

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

39-2021

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: Commissioners Sather, Walls and Thomas; Deputy Chief Clerk, Tracey Rhodes; Solicitor, Larry Newton; EMA Director, Joe Thompson; EMA Staff Member, Doug Hart; Community Development Administrator, Stacia-Fe Gillen; Probation Director, Len Hahn and Daily News Reporter, Kylie Hawn.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner Sather. Tracey Rhodes 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 was one addition to the agenda: a request to ratify a resolution in support of the RACP for the public safety radio system. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes) to add this item to the agenda.

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas encouraged all residents who are able to get the COVID vaccine. Commissioner Sather reminded everyone to be safe while traveling. Commissioner Walls reminded the public of designated recycling drop-off points. It is an extra expense on the taxpayers when these sites are used improperly. Please be mindful of the appropriate locations and facilities for recycling.

There were no public comments.

There were no matters to be addressed by the solicitor.

Under new business, Stacia-Fe Gillen, Community Development Administrator, requested consideration of approval for payout 1 for Mid-State Construction for the Library Elevator project. This payout is for bonds and insurance to get the project started. This expense is being paid with pass-through funding to the Library. No general fund dollars are being expended. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Stacia-Fe Gillen requested consideration of approval for a Notice of Award to Guyer Brothers, Inc. for the MUMA Hill Valley Sewer Improvement Project. The notice of award is for \$112,112. This project is partially funded by FY 2018 CDBG monies in the amount of \$87,000. The remaining balance will be

covered by MUMA. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Stacia-Fe Gillen requested consideration of approval for a Service Agreement with Guyer Brothers, Inc. for the above-mentioned project. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Len Hahn, Probation Director, requested consideration of approval for the County Adult Probation Grant-In-Aid application to PCCD. This is an annual grant for FY 2021-2022. It is for \$23,219 and will be used for operational costs and salaries in the adult probation and parole department. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Consideration of approval was given to ratify resolution 13-2021 in support of the RACP grant for the public safety radio system. The upgrade was completed in 2017 and this RACP grant is to offset the cost of those upgrades. The grant process has taken a long time but we are at the end of the paperwork and are now ratifying the previous actions taken as newly required by the state. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Joe Thompson and Doug Hart from EMA presented operational updates from their department. Joe Thompson announced that, as of last week, all Huntingdon County municipalities have ratified the 2021 Huntingdon County Hazard Mitigation Plan. It was fully accepted and adopted and the project is now completed. Thank you to everyone for getting that done.

Joe Thompson notified the Commissioners and the public that it is now time to begin thinking about the next Hazard Mitigation Plan update. A one-time source of funding for the next update has just been brought to our attention. We have just had our plan approved this year and normally we would not be due for another update until 2026, however we have a unique funding opportunity that has occurred that we believe would make it advantageous to update our plan early. This is as a result of the federal disaster declaration related to COVID-19 that has now been approved for Hazard Mitigation. We may apply for HMGP under the program to update our plan. We may wish to go early because the local match would be paid by PEMA. There would be no cost to the county. If we do not pursue this grant, we would wait another couple of years and apply for a grant that would require a 25% county match. This would put our next project in the early 2024 to mid-2025 time range. We did ours this year in about the same timeframe with a number of other challenges including the pandemic so I think we will be in a very good position to get this completed in the required timeframe. This letter of intent does not bind Huntingdon County, but without the letter we cannot be considered for this funding. Commissioner Sather congratulated the EMA department on getting 100% compliance from all municipalities. Commissioner Thomas commented that it is very important for municipalities to sign on so that they do not risk losing access to federal disaster funding. Commissioner Walls also congratulated the EMA office and all of the other parties involved in this project on their good work in accomplishing this difficult task. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes) to approve the letter of intent.

Joe Thompson announced that PEMA notified us late last Friday that Huntingdon County is included in the municipal funding amendment for damages from Ida. Municipalities that are eligible for funding need to make sure to be checking their email regularly as we are sending out lots of information. Next week we will be having a virtual meeting that is mandatory for each eligible municipality. Information will be coming out about those meetings this week. If any Huntingdon County municipality has not received the email that we have already sent out about the disaster declaration, please contact the EMA office. Additionally, on the call this morning it was noted that if there are any municipalities having technical problems at any point in the grant process PEMA is available to help with that side of it.

Doug Hart from the EMA Office provided an update on COVID-19. Huntingdon County remains in the high rate of community spread. We averaged 29 cases per day in the last week in Huntingdon County. SCI Smithfield has 32 inmate cases and 2 staff cases. SCI Huntingdon has 1 inmate cases and 2 staff cases. County schools are not reporting any significant issues. There were 23 COVID cases among school-aged children in the county during the most recent reporting period. There was one positive at Juniata College in the last month. As of the last time I spoke with Penn Highlands, they had 13 COVID patients. 8 are in the med-surg and 3 are in the ICU. 2 are waiting in the emergency department because there is nowhere to put them in med-surg. There are breakthrough cases happening among fully vaccinated people, but we are still recommending that people get vaccinated. It is still your best protection against contracting COVID-19 and experiencing complications. COVID hospitalizations for the state went down in the past week. The incident rate for the county is 370 per 100,000, which is up from 310 last week. PCR also went up from 10.3 to 12.7%. The state remains steady at 9.7%. There is nothing significant to report from long-term care facilities. Total number of people partially or fully vaccinated is 20,850, or about 46% of the population. 1,129 booster shots have been given as well. The FDA voted unanimously last week to approve Moderna and Johnson and Johnson boosters as well. The people that they are suggesting get Pfizer and Moderna boosters are seniors, those constantly exposed, and those with compromised immune systems. They are recommending that anyone can get Johnson and Johnson boosters. Commissioner Sather asked where people can get tested for COVID if they suspect that they have it. He noted that he is aware that people can get tested at convenient care centers and Appleby's. Mr. Hart responded that you can also get tested at the hospital over by the quick lab. We are just asking that people not show up just for a COVID test at the ER. Commissioner Thomas encouraged people to get the vaccine. We eradicated polio and other diseases by taking the shot. People should be just as willing to get the COVID vaccine. Kylie Hawn asked about cases of COVID at the Count Jail. The Commissioners noted that they do not have numbers in front of them. There have been cases at the Jail and those individuals are isolated from the rest of the population. Ms. Hawn asked if it is anything like we saw last fall. The Commissioners confirmed that it is not on the same level that it was last fall. Commissioner Thomas commented that the situation is being monitored. There were a few inmates who tested positive. They are being isolated and monitored and are doing well. We can get you an exact number after the meeting if you would like it. Last year we had to shut down and we are not experiencing that level of emergency at this time. Commissioner Sather commented that there is also additional testing protocol in place to keep COVID-positive inmates from being transferred to the County Jail. Commissioner Thomas also noted that we are randomly testing the guards as well. We are taking all of the precautions that we can take. Stacia-Fe Gillen asked about the Moderna booster and if it is available yet locally. Mr. Hart does not believe they are available yet locally.

There were no matters for action, information and discussion.

There were no Veteran's Burial Allowances.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Walls to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather N. Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary