations more trauma informed. Ms. Tolan spoke about the rising cost of mental health services and the lack of staffing in the human service field. She explained that the funding for the services come from the state down to the county and said multiple town halls have occurred regarding the lack of funding for mental health services. She said Cumberland County ARPA funds were used to implement a psychiatric residence program over the past fiscal year. Ms. Tolan commented that a walk-in crisis center is underway in Dauphin County via a recently awarded grant. She stated that last year's priority to expand the elementary school student assistance program was completed.

Jack Carroll, Director of the Cumberland-Perry Drug & Alcohol Commission, stated that his organization is responsible for managing public funding for substance use disorder, prevention, intervention, and treatment services. He said his organization subcontracts with many providers for these services. Mr. Carroll commented that his organization had received flat funding for many years, but due to the recent federal opioid settlement funds there has been some funding coming to the commission. He said the priority of his organization is to continue to address the opioid crisis. Mr. Carroll stated that statistics show that approximately 300 Americans die every day from a drug overdose. He said fentanyl is a major contributor to this statistic and noted a recent incident in the Harrisburg area. He said in 2022 there were 13 overdose deaths in Perry County. Mr. Carroll

said it is a multifaceted problem and his organization focuses on the oversupply of prescription medications, increasing access to Narcan, increasing access to treatment, and continuing community intervention efforts. Mr. Carroll explained that during the pandemic no one was dropped from medical assistance and now that the pandemic is over these people will no longer be eligible for medical assistance and will turn to his organization for help. He also explained that the County jail is responsible for providing medical assisted treatment to inmates that enter the facility in this treatment program. Mr. Carroll stated that the Perry County Commissioners have allocated some of their opioid settlement funds to pay this cost, and noted that pending litigation may result in County jails having to provide this type of treatment to all inmates even those that are not participating prior to entering the facility. He said Naloxone distribution continues and said the RASE Project provides training on opioid overdoses and participants receive doses of Narcan. Mr. Carroll said Narcan is now available over the counter at pharmacies for a cost or for free from Penn State Life Lion EMS. He stated that his organization continues to focus on prevention and early intervention services and partners with Perry Human Services.

Sue Carbaugh, Director of Cumberland-Perry Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, stated that currently there are 1,084 individuals registered with her office based on documented eligibility. She said the split between the counties is 80% Cumberland 20% Perry. Ms. Carbaugh noted that she contracts with community human service organizations to provide services. She commented that her funding was flat in 2023/2024 State budget, but 90% comes from waivers. She said the priority in the plan is to focus on services to achieve the goal of an everyday life. She commented that there are four community homes in Perry County that provide services as well as a day program in Newport. Ms. Carbaugh said 887 individuals in the programs were working competitively in the community, as well as some clients were currently attending post-secondary education. She commented that another main focus is promoting independent living. She said referrals to her programs are the highest she has ever seen and noted that the lack of sufficient staffing results in a lack of needed programs.

Doug Brubaker, Director of Perry Human Services, stated that his organization handles outpatient drug and alcohol counseling, representative payee program, student assistance program, and the homeless assistance program. He said that he recently was at West Perry conducting a student program. He commented that his agency has provided homeless assistance to 16 clients in the past three months. Mr. Brubaker said the homeless assistance numbers went down during the pandemic because eviction was not allowed during this time, but the numbers are going back up again. He commented that his organization receives assistance for the United Way, but that this funding covers administrative costs. Mr. Brubaker said a focus of Perry Human Services is to provide a safe structure to propel and excel and commented that safe housing is vital to achieving this goal.

Robin Tolan stated that the Human Services Development Fund provides funding to Disabled American Veterans, Neighbor Helping Neighbor, and Perry Human Services for the services they provide.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the 2023/2024 Human Services Block Grant. Commissioner Allen seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to make the following 2023/2024 Human Services Development Fund allocations:

- Neighbor Helping Neighbor Food Bank - \$10,000 (supplemental food services for seniors, children, individuals, and families within the County who are food insecure)
- Disabled American Veterans Chapter 49 - \$10,000 (Veteran's in Need Program and Transportation Program)
- Perry Human Services - \$20,500 (Adult Services Program – Representative Payee and Homeless Assistance Program)

- Cumberland-Perry Drug & Alcohol Commission - \$9,500 (fund drug and alcohol treatment programs for Perry County residents)

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

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the 2023/2024 Continuing County Probation/Parole Grant in the amount of \$37,939. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the Cumberland-Perry Drug & Alcohol Commission contract (below). Commissioner Allen seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Provider	Service	22/23	23/24	Rate increase	Percent Increase
Avenues Recovery/Valley Forge Hospital	3.5 High Adult Activity 823B	\$389.00	\$429.00	\$40.00	10%
	3.7 Intensive Activity 823C	\$450.00	\$495.00	\$45.00	10%
	3.7 WM Activity 823A	\$418.00	\$500.00	\$82.00	20%
	4 (Medically Managed) Adult Activity 834B	\$589.37	\$589.37	\$0.00	0%
	4 WM (Medically Managed) Activity 834A	\$589.37	\$589.37	\$0.00	0%

Alyson Thebes, Director of the Perry County Area on Aging, stated that this is a previously offered program, but due to funding constraints it had not been offered. She said that because of Aging ARPA funds it is now able to be offered. Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the agreement with Elaine Buffington for the Walk with Ease Program Health and Wellness Program for the Area Agency on Aging Department. Commissioner Allen seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Alyson Thebes said the pass-through contract is an annual contract for person centered counseling. Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the Contract for Pass Through Funding between Cumberland County and the Perry County Area Agency on Aging regarding the Pennsylvania Link program. Commissioner Allen seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the records improvement fund request for replacement PC's and licensing for the 911 Center at a cost of \$3,780. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Employee Status: Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to approve the appointment of Randy Sandoval and Joshua Hall to the positions of Part Time Correctional Officer at the Perry County Prison, effective October 4, 2023 at an hourly rate of \$21.51. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Solicitor's Report: Solicitor Bunt stated that he had attended a Solicitor Meeting last week. He commented that the topics of discussion included Children & Youth litigation issues, election updates specifically timelines, HIPPA, and ethics training.

Public Comments: None

Comments from the Press: None

Commissioner Reisinger made a motion to adjourn at 11:02 a.m. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.