

## COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION

April 22, 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:** Ed Albright, Gabrielle Brandt, Rich Fultz, Kristie Gantt, Jeff Garman, Kathy Garman, Sarah Geesaman, Wayne Leshner, Amber Martin, Donna McMillen, Darla McNaughton, Robbyn Metz, Rich Pluta, Dave Pundock, Faith Pundock, Angela Schlegel, John Sledzinski, Marty Smith, Wes Smith, Alyson Thebes, Randy Waggoner, Ashley Weaver, Josh Wilson

Commissioner Campbell opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on April 22, 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 Authority approved both of Perry County's applications. She said there were 53 projects awarded and noted that these projects involved 42 counties and focused on unserved areas. She commented that the two Perry County project partners are Bright Speed and ZITO, with a total project award amount of \$5,777,530. Commissioner Watson further stated that Brightspeed will be putting in an additional \$360,000 of their own funds into the project which will provide broadband capability to additional residents. She said that Brightspeed will also be doing broadband projects in the following areas on their own: Oliver Township, Marysville, and Duncannon. She commented that much of the work will be underway by the end of the year. Commissioner Watson stated that the broadband project maps will be posted on the County website at a future time and said more broadband funding will be coming available the next day. She commented that the County will be requesting \$26 million dollars of funding in the next round of broadband funds.

Commissioner Lyons stated that Commissioner Watson had worked tirelessly for two and a half years on the broadband projects, including meeting with the Governor, Senators, and multiple trips to the Capital. He said he appreciated her work behind the scenes.

Commissioner Watson asked that everyone thank Senator Rothman and Representative Stambaugh for their support of Perry County's broadband projects.

Commissioner Campbell also thanked Commissioner Watson for her broadband efforts. Mr. Campbell stated that the meeting was being recorded and said if anyone has questions regarding meeting topics, they are welcome to schedule a time to come in and discuss them with the Commissioners.

**Public Comments:** Sarah Geesaman announced that tomorrow, April 23, 2024 is Election Day and individuals may vote between 7:00 am to 8:00pm. She also said that anyone with a mail-in or absentee ballot may drop them off up until 8:00 pm on Election Day.

Ashley Weaver referenced photos of ballots in black bags in Commissioner Watson's office when she was running for office. She questioned how secure ballots really are and how can we have known if anyone was doing a write-in campaign at that time. Ms. Weaver stated that the Sheriff has every right to launch an investigation into this issue and he should not be intimidated as this is an obstruction of justice. She said that Commissioner Watson should abstain from the Election Board as it is a conflict of interest. Ms. Weaver explained that there is a conflict of interest because any complaints made through the Department of State website go to the County Board of

Elections, in which Commissioner Watson serves. She said she has been standing up for law and God and has received backlash for her views, but she said you must stand up for justice.

Robbyn Metz stated that her questions are not a personal attack on anyone but are raised due to inconsistencies. She said she is floored that no monthly budget report is provided on the County's financial position. She recommended looking at Cumberland County Commissioners page to view their financial committee reports. Ms. Metz said it seems like the Commissioners are working towards something similar, but are far from the mark. She said a general fund summary was provided on April 1<sup>st</sup> and then another on April 15<sup>th</sup> and when she pointed out a \$1.66 million dollar discrepancy in the unaccounted-for revenue, she said she did not receive a satisfactory answer. Ms. Metz spoke about several right to know requests she had filed and the responses she had received. She also brought up the reassessment, lack of a press release, and the formation of a joint management council that decided not to put out a press release.

Wayne Leshar stated that he wished the Commissioners would come clean about the mess in the Fiscal Department. He commented that if his comptroller did the same job as the County Fiscal Officer, that person would be gone. He said that ZA should be in the office 8 hours per day until issues are fixed. Mr. Leshar commented that it is very concerning to him that the Commissioners have no idea where money comes from. PA is an at will state and he is asking to have a qualified person in this position and to release the fiscal officer. Mr. Leshar requested that the Chief Fiscal Officer be relieved of her duties and find someone qualified for the position.

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the minutes of April 15, 2024 meeting with two corrections. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the Warrant List(s):** Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve warrant lists totaling \$507,358.53. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

**Meeting Business:** Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-04 PennDOT Municipal-Owned Bridge Reimbursement Agreement designating Commissioner Watson as the designated signatory. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the updated service agreement with Dean Lusby Technology Solutions, LLC. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the CDBG FY 2020 Budget Revision Certification for Oliver Township Wastewater Collection System Rehabilitation Project in the amount of \$36,384.50. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously. Amber Martin, from SEDA-COG, explained that the budget revision of \$36,384.50 was coming from the Newport Borough Water Authority Project for Well #1 as they did not expend the funds by the termination date of the contract. She stated that SEDA-COG is proposing the remainder go to Oliver Township Waste Water Collection System Rehabilitation Project.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to accept the Perry County Area Agency on Aging 2024-2048 Local Area Plan. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously. Allyson Thebes, Perry County Area Agency on Aging Director, stated that every 4 years the federal government requires the Area Agency on Aging to create a four-year plan in accordance with the Older American Act and the Administration For Community Living to receive federal funding. She said the Perry County Area Agency on Aging is responsible for developing and providing support for older adults and their families. Ms. Thebes said the plan incorporated trends and information was also gathered during 7 listening sessions that her department facilitated. She further stated that over the next four years the agency hopes to increase the ability for older Perry County residents to age in place based on a combination of outreach programs including social participation, community support, transportation, health services, communication, engagement, prevention, education, home, and community-based services.

**Employee Status:** Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the appointment of Ruth Lawler to the position of Dispatcher Trainee in the 911 Center effective April 23, 2024 at an hourly rate of \$15.61/hour. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to accept the resignation of Cathy Clouse, Clerk Typist at the Perry County Area Agency on Aging, effective April 30, 2024. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously. Allyson Thebes wished her the best of luck.

**Solicitors Report:** None

**Post Comments:** Robbyn Metz commented on how the reassessment was handled publicly and said she feels that the new government complex is headed down the same path. She said a request to do a feasibility study RFP was made in September 2023 and the motion died. She said she asked in February about the issue and Commissioner Watson emailed her that they were awaiting responses from three firms. Ms. Metz commented that she questioned how the County could be awaiting proposals when it was not brought up publicly and was told the Commissioners were doing their due diligence. She further stated that at the April 1 meeting a proposal from By Design in the amount of \$58,000.00 was approved for a feasibility study. Ms. Metz stated that when she asked if the public will be able to weigh in on this, the response was that the public will be kept informed. She stated that these are examples of inconsistency. She further stated that when she brought up the election issues last week, she felt that the Commissioners knew she knew something. Ms. Metz stated that the person who took the photos was afraid to bring the photos public and the issue should not be overlooked. She said to Commissioners Lyons and Commissioner Campbell, that they were not here at that time and the voters are still waiting to see them make a difference.

Wayne Leshar stated that the Commissioners, as a group, hold a fiscal responsibility to the county. He said Commissioner Lyons and Commissioner Campbell were not there when the last budget was passed and said Commissioner Watson passed a 37% tax increase and note that there is still \$3.1 million dollar deficit. He stated that if the Chief Fiscal Officer does not know where the funds come from or go to, the County cannot operate. Mr. Leshar said no private company would allow this person to be in the position. He asked that the Chief Fiscal Officer be removed for her position immediately. He commented that government comes to the tax payer to get more money and that is not the way to be. Mr. Leshar recognized Commissioner Watson for her work on broadband.

Jeff Garman said he agreed with Wayne Leshar.

**Comments from Press:** Nothing at this time.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to adjourn at 10:31 a.m. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

---

Shannon Hines, Chief Clerk

---

William G. Lyons, Secretary