

COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION

April 15, 2024

**Present at the meeting were
Commissioners:**

R. Franklin Campbell – Chairman
Brenda L. Watson – Vice Chairman
William G. Lyons - Secretary
Shannon Hines – Chief Clerk
William R. Bunt – Solicitor

Present from the Press: Paul Wyatt

Present from the Public: Gabrielle Brandt, Rich Fultz, Jeff Garman, Sarah Geesaman, Jason Harvey, Wayne Leshner, Jim Lucas, Darla McNaughton, Robbyn Metz, Rich Pluta, Dave Pundock, Faith Pundock, Larry Reisinger, Bob Ressler, Angela Schlegel, Megan Sellers, John Sledzinski, Alyson Thebes, Ashley Weaver, Josh Wilson

Commissioner Campbell opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on April 15, 2024 with the Pledge to the Flag and a moment of silence. The meeting was recorded by the County and Paul Wyatt.

Updates/Announcements: Commissioner Watson stated that the broadband funding announcement had been pushed to April 18th. She said the Broadband Authority will be holding their meeting that day and she has been told that at that meeting they will announce who will be receiving the broadband grant funding. She further commented that she was told that funding awards will be broken in half.

Commissioner Lyons commented that the Commissioners had attended the 15th Annual Perry County Chamber of Commerce Dinner over the weekend and noted that founding members Commissioner Campbell and Anne Simonetti were the keynote speakers. He said that on Sunday they welcomed the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation to the County and also attended an Eagle Scout Ceremony for Wilson Hartley.

Commissioner Watson said that the Eagle Scout Ceremony was impressive and the milestones the individual receiving the award had to accomplish were remarkable.

Commissioner Campbell stated that on Thursday evening he had attended a 4-H Speaking Contest in which 6 counties participated. He said there were more Perry County 4-H members than other counties and they took home several awards.

Commissioner Campbell reiterated the public comment policy. He stated that the Board of Commissioners believe that the public comment periods are for the public to offer their opinions of items of interest to the public regarding County government. He said it is not a question-and-answer period and commented that questions may be submitted to the Commissioners at commissioners@perryco.org. He said the Commissioners will respond to the questions which they believe are of importance to the general public and to residents in need of County services. He stated that questions related to the financial overview will be posted to the County website and said everyone is welcome to schedule an appointment and come in a speak with the Commissioners. He further said that the meeting was being recorded.

Commissioners Campbell stated that the county operates on an accrual basis and the financial overview is presented in that manner. He said the numbers are cumulative in the way they are presented. He reiterated that questions regarding the financial overview will be posted on the County website.

Public Comments: Rich Fultz, EMA/911 Director, stated that it was National Telecommunicators Week. He noted that Perry County 911 has received a Pre-Hospital Delivery Commendation from the Emergency Health Services Federation. Mr. Fultz commented that part time dispatchers Nolan Littlewood and Tyler Suplee were on duty and made this delivery successful.

Robbyn Metz stated that she did basic math on the two financial overview documents. She said the revenue went up by about \$4 million from one month to the next and said that expenses went up by \$1.49 million, and noted that an increase of \$911,000 was in the unrestricted fund. Ms. Metz commented that when you take the \$4 million in revenue less the \$1.49 in expenses and the \$911,000 in the unrestricted funds, that leaves \$1.66 million not accounted for. She said this question was submitted to the Commissioners. Ms. Metz stated that last week she had submitted a question asking where uncertified ballots are stored. She said that Commissioner Campbell responded that they are stored in a secure location. She said she followed up with another question asking if during the November 2023 election if any ballots were stored in an elected official's office. Ms. Metz said she did not receive a response. She commented that she already knows the answer to the question as she had received photos dated November 13, 2023 in which uncertified ballots are shown in what appeared to be in Commissioner Watson's office. She stated that ballots should not be stored in the office of a candidate on the ballot and questioned why a more secure location was not used such as Commissioner Reisinger's office or the Voter Registration Office. Ms. Metz stated that the Board of Election states that she must make a complaint at the local level first and requested that the Board of Elections, less anyone serving on the Board of Elections in November 2023, investigate this issue or turn it over to the Perry County District Attorney for investigation.

Rich Pluta, on behalf of the Perry County Chamber of Commerce, thanked the Commissioners and staff for their attendance at the 15th Annual Dinner.

