

COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION
December 30, 2024

**Present at the meeting were
Commissioners:**

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

Present from the Press: Paul Wyatt

Present from the Public: Tony Campbell, Kristie Gantt, Sarah Geesaman, Darla McNaughton, Robbyn Metz, Michelle Orris, David Pundock, Larry Reisinger, Bob Ressler, Megan Sellers, Wes Smith

Commissioner Campbell opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on December 30, 2024 with the Pledge to the Flag and a moment of silence and noted the passing of former President Jimmy Carter. The meeting was recorded by the County, Robbyn Metz, and Paul Wyatt.

Updates/Announcements: Commissioner Campbell stated that recently a clerical error resulted in incorrect information being provided to the Commissioners regarding renewal of a cd. He further said the issues surrounding the error were being investigated and processes have been put in place so that a similar situation does not happen in the future.

Public Comments: Robbyn Metz asked that the Public Defender item on the agenda be explained when the Commissioners get to it. She questioned if the position was always a County employee or if it was separate. Ms. Metz further asked if it was separate was the move to County employment providing a cost saving and how much. She questioned if the payrate included benefits.

Megan Sellers questioned if the year of retirement listed on the agenda for Deb Shrawder was correct.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 23, 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 \$847,327.69. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Business: Commissioner Lyons made a motion to approve the appointment of Nicole Holmes to the MH/IDD Advisory Board. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. Commissioner Campbell stated that the appointment was per the recommendation of the Director of Cumberland-Perry MH/IDD. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Employee Status: Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the appointment of Barbara Wevodau to the position of Public Defender effective January 6, 2025 at an hourly rate of \$39.75. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. Commissioner Campbell stated that this is continuing the process of bringing the Public Defender position under County employment as it was formerly not a County position. He said the caseload of the office has significantly increased and commented that the hourly rate does not include benefits, but Ms. Wevodau would be eligible for benefits. Commissioner Campbell further said that it is not a cost savings but it is more about efficiency of the department. He commented that the State was encouraging this move and grant funding was received to help with the transition. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lyons made a motion to accept the retirement of Deborah Shrawder, Deputy Director Election, in the Election Office effective January 1, 2026. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. Commissioner

Campbell stated that it was regretful to lose Ms. Shrawder after 39 years of service. Sarah Geesaman, Election Director, said she will be greatly missed and is an asset to the department and good team player. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Solicitors Report: Solicitor Bunt said he has worked with Deb Shrawder and said elections always change. He commented that Deb was always there to help during all the changes and she will be greatly missed. He thanked her for her service.

Post Comments: Darla McNaughton said she did not dread coming back to work after time off and said it was a credit to her employees and the County. She said the County pulls together to serve the constituents better.

Michelle Orris congratulated Deb Shrawder on her retirement. She noted her years of service and wished her well.

Robbyn Metz said she appreciated Commissioner Campbell's opening statement regarding the cd. She said things happen and people should respect that. She asked if the money was still sitting in the lower interest-bearing account or if it was moved into a higher yielding account. Ms. Metz questioned if it was a good practice to have half of County funds sitting in one bank, as money is only insured up to a certain dollar amount. She further asked if there is someone that has a good rapport with the bank.

Megan Sellers stated that due to the engagement on social media, people will understand there was a mistake but she would recap the details so people could fully understand. She said the Perry County Treasurer released a statement that his advice was being ignored. She questioned if the investigation was happening because it was made public and said the financial records of the County are not up to standard and is evidenced by the large fees paid to ZA Accounting. Ms. Sellers further commented instead of working collaboratively with the Treasurer, the Commissioners continue to mismanage County investments. She stated that Jan Gibboney has pointed out the lack of an investment policy, as well as a \$2.5 million Pennian cd being renewed at 1.74% despite market rates being close to 5%. She said this locked in a \$19,000 lose over three months and over \$75,000 in annual lost income. Ms. Sellers commented on the County holding \$25 million in available funds and said with proper diligence the money could generate significant income easing the burden on tax payers. She said the County operates without updated financial documents and information. Ms. Sellers stated that the Commissioners need to be transparent and everyone should be held accountable. She urged the Commissioners to create an investment policy, listen to the Treasurer, and work to ensure funds are used effectively for all County residents.

Tony Campbell asked what the warrant list was. He further questioned if the pay rate of the Public Defender was a County grade rate like other employees. He asked who used the West Law at the Law Library.

Larry Reisinger said he hoped everyone had a great Christmas and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Sarah Geesaman stated that her office is getting ready for the 2025 municipal election. She said for anyone wanting to be on the ballot; the first day to get signatures was February 18th and the last day to get signatures and file was March 11th. She commented that all Judges, Majority and Minority Inspectors have been notified of these dates. She commented that petitions should be in the office by the end of January. Ms. Geesaman said the dates of the 2025 election were May 20, 2025 and November 4, 2025.

Commissioner Campbell thanked the Departments for the good work they did over the past year and looks forward to continuing to provide services to residents.

Comments from Press: Paul Wyatt wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Campbell wished all a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to adjourn at 10:19 a.m. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried unanimously.

Shannon Hines, Chief Clerk

William G. Lyons, Secretary