

COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION

December 2, 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: Jason Finnerty, Kristie Gantt, Jeff Garman, Sarah Geesaman, Robbyn Metz, Jed Nessinger, Michelle Orris, Rich Pluta, Dave Pundock, Faith Pundock, Larry Reisinger, Bob Ressler, Megan Sellers, Randy Waggoner

Commissioner Campbell opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on December 2, 2024 with the Pledge to the Flag and a moment of silence. The meeting was recorded by the County, Paul Wyatt, Robbyn Metz, and Jed Nessinger.

Updates/Announcements: Commissioner Watson announced that there were no changes to note regarding the broadband project. She said the covered bridge project is now in the same status as the municipal bridges, on the ECMS PennDOT pages. She commented that the covered bridge project renovations will not start until the weather is consistently nice and the municipal bridge project is awaiting engineering and is tentative for the end of spring. Commissioner Watson stated that they had attended the State Conference last week and noted that all counties have their own trials and tribulations.

Commissioner Lyons said he was able to speak to many other County Commissioners during the CCAP Conference last week. He stated he was honored to attend a dinner in which Solicitor Bunt received a prestigious award.

Commissioner Campbell stated that Solicitor Bunt received the Brady Koch Award for his contributions to PCoRP and risk management of the County.

Public Comments: Robbyn Metz stated that the proposed 2025 budget was on the agenda. She asked if the budget included a tax increase and if so, how much and why. She also said it would be beneficial to know how much each department's budget increased or decreased. She asked what the exact dollars are sitting in the assigned and unassigned fund balances and if not, when the Commissioners project it to be completed by. Ms. Metz stated that based on a right to know there is information the public should consider, including that in 2021 the County imposed a 37% tax increase but could not explain what they had in the County budget. She said in July 2022 a check in the amount of \$945,000 bounced and commented there was another case in which this almost happened a second time. Ms. Metz said for the past two years recommendations have been made to move County funds to higher interest-bearing cd's and accounts and no action was taken or taken after the fact costing free interest. She further said in March 2024 huge pay raises were given to select employees without knowing what is in the County bank accounts costing over \$100,000 more per year. Ms. Metz said if the Commissioners are not being good stewards of taxpayer funds, what trust can the public have that any additional tax revenue funds will be handled responsibly. She asked what assurances the Commissioners could give to ensure they will see this in the coming year.

Wayne Leshar said he reviewed the proposed budget and sent questions to the Commissioners. He called out the payrate of the social worker and the correctional officer on the agenda and said that if you paid the social worker \$20.00 you may be able to hire more people and offer services, instead of giving 60% director raises. He said the chiefs are getting the raises but the indians do the work. Mr. Leshar stated that the indians are not happy and

dozens of people reach out to him about this. He said Commissioner Lyons was laughing and he reclaimed his time. He commented that this affects him personally due to his autistic granddaughter and the fact he is told there are not enough people for the services she needs. He further said the Commissioners should focus on hiring better people than on vanity projects.

Jed Nessinger said the proposed budget shows \$4,000,000 was brought over from another fund to balance the budget and questioned where this money came from.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 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 \$596,189.85. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Business: Cory Johnson from Zelenkofske Axelrod provided an overview of the budget process. Mr. Johnson explained that he puts together an analysis of each department from the past 3-5 years to see any trends and come up with an initial budget. He said a meeting is held with each department to go over their proposed budget and discuss any changes that may be needed. He commented that there is no tax increase in the 2025 budget and a deficit budget cannot be adopted so funds were taken from reserve to balance the budget. Mr. Johnson stated that last year the deficit was approximately \$3.1 million and the coming year was projected to be \$4.7 million. He explained that increases in salaries, benefits, and utilities equal approximately \$1 million dollars and this compounds each year. He said approximately a million dollars of the deficit is caused by these inflationary costs and also noted that a million dollars was reassessment cost.

Wayne Leshner asked if questions could be asked.

Cory Johnson said each department is alerted as to what is approved or not approved in their budget and this results in the proposed budget. He stated that the budget would be adopted later in the month, but noted how compounding inflation and costs affect the County budget.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the 2024-2025 Cumberland-Perry Drug & Alcohol Commission contracts (attached). Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the reappointments of James H. Turner and Dan Kirk to the Perry County Planning Commission. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. Jason Finnerty noted the service of each individual on the commission and noted that each term will run from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the amendment to the Reassessment Agreement for all taxable and exempt real property. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. Commissioner Campbell noted that the County Assessment Office will assist Vision which will save money. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the 9-1-1 Statewide Interconnectivity Funding Grant Agreement. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the proposal from KIT Communications for a camera and access control project at the Newport MDJ Office at a cost of \$39,500. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. Commissioner Campbell stated that a portion of the project would be paid for using AOPC grant funds. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Employee Status: Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the appointment of Jeanette Ruhle to the position of Part Time Social Services Case Aide 1 in the Children & Youth Services Department effective

December 3, 2024 at an hourly rate of \$17.71. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the appointments of the following to the position of Part Time Correctional Officer at the Perry County Prison effective December 3, 2024 at an hourly rate of \$22.21. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

- Teyona Cannaday
- Seth Zorn

Solicitors Report: Solicitor Bunt thanked the Commissioners for the recognition. He said he has served on the Prison Inmate Medical Cost Containment program which helps reduce the cost the County pays for inmate medical treatment. He said it is great program and results in a reduction of almost 92% from market value of medical services.

Post Comments: Megan Sellers asked Commissioner Watson why she asked Cory Johnson to turn off his phone for the meeting. She said there is a lack of transparency and accountability demonstrated by the Board of Commissioners and the Voter Registration Office. She commented that this has resulted in a lack of public confidence in the Commissioners duty to serve as public servants under the US and PA Constitutions. Ms. Sellers noted that the Commissioners gave Bill Bunt the award, not the people and she will make sure this is the last Board he represents. She stated that instead of fostering open dialogue with the public they have put up road blocks for those seeking information. She said this erodes public trust and wastes time of staff. Ms. Sellers read comments from social media and said there are so many.

Robbyn Metz said she agreed 100% with Megan's comments. She stated that she asks questions so she can understand and was grateful Mr. Johnson gave a brief overview. She commented that she does not understand why questions are not answered and stonewalling has resulted in this. Ms. Metz stated that shutting down virtual participation at the Commissioners' meeting, but not other meetings shows that the Commissioners do not want people to know what they are doing and is wrong. She said she has asked for updates on the feasibility study and she does not want 911 employees sitting in raw sewage and something like a new building may be warranted. She commented that the public is treated like they are dumb Perry Countians.

Rich Fultz stated that he is disappointed that a part time case aide is hired at a pay grade higher than a 911 telecommunicator.

Wayne Leshar commented that nothing warms his heart more than bureaucrats giving bureaucrats awards. He said he will not call individuals by their titles. He further said that he appreciated Cory's presentation but he knows the Commissioners will not let him get into further detail. Mr. Leshar said many of the people have their own businesses and have budgets. He stated that the difference between private and government budgets is that private cannot have a 1% increase each year and cannot pull from reserves. He said you pull from the reserve this year, but what happens next year. Mr. Leshar said a million dollars is paid for the reassessment, but that means to him that you expect to get this back. He commented that everyone does budgets and there should be an avenue for getting questions answered. He stated that the Commissioners have tried everything to shut this down but it is not working. Mr. Leshar said consultants do not need to be hired, the Commissioners should get input from the public and not have "yes men."

Jeff Garman noted the tax increases over the years and asked why a tax increase could not be based on CPI each year instead of a 35% increase every four years. He said he trades a lot of stock and every publicly traded company must put out a monthly balance statement and profit/loss statements. Mr. Garman stated he has not seen this from the County and asked why.

Larry Reisinger said the reassessment has come up many times during the meeting and he supports the reassessment. He provided an example of a property being sold for \$1 million dollars and said he thought the

property would then be assessed based on the sale price, but that is not the case. He said the reassessment will get property taxes in line based on market values.

Jed Nessinger stated that he does not know why Commissioner Watson was at the meeting and why she wants the position. He said she has a horrible demeanor and she should be the bigger person. Mr. Nessinger said property tax is theft. He stated that the Commissioners should learn how to run the County without stealing money from his pockets. Mr. Nessinger said he does not make anymore money when inflation rises and the Commissioners should make some sacrifices in the County budget.

Comments from Press: None

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

2024-2025 Cumberland-Perry Drug & Alcohol Commission agreements

Provider	Service	23/24	24/25	Rate increase	Percent Increase	
Center for Behavioral Health HA, Inc.	Methodone Maintenance and Outpatient Treatment	\$17.00	\$17.00	\$0.00	0%	
	Outpatient Individual Session	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$0.00	0%	
	Outpatient Group Session	\$32.00	\$32.00	\$0.00	0%	
	Suboxone Services					
	-Intake Assessment		\$177.02	per assessment		
	-Annual Medical Assessment		\$101.03	per assessment		
	-Group Counseling		\$11.24	per session		
	-Individual Counseling 30 minutes		\$49.78	per session		
	-Individual Counseling 60 minutes		\$98.13	per session		
	-Dispensary Dose/Takehome medication		\$9.59	per session		
	-MD-Initial Physical & Comprehensive Exam		\$269.86	per exam		
	Discovery House CC, Inc.	Methodone Maintenance and Outpatient Treatment	\$17.00	\$17.00	\$0.00	0%
		Outpatient Individual Session	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$0.00	0%
Outpatient Group Session		\$32.00	\$32.00	\$0.00	0%	
Suboxone Services						
-Intake Assessment			\$177.02	per assessment		
-Annual Medical Assessment			\$101.03	per assessment		
-Group Counseling			\$11.24	per session		
-Individual Counseling 30 minutes			\$49.78	per session		
-Individual Counseling 60 minutes			\$98.13	per session		
-Dispensary Dose/Takehome medication			\$9.59	per session		
-MD-Initial Physical & Comprehensive Exam			\$269.86	per exam		

Provider	Service	23/24	24/25	Rate increase	Percent Increase
Substance Abuse Services, Inc	Medication Assisted Recovery Services	\$141,500.00	\$148,486.00	\$6,986.00	5%
Positive Recovery Solutions, LLC	Vivitrol New Patient Assessment	\$200	\$200	\$0.00	0%
	Vivitrol Follow-up Assessment	\$120	\$120	\$0.00	0%
	Vivitrol Urinalysis	\$60	\$60	\$0.00	0%
	Vivitrol Injections	at cost	at cost		
Bowling Green Inn, Brandywine	3.5 High Activity 823B	\$353.00	\$353.00	\$0.00	0%
	3.5 High Enhanced Activity 823B	\$299.00	\$337.00	\$38.00	13%
	3.7 WM Activity 823A	\$432.00	\$446.00	\$14.00	3%

Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) Student assistance services – Addendum to extend the contract until 8/30/2025