

Huntingdon, PA
Tuesday, July 21, 2009
28-09

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; Richard Stahl, Planning Director; Josh Funk, The Daily News; and visitors Jo Ann Whitsel, Charlie Coleman and Zach Gordon.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Fluke followed by Prayer led by Chief Clerk Cinnamon Bair 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 (Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes; Hoover, yes) to approve the minutes of the July 14 meeting with corrections to the date.

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 July 20.

There was one addition to today's meeting a contract with the doctor at the jail.

There was no public comment.

First on the agenda, was Richard Stahl. Richard came to the meeting to update the Commissioners on the SAP&DC meeting regarding wireless broadband.

Richard started first with the information from a survey the Planning Office sent to municipalities in the County. In the survey a question was asked if the municipality had high speed internet access. Richard told the Board less than half of the County had High speed internet. He said satellite service is available but very expensive. The phone companies in the area are deploying service to their customers as it is profitable to them.

Richard said he learned that Cambria County has placed 18 towers. The towers were placed as part of plan to connect the emergency services. The County can lease the towers to wireless providers to sell to the residents. The emergency services get free internet. The cost for the project was \$10 mil. If a county would decide to do this they must have a sign off from the local phone providers. Act 183 states government cannot complete with private sector.

Richard said other Counties that border Cambria may create a consortium. At this time none have. Commissioner Kough Pittenger said that she received an email that Blair County is not interested that this time, but would like the opportunity to look at it in the future. It was also mentioned that you must have more than 45% non coverage to apply for an American Recovery and Reinvestment grant. The next grant submission is August 31st. The grants require a 20% local match. Richard said that private entities can apply for funds. Richard discussed the different grant project categories he felt most private entities will apply for the "middle mile projects". Commissioner Kough Pittenger asked if to apply for this grant the project needs to be "shovel ready". Richard said Huntingdon does not have a project, but may send a letter of interest. Commissioner Kough Pittenger asked about getting the phone providers to sign off. Richard said we would not know unless we ask. Richard said at this time high speed internet is crucial to the county. Cambria's project cost \$10 mil with a 150,000 residents, Huntingdon has less than 46,000 Richard could not estimate an amount for a project for Huntingdon County. Richard did say the grant required a 20% match. Commissioner Hoover asked if it would require blanket coverage for the entire County and secondly does a phone company get to choose what they cover. Richard answered no (to the blanket coverage), but Cambria wanted their County covered. Secondly, yes a company can choose any area, any area, it is an open system. Commissioner Kough Pittenger added that the main reasons for Cambria's project is for emergency service coverage, second potential revenue for tax relief and third for economic development. She mentioned that Cambria used outside firms and consultants to help with the project. Commissioner Hoover asked was radio service different than broadband. Richard said yes but they can both be run from the same towers. Commissioner Fluke said that as a member of the 911 board he would have reservations. What if Huntingdon went into an agreement with Blair County (as an example) and Blair dropped the service. Richard answered there would need to be many agreements signed. Commissioner Fluke said would it have been better to go with satellites rather than all these towers. Richard said he could not say, but with the new technology it may change. Right now you must be within five miles of a tower to have cell phone service. Commissioner Kough Pittenger asked if funds are available for a feasibility study. Commissioner Hoover asked Federal Stimulus money was available. Richard answered yes. Richard asked the Commissioners if they want him to contact Southern Alleghenies for assistance with a feasibility study. The Commissioners agreed.

It was moved by Commissioner Hoover seconded by Commissioner Kough Pittenger and carried (Fluke, yes; Kough Pittenger, yes; Hoover, yes) to sign a contract with Dr. Mark Minor for physician services at the County Jail. The agreement is for two years and the conditions and rates will stay the same.

The Commissioners approved payment for 4 Veteran burial allowances, 0 widow/widower burial allowances and 2 bases.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Hoover second by Commissioner Kough Pittenger and carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 a.m. Minutes prepared by Chief Clerk Cinnamon L. Bair.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Kough Pittenger, Secretary