

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

19-2020

The regular meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date and time in the Commissioners Office with the following present: Commissioners Sather, Walls and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman and Solicitor, Peter McManamon. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the following individuals were present via GoToMeeting: Planning Director, Jim Lettiere; Community Development Administrator, Stacia-Fe Gillen; CYS Director, Shannon Walborn; News Reporter, Kylie Hawn and visitor, Dean Fluke.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner Sather. Chief Clerk 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 Walls and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Commissioner Thomas.

It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the minutes of the May 19th Public Meeting.

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

There were two additions to the agenda: an Avanco Agreement for CYS and additional Act 13 Legacy Fund Agreements. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes) to approve these additions to the agenda.

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas reminded residents that this year is a census year. The deadline to participate in the census is October 31, 2020. It is important that all residents participate. For each person that opts out of the census \$2,000 in funding for the area is lost every year. You can complete the census online, via telephone, or using a paper form. Mark Sather announced that next Tuesday's meeting is cancelled because it is Election Day.

There were no public comments.

There were no items to be addressed by the solicitor.

Under new business, Shannon Walborn, CYS Director, requested consideration of approval for the Avanco Child Welfare Information System (CWIS) agreement. This is a renewal for 4/20/21 at the same contracted price that has been paid since 2014. This is a subcontract with a state-wide software system. Commissioner Sather noted that the cost is shared by all 56 participating counties. It is a fixed price cost to the client of \$2,231.49. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Shannon Walborn requested consideration of approval for Resolution 10-2020 recognizing the staff of Huntingdon County Children's Services. The week of June 1st through June 5th is Child Welfare Professionals Appreciation Week. Ms. Walborn noted that she is very proud of the hard work of all of the professionals in her department. 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 the Community Development Block Grant Sub-Recipient Administrative Agreement between Huntingdon County and Mapleton Borough for the fiscal year 2016 CDBG program administration. Mapleton Borough was allocated \$57,466 for

sidewalk restoration on Church Street, Reservoir Street and Hill Street. It is hoped that they will be able to move forward with this project this year. Dean Fluke asked if there was a match. Ms. Gillen noted that there was no match from county, however she would have to look at the records to determine if Mapleton Borough made an contribution. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Stacia-Fe Gillen provided an update about the funding through the CARES Act in response to COVID-19. The CARES Act allocated a certain pot of money for entitlement monies and competitive monies. Huntingdon County received information on the allocations for the three entitlement communities in the county. Huntingdon County's allocation is \$166,152. There is concern about accepting the entitlement monies due to concerns over the county's capacity to administrate those funds. The Center for Community Action has reached out about a potential partnership to help meet some of the stringent requirements of administering those funds.

Jim Lettiere, Planning Director, requested consideration of approval for an agreement for Act 13 Legacy Funding with Mapleton Borough in the amount of \$10,000. The Board of Commissioners had previously approved this agreement at the May 28, 2019 public meeting. There is a one year period to have this agreement executed and the one year mark is approaching. This funding is for an ADA accessible playground at Riverside Memorial Park. The total project cost is \$64,000, of which \$10,000 will be from Act 13 Marcellus Shale Legacy Funding. The Borough Council is contributing \$14,000 and the Allegheny Ridge Corporation has submitted a \$40,000 application to DCNR for a small community grant. 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 an amendment to a previously approved agreement for Act 13 Marcellus Shale Legacy Funding for Mount Union Borough. They were allocated \$10,000 for the Riverside Park food truck and supplemental parking addition. There was a dump station that was part of the original request. Since that time, they determined that that is not a feasible component of that project. The cost for that project was \$1,400. They have asked to reduce their allocation by that amount, which results in the new funding amount being \$8,600. They are providing an in-kind match in the amount of \$3,067 for sewer line connections, a water line connection, and stone and blacktop. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Consideration of approval was given for the Cambria County Regional Highway Safety Network Letter of Support for fiscal year 2021-2022. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Consideration of approval for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) letter of support for the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Consideration of approval was given for the extension of county property tax face value payments. Commissioner Sather noted that the discount period ended in April and we are currently in face value payments. The face value rate will be extended until the end of September. Commissioner Thomas commented that a mailing was sent out to tax collectors and borough secretaries discussing this possible move. With the pandemic, this will give the county residents a couple of extra months to pay without going into the penalty phase of the property tax. We would encourage all the municipalities to join us in extending their face value so that it is easier on the tax collectors. Commissioner Walls added that the county gets approximately 50% of its revenues from property taxes and that money is still being counted on. The homestead and farmstead exemptions are reimbursed through the gambling money for those discounts. The casinos have been closed for a couple of months and whether that revenue will actually come in remains to be seen, but with the pandemic and everybody struggling we want to do all we can to help the tax payers. Commissioner Thomas noted that this is only the county portion of the taxes. It is up to each municipality to determine if they would like to extend their portions as well. The Commissioners encourage the municipalities to join them in extending face value. Dean Fluke asked if the Commissioners were only extending face value for the property tax and not the school tax. Commissioner Sather confirmed that that is correct. Kylie Hawn asked when the face value rate is normally done. Commissioner Thomas answered that face value rate typically ends at the end of June.

Heather Fellman, Chief Clerk, provided an update on the upcoming Presidential Primary. Polling places have been consolidated for the June 2nd election. This is not a permanent consolidation. Information on where people can vote can be found on the county website on the elections page. Mail-in and absentee ballots are due in the office no later than 8PM on June 2nd. Postmarks do not count. On Election Day, there will be someone stationed by the glass doors at the back of the Bailey Building from 8:30AM to 8:00PM to accept your ballots. Only the voter themselves can return their ballot. You cannot bring ballots in for your family members or friends. We are also encouraging voters to wear masks to protect other voters and our poll workers. That is not something that we can require but we are strongly encouraging it. Commissioner Thomas commented that the elections staff has been doing a wonderful job and their hard work is appreciated. With the new mail-in system, there have been thousands of applications to process and it is a very tedious process to ensure that that ballot goes to that person with scanning and double-checking everything. Kylie Hawn asked about reports from across the country where people have been mailed multiple applications or ballots for mail-in and noted that she wants people to understand that that is not how the process works in Pennsylvania. Ms. Fellman commented that she is aware of those reports as well and can understand concerns that people may have about this process. There are multiple fail-safes built into our system. If anything were to happen to something in our system where people ended up with two ballots, two ballots cannot be counted for the same voter. It is not possible in our system. Ms. Hawn asked how many mail-in ballots we have had. Ms. Fellman responded that the last time she looked it was approaching 4,000. Ms. Hawn asked how that compares to other presidential elections. Ms. Fellman responded that off-hand she is not sure, but she knows that these are higher numbers than we have ever seen in the County before. Now that it is expanded to include not just absentee voting for specific reasons and people can apply for a mail-in ballot just because that is how they would prefer to vote we have definitely seen significantly greater participation that way.

There were no Matters for Action, Information, and Discussion.

There were 5 Veteran's Burial Allowances.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Walls to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather N. Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary