

Huntingdon, PA
Tuesday, March 3, 2009
09-09

The regular weekly meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date in the Commissioners Meeting Room with the following being present: Commissioners Fluke, Hoover, and Kough Pittenger; Scot Gill, Solicitor; Chief Clerk, Cinnamon Bair; Karen Weyant, Director of Community Services for Skills; Ken Tucker, Chief Assessor; Maureen Safko, Grants Administrator; Richard Stahl, Planning Director; George Germann, The Daily News; Jeff Gill, Altoona Mirror; and visitor Randy Carper.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Fluke followed by Prayer led by Commissioner Hoover and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Commissioner Kough Pittenger.

It was moved by Commissioner Hoover seconded by Commissioner Kough Pittenger and carried (Kough Pittenger, yes; Fluke, yes; Hoover, yes) to approve the minutes of the February 24 meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger seconded by Commissioner Hoover and carried (Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes; Hoover, yes) to approve payment of invoices for the week of March 2.

There was one addition to today's meeting. Commissioner Hoover made a statement expressing his feelings about the Elks building project... "We (the County) are on the verge of spending big bucks on the Elks building. I am still convinced the first step should be to computerize the record keeping system of the Courthouse. And then determine how much more if any taxpayer's money should be spent on building renovation. There are too many unknowns on how long the recession will last, to be increasing the county debt at this time.

I am saying this now because in the next few weeks I will make a motion to shut the Elks projects down and refocus our efforts to make fiscally responsible improvements in the courthouse and to computerize the record keeping system."

George Germann asked if the other Commissioners had any comment. Commissioner Kough Pittenger responded by saying it is his prerogative to make his statement. I commend him for that. Commissioner Fluke said he is entitled to his opinion. As discussed before the route we have taken is the shortest most cost effective way to our goal. It is not just a matter of record storage, it is far greater.

There was no public comment at today's meeting.

There were no matters addressed by the Solicitor.

First on the agenda, Karen Weyant, Director of Community Services for Skills of Central Pennsylvania, Inc asked the Commissioners to proclaim March as National Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Commissioner Hoover, who sits on the Advisory Board of Skills, read the proclamation asking the public to have awareness about Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities. Karen said that she runs 5 programs in three Counties. Huntingdon County has 58 people in the habilitation program and Karen is based in Lewistown. Commissioner Hoover thanked Karen for the work Skills does. It was moved by Commissioner Hoover seconded by Commissioner Kough Pittenger and carried (Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes; Hoover, yes) to proclaim March as National Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

Second on the agenda was Ken Tucker, Chief Tax Assessor. Ken met with the Commissioners to update them on the Tax Assessment Department. Ken told the Commissioners that his department is responsible for maintaining a record of all real estate parcels in the County. They must value the real estate and keep track of ownership. They are charged with keeping the data current most do not realize their records are used by appraisers, abstractors, attorneys, surveyors and property owners. The information is used for appraisals, insurance companies to value when being mortgaged or in the case of loss by fire, floods, etc. Ken told the Commissioners that there are 29073 parcels in the County. 1188 are exempt from taxes. Ken said the parcels were owned by government bodies, churches, and schools. Commissioner Fluke asked if all the parcels owned by churches and schools were tax exempt. Ken said it depends on the use of the property. The Assessment Office also runs the Clean and Green program, with 3231 parcels and the Homestead/Farmstead exclusions, with 11119 parcels. Ken said they are finishing up the first tax billing of the year for the County and the municipal portion of the real estate taxes. The 27885 taxable parcels have an assessed value \$280,380,680. This generates \$6,729,136 in county taxes and \$1,927,530 in municipal taxes at face value. Per capita taxes generate \$121,590 in county taxes. The Assessment Department prints 408 tax duplicate books. In June they start over with the school district tax bills. Commissioner Kough Pittenger asked Ken to go over what they do to collect information. Ken told the Board that they need to do field assessments, going to the properties on a yearly basis. Building permits help them to locate new structures along with them driving out to locations and see new buildings on the way to a known new structure. The buildings are assessed from values set in 1978. Commissioner Hoover asked about the approximately 9500 acres owned by Penn State. Ken said they do not pay taxes and it

would be hard to get them to pay due to the complicated exemption law. Ken noted that Juniata College pays taxes on some of their properties that are not of educational use. Commissioner Fluke asked when the total value was dated. Ken said it was good as of today.

The last agenda item was Maureen Safko and Richard Stahl they requested to meet with the Commissioners to have the amended 2008-2009 CDBG contract signed. The contract was amended to include Smithfield Township. It was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger seconded by Commissioner Hoover and carried (Fluke, yes; Hoover, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes) to sign the amended 2008-2009 CDBG contract.

Maureen brought resolutions for the Commissioners to sign that would revise use of CDBG money to go from one project to another that was ready and the allocated money would be moved to those projects in the future. Maureen summarized six changes; 1) \$25,500 additional to the Shirley Home for HVAC and construction drawings for the kitchen; 2) \$9,500 additional to Huntingdon House for HVAC; 3) \$2,212 to Petersburg Borough allowing them to extend the sewage treatment plant project until 2010; 4) \$20,000 held for the Library to allow them time to get a match for a project in the third year of the plan; 5) restores \$75,788 to the Mapleton Water project; And 6) moves a small balance to nearly complete Puttstown lateral project. Resolutions 03-2009, 04-2009, 05-2009, and 06-2009 to modify contracts with Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) FFY 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008. It was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger seconded by Commissioner Hoover and carried (Hoover, yes; Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes) to approve modifications to above contracts.

The last item Maureen brought for approval was an agreement with DCED to apply \$75,788 to Mapleton water line project. It was moved by Commissioner Hoover seconded by Commissioner Kough Pittenger and carried (Kough Pittenger, yes; Fluke, yes; Hoover, yes) to approve the DCED agreement with Mapleton for the water line project on Railroad Street.

Richard Stahl stayed to give the media the news that the County Department Heads had met and designed a Mission Statement for the County and they were in the process of working on a long term strategic plan. The strategic plan information and the Mission statement were posted on the Huntingdon County website. Along with those items the approved minutes and the Commissioners Meeting agenda would now be available as well. It was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger seconded by Commissioner Hoover and carried (Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes; Hoover, yes) to adopt the Huntingdon County Mission Statement:

“Huntingdon County government will provide essential public services with pride and professionalism. Services will be delivered in a fiscally sound and unified manner using available resources to enrich Huntingdon County socially, economically and environmentally.”

On the recommendation, of Children Services Director, Joyce Zolten to appoint William Brumbaugh to the Children Services Advisory Board. It was moved by Commissioner Hoover seconded by Commissioner Kough Pittenger and carried (Kough Pittenger, yes; Fluke, yes; Hoover, yes) to appoint Mr. Brumbaugh to the advisory board.

There were no Veteran burial allowances.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger second by Commissioner Hoover and carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Kough Pittenger, Secretary