

Huntingdon, PA
Tuesday, June 16, 2009
23-09

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; Solicitor, Scot Gill; Chief Clerk, Cinnamon Bair; Maureen Safko, Grants Administrator; Illona Ballreich, Executive Director of the Huntingdon County Arts Council ; George Germann, The Daily News; and visitors Charlie Coleman, Bill Livingston, and Zach Gordon, Candidate for Prothonotary.

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

It was moved by Commissioner Hoover seconded by Commissioner Kough Pittenger and carried (Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes; Hoover, yes) to approve the minutes of the June 9 meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger seconded by Commissioner Hoover and carried (Hoover, yes; Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes) to approve payment of invoices for the week of June 15.

There were no additions to today's meeting.

Mr. Bill Livingston addressed the Commissioners when Chairman Fluke asked if anyone had public comment. Mr. Livingston asked the Commissioners how they planned to address the tax base for Huntingdon County. He said that the area was losing two businesses and approximately 1000 jobs. Commissioner Fluke said in former years businesses came to the County to have their taxes lowered therefore he felt the County was not losing as much of the taxes as they could have if the taxes had not been lowered at the beginning. Commissioner Fluke went on to say in his opinion they should be more concerned about economic development. The County should not "put all their eggs in one basket" he suggested that the area groups for years have only concentrated on Raystown Lake and tourism. Commissioner Fluke said that Huntingdon County's assets were lower than Bedford County, even though Bedford is approximately the same size as Huntingdon. He said Bedford's tax base is growing. Commissioner Fluke said that when money comes to Huntingdon it is used for trails and recreation, which does not add to the tax base. Mr. Livingston said we cannot rely on the Lake, visitors do not pay taxes. Young people leave because they can't live on \$8.00/hr jobs. Commissioner Kough Pittenger said there have been no red flags alerting Commissioners that the taxes have changed from the numbers historically. People that visit the lake return and retire here and build large, expensive homes, which help the tax base. Pennsylvania relies on tourism and agriculture. Huntingdon is blessed by both. Commissioner Kough Pittenger said she respectfully disagrees with Commissioner Fluke and Mr. Livingston, she said tourism does help economic development. She added that the only way the County has to increase revenue would be raise taxes which she stated that she does not want to do. Commissioner Hoover said that tourism is a major piece of the pie. He said that in order to increase the chances of economic development Huntingdon County needs to work with organizations such as Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I) they "court" businesses to come to the area, they are a salesman for the area and sell our County to companies. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Livingston for attending.

No matters addressed by the Solicitor.

First on the agenda, Maureen Safko; Maureen gave the Commissioners a chart that lists the companies that bid on the design, construction projects for the Shirley Home for the Aged. Maureen said two companies bid only on the HVAC or Kitchen renovation the others bid on both. Maureen went over the bids with Valerie Thomas the Shirley Home Administrator and they both felt that the Michael L. Norris & Associates, State College, company stood out above the others. Maureen said the overall thought and consideration of building and their knowledge of the PA Conservation Works program would be very helpful. Maureen explained that the kitchen renovation would show as the larger energy saver project than the HVAC. Maureen told the Board that with the time deadlines with the grant applications she would need up to \$20,000 non-grant money to start design and environmental review that is required to receive CDBG funding. The money will not be reimbursed by a grant. Maureen said that Michael L. Norris felt that the \$80,000 would not be enough to complete both projects. Commissioner Hoover asked Maureen what would be the total cost. Maureen said that they would have to work within their means. They have budgeted \$60,000 CDBG money and with the \$20,000 would total \$80,000. The HVAC system is the first priority and the kitchen project may be set back to look for other funding. Commissioner Kough Pittenger said that the HVAC project has been on the CDBG plan for years and they did not plan the match in the budget. She asked Maureen about money that was granted to the Shirley Home from Representative Mike Fleck. Maureen said a small portion of the money could be used to match the other grants but it was designated for certain expenditures, furniture, painting, and new flooring. Another project granted with the recovery money which will replace windows, door replacement and flooring. Commissioner Hoover said that he knows the project is needed but he figured with the County's

allocation the taxpayers of the County were paying \$6,000 to \$8,000 toward each resident of the home already. Commissioner Kough Pittenger said that the home is a County owned facility and they were responsible for the property even though it is under private administration. She added all the residents pay to live there. Commissioner Fluke said you can look at it in several ways. If the residents do not have a home the County would be required to place them somewhere. Commissioner Fluke asked if the current heating system is the most economical, because the system only heats it does not cool in the summer. Maureen said it is only a heating system a new system could heat and cool the Shirley Home. Maureen added that this project only has to deal with heating. Maureen suggested a meeting with the Commissioners, Shirley Home Administration and the engineers to decide what the goals are. Commissioner Fluke stated that CDBG money should go toward projects to improve the home over other projects. When asked, Maureen said she would like the Commissioners to make a motion to negotiate with Michael L. Norris & Associates to enter into a contract of \$20,000 or less to get design work started for the HVAC and kitchen renovations. Commissioner Kough Pittenger asked when the PA Conservation Works deadline is. Maureen said the preliminary deadline started yesterday. Commissioner Kough Pittenger added that she would love to make the motion to spend the money to start the project, but the Commissioners had not reviewed where they could pull the money from. Commissioner Kough Pittenger said the Board would look into it this week.

Commissioner Hoover asked the Solicitor if a Commissioner could join the meeting by telephone. Scot answered yes. Commissioner Kough Pittenger asked if a Commissioner could give a proxy vote. Scot said that is much more difficult, because you need to put in writing exactly what you are voting on and you could have the potential to get new information by the time the vote is cast. Scot said they have had meetings in the past with Commissioners joining by phone. Commissioner Fluke was not aware this could happen.

The second scheduled guest was Illona Ballreich. Illona brought the Commissioners a copy of the book the Arts Council created titled, In these Hills and Valleys. The book is a look into Huntingdon County as seen by the many people who contributed to its development. The books reads about the past, schools, agriculture, music, historical events, art, literature, and the Arts Council mission statement. Illona said the book will be given to the schools for teachers to reference. The book will be sold a local businesses and at the Raystown Tourism Center for \$10.00. Illona talked with the Commissioners about the changes the State is making in the budget regarding Arts.

The last item on the agenda was the discussion to hire RBA Associates, State College to be the IT services company for the County while contracts are being negotiated with the current company. Commissioner Kough Pittenger read a proposal the Commissioners received from RBA for 108hours at a cost of \$10,600. Commissioner Hoover said that given the unique needs of County Government and the experience of RBA he felt it would be the best company for the County. Commissioner Fluke asked the Solicitor if he could abstain from a vote because he felt that personally this may cause a legal issue with the current IT contract. Scot answered that he could abstain if he had a personal conflict with the companies involved. Commissioner Fluke answered no. Commissioner Kough Pittenger asked if there was an issue. Scot said there was nothing to keep the Commissioners from an agreement with another company for IT services. It was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger seconded by Commissioner Hoover and carried (Fluke, no; Kough Pittenger, yes; Hoover, yes) to agree to hire RBA Associates for 108 hours in the amount of \$10,600.

The Commissioners approved payment for 0 Veteran burial allowances, 0 widow/widower burial allowance and 0 bases.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Kough Pittenger second by Commissioner Hoover and carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 a.m. Minutes prepared by Chief Clerk Cinnamon L. Bair.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Kough Pittenger, Secretary