

Huntingdon, Pa.
Tuesday December 11, 2012
7:00 p.m.

The Huntingdon County Commissioner held a budget meeting on the above date and time in the Bailey building meeting room with the following being present: Commissioners O’Korn, Fluke and Thomas; Solicitor, McManamon; Chief Clerk, Michelle Cerett; Treasurer, Rich Irvin; Fiscal Supervisor, Sherri Rogers and visitors Bruce Pergament, Larry Sather, Harris Layton, Betty Layton, Karen Gilliland, Nancy Bair, Jason Altmanshofer, Robin Horne, Julie Palmer, Scott Walls, Bland Parks, Barry Wright, David Booher, Gerald Booher, C. Arnold McClure, Jayce Reck, Skylar Reck, Wesley Ray, and Bill Hoover.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Commissioner O’Korn followed by Prayer led by Commissioner O’Korn and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Commissioner Fluke.

Commissioner O’Korn opened the meeting with introductions, a review of rules of the meeting and an overview of the budget process.

Bland Parks was the first to comment, asking if a review of the per capita income was done during the budget process. He commented on the number of jobs being lost in the County and asked if the Commissioners were doing anything about it. He further commented on the amount of money appropriated to the Huntingdon Library being the same as it was last year, which funded three libraries.

Commissioner Fluke stated that he feels the appropriations should have all been reviewed closer. Commissioner Thomas commended residents for continuing to run the Mount Union and Orbisonia libraries despite the funding cuts. Commissioner also stated that the Commissioners are working with various agencies on bringing jobs into the area. Commissioner O’Korn stated that the ratio change was not done with the intention of increasing taxes. His goal with the ratio change was simply a risk management tool. Unfortunately, after assessing the situation, it was determined a tax increase was necessary.

Belle Tuten commented on the library appropriation. She stated that the decision to close two libraries was very difficult. She further stated that their State funding is contingent upon the County funding. She also addressed a comment made by Bland Parks in regards to a \$16,000.00 desk purchased for the library. She informed him that the desk was purchased through a grant to make the front desk handicapped accessible.

Larry Sather urged the Commissioners to assess the number of properties in the County that are not on tax rolls. He asked how many people were doing field work and Commissioner O’Korn stated that the vacancy in that office was recently filled. Mr. Sather also asked if anyone has contacted the Governor’s response team about the FCI closing. Commissioner Thomas stated that there has been some action taken but he’s not sure if anyone has contacted the Governor’s office. Commissioner O’Korn stated that HCBI has also been in contact with FCI.

David Booher questioned the legality of increasing taxes in the same year as a ratio change occurs. Commissioner O’Korn stated that a 10% increase is permitted under those circumstances. Mr. Booher stated that between the increase in tax revenue and the increase in the state grants, a tax increase is not necessary. He feels that if there was fiscal management in the County, a tax increase would not be necessary. Commissioner O’Korn followed up with comments regarding the cost of meeting the narrow banding requirement, which was unexpected. The initial cost was anticipated to be \$250,000.00, however through working with the 911 board and seeking other funds, the cost was reduced to \$216,000.00. He also commented on the decrease in funding from the State for the 911 system, which resulted in the County picking up that cost.

Bland Parks asked about the fracking fee for the Marcellus gas. Commissioner Thomas stated that the County will receive a yearly fee for it but the funds are restricted on use.

C. Arnold McClure addressed the Board and urged them to fight for tax reform. He stated that property owners are under great stress and cannot handle more taxes. Commissioner O’Korn stated he is not happy with the results either and urged residents to contact state and local representatives. He further commented on some cuts that have been made and the benefits the County could receive if the State would reform the income tax laws.

Bill Hoover commented on the appropriations made to the Shirleysburg Apartment building and the Shirley home for the aged. He stated that appropriation is the only one the Commissioners are not mandated to make

and they should consider cutting it. Lastly, Mr. Hoover commented on the amount of money spent on renovating the ballroom at the Bailey building.

Wesley Ray questioned why the Chief Tax Assessor's salary is so far over budget for the year. Rich Irvin stated it is because Ken was the only field data collector for most of the year and was doing additional work. The vacancy has now been filled and the new employee trained.

Barry Wright commented on taxes being increased in a poverty stricken county. He suggested cuts being made to the budget instead of taxes being increased.

Bland Parks commented about the Veterans affairs office and asked if it still needed to be a full time position. Commissioner O'Korn stated that the issue is being reviewed.

Scott Walls asked if the EMA office needs to be full time.

Mr. Walls suggested cutting out the Ag extension and Conservation District offices.

Bruce Pergament stated that the County should fight mandates instead of funding them.

Dave Booher stated he feels association dues should be cut. Kevin Fluke stated he feels the CCAP association dues should be paid from the Commissioners pocket.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. Minutes prepared by Michelle Cerett, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary