

COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION
July 1, 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, Mary Ann Brownawell, Andrew Burke, Jason Finnerty, Sheila Forrester, Kristie Gantt, Jeff Garman, Sarah Geesaman, George Gochenaur, Jeanne Hammar, Nathan Lesh, Wayne Lesh, Taira Little, Amber Martin, Robbyn Metz, Jed Nessinger, Rich Pluta, David Pundock, Faith Pundock, Larry Reisinger, Megan Sellers, Craig Sheaffer, Wes Smith, Alyson Thebes, Randy Waggoner, Ashley Weaver, Harold Weibley, Josh Wilson

Commissioner Campbell opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on July 1, 2024 with the Pledge to the Flag and a moment of silence. The meeting was recorded by the County, Jed Nessinger, and Paul Wyatt.

Updates/Announcements: Commissioner Campbell said that public comment periods are for the public to offer their opinions on items of interest regarding County government and it is not a question-and-answer period. He said questions may be submitted to commissioners@perryco.org and the Commissioners will respond to those questions which are of importance to the general public and to residents in need of County services. Commissioner Campbell stated that questions related to the financial overview will be posted on the County website for everyone's benefit.

Commissioner Campbell announced that the 2022 audit had been received on Friday and copies could be obtained via a right to know request. He also said that internally the County is working on the 2023 budget.

Public Comments: Megan Sellers stated that Jed Nessinger visited the Board of Elections in the past week. She said she watched the video and was disheartened to observe the lack of transparency and childish behavior. Ms. Sellers said she has been stonewalled since last year. She provided dates of emails and phone calls to Election Director, Sarah Geesaman. She questioned Clear Ballot Print Now components and said she needs to know if this transaction was completed and delivered. Ms. Sellers said not answering questions shows lack of transparency. She commented that she emailed the Commissioners in January 2024 about 2020 election fraud and the email was acknowledged, but she has heard nothing since. She stated that PA Election Code Article 11, Section 1103(a) says the County Election Board may pose a question to the electorate about the use of voting machines. She urged the Commissioners to allow the people to decide on voting machines, as it was not voted on and should be on the ballot.

Sarah Geesaman, Election Director, stated that last Friday the Voter Hall of Fame ceremony occurred for individuals that voted in 50 consecutive general elections. She said there were 17 honorees and the event was well attended and appreciated.

Robbyn Metz said that the public comment statement given at the beginning of the meeting does not include anything about the financial statement. She commented that her two questions about the financial statements were not answered or put on the County website. Ms. Metz further stated that in the response to a recent RTK for an email string there was information regarding \$394,000 being taken from the unrestricted fund to use for accounts payable. She said this information did not get back to her and the Commissioners should amend their public comment statement as they are being selective on the financial statement questions as well.

Ashley Weaver stated that Commissioner Watson was very nice to Jed Nessinger in his recent video. She said Commissioner Watson provided details on chain of custody to Mr. Nessinger, but she said when she asked the same question about chain of custody on May 6th she was ignored. She commented that in her RTK about this, the response was no documents exist. Ms. Weaver stated that in the response to her recent RTK request for correspondence from Commissioners and Solicitor mentioning Robbyn Metz, Megan Sellers, and herself, the response she received was that correspondence between the Commissioners and Solicitor is privileged information and exempt from disclosure. She further said she did receive some emails but someone else filed a right to know and received a letter from Solicitor Bunt to the Sheriff and District Attorney, but she did not receive that information in her RTK response. Ms. Weaver further said she did not receive any of her emails to Solicitor Bunt regarding Commissioner Watson's text messages. She stated that she agreed with Ms. Sellers and said paper ballots should be considered for the presidential election.

Larry Reisinger thanks Sarah Geesaman and the Commissioners for the Voter Hall of Fame ceremony the previous week. He also wished everyone a great July 4th.

Allie Thebes stated that the Aging Office is distributing Farmer's Market vouchers to senior 60 years of age or older who meet income requirements. She said applications are available at the senior centers in the County and at the Aging office.

Gabrielle Brandt recommended that the 2022 audit be posted on the County website for easier access.

Wayne Leshar stated that he would be speaking about the system and explained that the system is everything in place before the Commissioners were elected. He said the longest running part of the system is Bill Bunt as he went to work for the County in 1976. He commented the Solicitor Bunt represents Children & Youth, Aging, Tax Claim, arbitration panel, and the Commissioners. Mr. Leshar said the system does not want to lose what it has and said there is no engagement letter with him for his service to the Commissioners. He commented that he was told via a right to know request that he is paid via the Commissioners' budget but said he doesn't see how Solicitor Bunt could possibly get paid that way. Mr. Leshar said Solicitor Bunt gets paid approximately \$145,000 as an independent contractor, but he and his wife receive County paid benefits. He said the County benefits are one of the best benefit packages around and Solicitor Bunt pays \$240/month.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2024 meeting. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Warrant List(s): Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the warrant lists totaling \$656,772.15. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Business: Amber Martin, from SEDA COG, said that due to a very recent HUD policy update, Newport Borough was disqualified from consideration as they no longer fall within the guidelines for low to moderate income. She stated that there are three applicants still eligible for CDBG funding and they included: Duncannon Borough, Liverpool Municipal Authority, and Loysville Village Municipal Authority. Commissioner Watson made a motion to allocate FY 2024 CDBG funds as follows. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

- Duncannon Borough – Pedestrian Bridge Rehab - \$71,752.67
- Liverpool Municipal Authority – Well #2 Chlorine Tank Replacement - \$71,752.67
- Loysville Village Municipal Authority – Sewer Manhole Rehab - \$71,752.66

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the MH/IDD contracts for Early Intervention for fiscal year 2023/2024 in the total amount of \$42,797 (attached). Commissioner Watson seconded the motion.

Commissioner Campbell stated that these contracts are vetted by MH/IDD. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the MH/IDD contracts for Early Intervention for fiscal year 2024/2025 in the total amount of \$439,714 (attached). Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the quote from Clear Ballot Group for election support services for the November 2024 election in the amount of \$18,000 and stated that this for support for the upcoming presidential election. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the quote from AutoClear for a walkthrough metal detector at a cost of \$5,800. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. Commissioner Campbell stated that the detector was for the courthouse and the current device is too old for repair. He also noted that the cost would be paid via safety grant funds. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Employee Status: Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the appointment of Russell Marks to the position of Part Time Intern in the District Attorney's Office effective July 2, 2024 at an hourly rate of \$17.71. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Solicitors Report: Solicitor Bunt stated that he would have a public comment.

Post Comments: Megan Sellers said that the Commissioners have the authority under PA Election Code to put the voting machine question on the ballot. She stated that voting machines should have been voted on. Ms. Sellers commented no one is representing the will of the people and the Commissioners are not responding to her emails. She stated that while Commissioner Watson was nice on the video but she did not provide the correct information. Ms. Sellers commented that friends should not be hired because in situations like this there is shadiness. She said because questions are not being answered people are upset. Ms. Sellers said if she was in the Commissioners seat she would welcome people to come in, she would answer emails, and she would bring issues forward to the public. She stated that the Commissioners should do better or resign as she could not handle it for another three and a half years.

Sheriff Hammar said he did not understand the CDBG item on the agenda, but said it was a great thing that the residents of Newport Borough are above the low to moderate income level.

Jedd Nessinger stated that he had never spoken with Commissioner Lyons but said if he condones the Commissioners' and Solicitor's behavior, it's unfortunate. He further said that if Commissioner Lyons does not condone the behavior, he has the option to speak up and they will back him.

Ashley Weaver stated that she could not hear the first lady who spoke and it is a sunshine violation. She said that on Monday a comment was made on Monday about God disapproving of people like her for not being kind. Ms. Weaver commented that May 20th she publicly forgave the Commissioners and noted her children were in the room. She further said that someone in the room directed a comment to her as she was leaving the room with her children. Ms. Weaver quoted scripture from the book of Isaiah and Mathew. She said whoa to the Commissioners, Solicitor, or any other public official that goes against the Constitution.

Randy Waggoner commented that reassessment data collectors are finishing up in Duncannon and will then be starting in Centre Township. He said data verification mailers will be going out soon and once he has the mailing schedule, he would like to provide the information to the newspaper so it could be published in the local newspapers.

Solicitor Bunt extended an invitation to anyone that would like to meet with him to learn about his duties as County Solicitor. He said to contact Deputy Chief Clerk, Angela Schlegel, to make an appointment for an in-person meeting. He commented that his goal is not to change people's minds, but to make people better informed so that next time they make comments they know what they are talking about.

Wayne Leshar said is it correct that he doesn't know what he's talking about. He commented that nothing he said is incorrect. Mr. Leshar said Solicitor Bunt has been on County benefits since 2010, pays \$245/month for he and his wife's coverage, and makes mid \$100,000's from the County. He said the County employee manual says only employees should get benefits. Mr. Leshar said he did twelve right to know requests to other counties and they only offer benefits to full time employees. He asked that he be told what was incorrect in his statements. He said Bill Bunt is the system and should leave.

Randy Waggoner interrupted and said this is public comment not public attack. He stated people continue to attack and he will keep interrupting the idiots until he is thrown out of the meeting. Mr. Waggoner stated that it is ridiculous and questioned how much more the Commissioners will put up with.

Individuals in the room yelled it is their right under the First Amendment.

Taira Little said it is not the First Amendment to attack someone. She said to give the Commissioners a chance to do their jobs as it's only been six months.

Megan Sellers said the Commissioners have been given a chance but they don't answer.

Wayne Leshar resumed his comments and said he may go too low, but there is a level of frustration outside the room. He said the Commissioners could end it by being clearer and the Commissioners could figure things out on their own. Mr. Leshar said he wished the Commissioners only had three minutes to speak so that he only had to put up with their bullshit for that amount of time.

Comments from Press: Paul Wyatt asked for clarification on the election support services. Sarah Geesaman stated that it includes ballot layout, machine setup and test, and onsite staff support.

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

Shannon Hines, Chief Clerk

William G. Lyons, Secretary