Wayne Leshar commended Commissioner Campbell for his explanation on the financial overview document as it answered a question he had. He said in his own business it was important to provide a good living to his employees, but said it was not his responsibility. Mr. Leshar read some of the duties from the Chief Fiscal Officers' job description and noted that it was obvious these duties were not being done, based on the response to his Right to Know request for a current statement of financial interest. He said the response provided was of the 2021 audit and it was done by an auditing firm and not by the Fiscal Office. Mr. Leshar noted that an essential function on the job description was responsible for accuracy and integrity of all County financial records, including revenues and expenses. He suggested that a CPA should be doing the job and said he had researched what a CPA in the area makes and it is about the same as what the current Chief Fiscal Officer makes. He said the person is not performing their job duties and said a CPA should be put in the position.

Megan Sellers stated that she is unable to attend the Election Board meeting so she would comment now. She said the continued use of electronic voting technology and mail in ballots is a matter of serious concern. She commented that she understands that mail in ballots are a legislative issue, but said that the chain of custody and security of the ballots are a County responsibility. Ms. Sellers said that the photos showing ballots in a Commissioners' Office that was also a candidate and ballot bags mean that the election is no longer transparent or secure. She said that she is not comfortable with Commissioner Watson and Sarah Geesaman overseeing the elections and would like them to resign immediately. She summarized that on November 13, 2023 after the election and prior to certification, mail in and absentee ballots were in Commissioner Watson's office, a candidate on the ballot. Ms. Sellers further stated that the security of the ballots was the responsibility of Ms. Geesaman, a friend of Commissioner Watson and noted the recent pay raise. She requested that the Board of Elections turn this issue over to the District Attorney's Office and the Sheriff should investigate his duties regarding this issue. She stated that she may file a complaint with the State Ethics Commission.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the minutes of April 8, 2024 meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Business: Commissioner Campbell noted that National Telecommunicators Week was April 14 – April 20 and recognized the Perry County 911 Dispatchers for all their hard work.

Commissioner Campbell stated that a financial overview was attached to the agenda. He said that all questions pertaining to the overview can be emailed to commissioners@perryco.org.

Marty Smith, Maintenance Director, commented that the generator service contract was a cost of \$948 for full service and includes time and materials. He said the contract also includes an annual Department of Corrections required 2-hour load test at a cost of \$526. Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the service proposal from Premium Power Services, LLC for the generator at the Perry County Prison. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the FY 2021 CDBG subrecipient agreement with Oliver Township Municipal Authority. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the terminations of Memorandum of Understandings with Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging Inc. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Sheriff Hammar noted that the software was used for background checks and said it was a renewal of a current contract. Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the proposal from Thomson Reuters for Clear for Law Enforcement Plus software for the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the FY24/25 Intermediate Punishment Grant application for the Probation Department. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Employee Status: Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the appointment of Heather Crockett to the position of Dispatcher Trainee in the 911 Center effective April 16, 2024 at an hourly rate of \$15.61. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the appointment of Eric Richard to the position of Full Time Correctional Officer at the Prison effective April 16, 2024 at an hourly rate of \$22.92. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Alyson Thebes, Director of the Area Agency on Aging, stated that Deborah Willi had over 20 years of service in both Children & Youth and Aging. She said she will be greatly missed. Commissioner Watson made a motion to accept the retirement of Deborah Willi, Care Manager at the Perry County Area Agency on Aging, effective May 4, 2024. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Solicitors Report: Solicitor Bunt said that Deborah Willi handled some very difficult circumstances while with Children & Youth Services and noted that she handled them well. He wished her a good and healthy retirement and thanked her for her years of service to the County.

Public Comments: Faith Pundock said she has grave concerns regarding the ambulance services in the County. She noted that Spring, Marysville, and Ickesburg do not have service and said something needs to be done.

Ashley Weaver stated that the Commissioners have a hard job but it is a job of honor. She said that when pledging to the flag you are making a promise for justice for all and it means much more. Ms. Weaver stated that it is very concerning to hear about possible election interference and hoped that the Sheriff pays a close eye to this. She said hopes the Commissioners pay close attention to the upcoming election to ensure that everything is done rightly and justly as the Constitution dictates.

Robbyn Metz said she agrees with Wayne Leshner. She commented that no one fed her the information and she used basic math. She further stated that this shakes the confidence of the public regarding the people doing the fiscal work. Ms. Metz stated that in regards to the ballots she cannot believe it happened as ballots should not

be stored in the office of someone on the ballot. She said someone should answer for this and this looks suspect to the voters.

Wayne Leshar commented on the ballot issue. He said the Commissioners have an obligation to use the best judgement in every situation. He commented that it is the optics of the situation whether or not something happened. Mr. Leshar said this needs to be investigated and Commissioner Watson should not sit on the Election Board until this is looked into.

Comments from Press: None

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to adjourn at 10:30 a.m. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Shannon Hines, Chief Clerk

William G. Lyons, Secretary