

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

19-2021

The regular meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date and time in the Commissioner's Office with the following present via GoToMeeting: Commissioners Sather, Walls and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman; Solicitor, Larry Newton; Treasurer, Susan Harry; Planning Director, Jim Lettiere; Community Development Administrator, Stacia-Fe Gillen; District Attorney, Dave Smith; Veteran's Affairs Director, Brian Bassett; EMA Director, Joe Thompson; Doug Hart from the EMA Department; 911 Director, Chris Stevens; Larry Smith, Bob Williams, and Lonnie Smith of the Sons of the American Revolution, Frontier Patriots Chapter, and Daily News Reporter, Kylie Hawn.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner Sather. Heather Fellman conducted roll call of all call-in participants and discussed policies and procedures for public comment during the meeting. All participants will be muted for the duration of the meeting except during public comment periods. During public comment periods, participants will be unmuted individually to ensure that everyone is heard. Prayer was led by Commissioner Thomas and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Commissioner Sather.

It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes) to approve payment of bills.

There were two additions to the agenda. The first is the COVID-19 weekly update from Joe Thompson. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes). The second addition is Chris Stevens, 911 Director, who is requesting approval for a letter of engagement for the provisioning of Next Gen services. It was moved by commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas asked that everyone remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country as we kick off the summer with Memorial Day. Take a moment to reflect on how they made it possible for us to be here today.

There were no public comments.

Under matters to be addressed by the solicitor, Attorney Newton provided an update on the Gail Galloway case. This lawsuit has been dismissed. His second amended complaint was dismissed with prejudice. At the last meeting, the Commissioners asked Attorney Newton to confirm with Mifflin County that there would be no increase in the daily cost for inmates in the update to the Inmate Housing Agreement. Attorney Newton confirmed that there is no cost increase.

Under new business, Larry Smith, President of the Frontier Patriots Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, presented two plaques honoring 131 patriots who served in the Revolutionary War and died and were buried in Huntingdon County. These plaques will be hung in a public area in the Courthouse to honor their service.

Dave Smith, District Attorney, requested consideration of approval to attend the District Attorney Association's 2021 Annual Summer Meeting in Bedford. The total cost is \$850 and includes CLE credits that he is required to have. The conference dates are July 18th through the 21st. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Chris Stevens, 911 Director, requested consideration of approval for a letter of engagement from PEMA that was sent to every county that operates a 911 center. It basically states that the county will cooperate with PEMA in their efforts to create a state-wide 911 phone system. This will eventually save the county about \$6,000 per month as the state will assume those costs. This is basically a situation where we either sign the letter or lose our 911 funding. Commissioner Sather asked if this does mean that the 911 Center will remain in Huntingdon County. Mr. Stevens confirmed that the 911 Center will remain in Huntingdon County. This is just the state taking over the Next Gen system. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Joe Thompson and Doug Hart from the EMA Department provided a COVID-19 update. Huntingdon County has improved to the moderate level of community spread. Mr. Thompson wanted to remind residents that the situation is improving but we still need to be cautious. Continue to wash hands, socially distance, and wear masks. Over the past 7 days, there have been 32 new cases of COVID-19 reported in Huntingdon County, which is a great improvement over what it has been. For the duration of the pandemic, Huntingdon County has had 5,088 total cases. There is one patient with COVID-19 currently being treated at Penn Highlands hospital. This individual is not in the ICU. The 14 day state average is coming down. The percent positivity rate for Huntingdon County is 4.2%, the lowest it has been in a long time. The state percent positivity rate is 4.5%. Unfortunately there were two new COVID-related deaths in the county this week. There have been 131 COVID-related deaths total in the County since the beginning of the pandemic. SCI Huntingdon is now reporting no inmate or staff cases of COVID-19. SCI Smithfield is reporting 15 inmate and 1 staff positive. In person visitation will be starting up again in the SCIs soon. Huntingdon County Jail is still utilizing video visitation. Long-term care facilities are reporting some resident and staff cases but no significant outbreaks. All but one school is open for in-person classes. Juniata College held graduation last week. There are many vaccine providers in Huntingdon County and the vaccine availability from the federal government remains good. The Department of Health is working with enrolled vaccine providers in the county to get the vaccine to everyone ages 16 and up who wants it. As of today, PA has administered first doses of vaccines to 56% of its entire population. The state ranks 9th among all 50 states for first doses administered by percentage of population. 51% of Pennsylvanians aged 18 and older are fully vaccinated. According to the CDC, PA ranks 5th among all 50 states for total doses administered. We are doing well compared to other states. The Bryce Jordan Center is continuing their regional vaccination clinics. That is scheduled to run at least through the end of June. They are doing 5 days per week with Tuesdays and Wednesdays off for deep cleaning. Currently in Huntingdon County, we have 2,222 people partially vaccinated and 14,416 people fully vaccinated. This accounts for approximately 38% of the county population. Penn Highlands has reduced to one vaccine clinic per week on Thursday mornings at the education building from 7-11AM because the demand for the vaccine has dropped significantly. Broad Top Medical Group has the Moderna vaccine available at the following facilities: Broad Top, Mount Union, Huntingdon Family Care Center, primary Care Center and the Pediatric and Family Health Care Centers. They are getting very few calls requesting the vaccine at this point. Mr. Thompson discussed community services that are available. If anyone needs help getting to a vaccine site, the Center for Community Action, Area Agency on Aging, and the EMA office have coordinated to provide transportation to individuals who need it. You can contact CCA for details. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program provides financial assistance to households directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19. There are a number of ways that this funding is available to help. Please contact CCA for more information. The state COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program is available for eligible businesses. They are encouraged to apply for this grant by June 15th. You can contact Huntingdon County Business and Industry for more information on this program.

Susan Harry, Treasurer, requested consideration of approval to hire Lauren Heane, for the position of part-time clerk effective June 1, 2021. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Jim Lettiere, Planning Director, requested consideration of approval for the relocation of the Blue Star Memorial By-Way Marker from its current location near Portstown Park to the area between the Courthouse and the Veteran's Affairs Building. I discussed this with Jay Buchanan, President of the Huntingdon County Veteran's Association and Rick Henney, Commander of the Huntingdon County Veteran's Association. Neither had an objection to the relocation. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested consideration of approval for a request from the Standing Stone Garden Club for placement of a planter at the front of the Courthouse. The Garden Club has purchased a concrete planter and will be responsible for planting it in the spring and summer and decorating it during the holiday seasons. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested consideration of approval for a request from the Mapleton Borough Council President on behalf of the Borough Council. They would like an extension on an Act 13 project at Riverside Park. They were awarded money for a playground from the 2019 Act 13 money. The deadline for the project to be completed is tomorrow, May 26th. They did run into some unforeseen COVID-related issues. They are requesting a 2 month extension and the Planning Office is recommending approval of their request. They feel they could get it done with this extension. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested consideration of approval for a proposal from Barton and Loguidice for a revision to the solid waste management plan for the South-Central Solid Waste Authority. We had an initial proposal submitted to us for a range between \$8,000 and \$13,000. It is around 90% completed but there is more work to do. The budget is \$10,000. We are requesting consideration of approval to seek the Authority's approval to pay the costs from the agency budget. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested that Resolution 7-2021 for the East Broad Top RACP grant be tabled until the next meeting because some changes need to be made to reflect that the Huntingdon County General Authority, not Huntingdon County, will be acting as the applicant. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested that the cooperative agreement for the East Broad Top be tabled until the next meeting as well. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Jim Lettiere requested consideration of approval for 2021 Act 13 Application Funding Recommendations. Seven Applications were received. It was a difficult situation to recommend funding based on the competitiveness of the applications. Some applications were ready to go and were fundable within two years. Some of the ranking numbers may be a little higher than others but didn't get funding because we did not feel it was a fundable project. There were not banked funds to cover the difference between the funding request and the total budget. Smithfield applied for park benches at Riverside Park, Three Springs applied for a table upgrade for the swimming pool area, Mapleton Borough applied for the Riverside Memorial Park concrete boat ramp replacement, Warrior's Mark applied for a meeting and activity pavilion for the Warrior's Mark Area Historical Society, Alexandria Borough applied for the Canal Street pedestrian Bridge, Mount Union Borough applied for a park renovation and Wood Township applied for a bleacher replacement project for a park. It is recommended to fund the following projects: the table upgrade for Three Springs in the amount of \$10,000; the Riverside Memorial Park concrete boat ramp replacement in the amount of \$10,000 and the bleacher replacement project for Wood Township in the amount of \$9,000. The remaining \$1,000 will remain in the account. Commissioner Walls asked for the reasoning behind not selecting the Alexandria bridge project given its high score. Stacia-Fe Gillen responded that they also applied for funding for that project last year. At that time, they had an estimate that it would cost over \$100,000 for the bridge, but they did not have the commitment of the funds. They reapplied this year with a different estimate for the bridge but it was still very much in excess of what they had committed in terms of funding. There is a limit of \$10,000 for this project so we look at their ability to fundraise. We did not see them being able to achieve that funding in the two year time frame. We are in discussion with Alexandria Borough on a potential solution. There is a PennDOT historical bridge that needs to be rehomed. We think it is a good fit. It is still in discussion. We did encourage all of the applicants to reapply next year. This year happened to be a particularly competitive year. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Stacia-Fe Gillen, Community Development Administrator, requested consideration of approval for a notice of award for the 19 South Jefferson Street demolition project in Mount Union to Krieger Excavating LLC. This project was put out to bid as required and Krieger Excavating LLC was the sole bidder. Other interested bidders cited schedules that were too busy to accommodate the emergency needs of this project. The terms of the agreement are 60 days to substantial completion at a rate of \$49,450. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Stacia-Fe Gillen requested consideration of approval for a form of agreement for the 19 South Jefferson Street demolition project between the Huntingdon County Commissioners and Krieger Excavating LLC. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Stacia-Fe Gillen requested consideration of approval for a notice to proceed for Krieger Excavating LLC conditional on providing proper documentation and receiving no comments by 4PM today. This is being approved now to keep from any delays to next week's meeting because of the emergency declaration for this project. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

There were no Matters for Action.

There were no Veteran's Burial Allowances.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Walls to adjourn the meeting at 10:37 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary