

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

33-2021

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: Commissioner Sather; Deputy Chief Clerk, Tracey Rhodes; EMA Director, Joe Thompson; CYS Director, Shannon Walborn; Planning Director, Jim Lettiere; Community Development Administrator, Stacia-Fe Gillen; Daily News Reporter, Kylie Hawn and visitor Lonnie Smith. Attending via GoToMeeting: Commissioner Thomas; CYS Fiscal Supervisor, Claudia Conrad and CYS Fiscal Tech, Chris Dixon.

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 Sather and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Commissioner Thomas.

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Sather, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

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

There were no additions to the agenda.

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas encouraged everyone to get the COVID vaccine if you have not already done so. Commissioner Sather reminded everyone to pay attention to children commuting to and from school when they are out driving.

There were no public comments.

There were no matters to be addressed by the solicitor.

Under new business, Commissioner Thomas requested consideration of approval to appoint directors to the Huntingdon County Ag Land Preservation Board. Dennis Cramer of Shade Gap has been nominated for a three year term expiring on December 31, 2023. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Sather, yes; Thomas, yes).

Marissa Gioffre from America250PA requested consideration of approval for Huntingdon County to appoint Lonnie Smith as a representative for the PA Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Stacia-Fe Gillen, Community Development Administrator, requested consideration of approval for a resolution for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This is an annual request in preparation for the annual CDBG program application. This is required of the grant, but it is also required to be in compliance with federal accessibility regulations. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Sather, yes; Thomas, yes).

Jim Lettiere, Planning Director, requested consideration of approval to attend the PA Planning Association's Annual Conference in Pittsburgh from October 17-19th. Total cost of the event is approximately \$878. This is a budgeted

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

Jim Lettiere requested consideration of approval to accept the resignation of Taylor Aurand effective September 13th. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Sather, yes; Thomas, yes).

Shannon Walborn, CYS Director, requested consideration of approval for Laura Bilger to join the CYS department as an unpaid intern effective 9/9/2021. She is currently a student at Clarion University and has completed all necessary screenings. Commissioner Thomas commended Ms. Walborn on an excellent job retaining employees in her department and encouraging internships. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Chris Dixon, CYS Fiscal Tech, requested consideration of approval for a purchase of service agreement with Perseus House. This is for contract year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. They provide residential services for the agency. These are state-approved rates and this is a renewal from last year. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Sather, yes; Thomas, yes).

Chris Dixon requested consideration of approval for a purchase of service agreement with Pathways Adolescent Center. This is for contract year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. They provide residential services for the agency. These are state-approved rates and this is a renewal from last year. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Chris Dixon requested consideration of approval for a purchase of service agreement with KidsPeace National Centers. This is for contract year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. They provide residential and foster care services. These are state-approved rates and it is a renewal from last year. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Sather, yes; Thomas, yes).

Chris Dixon requested consideration of approval for a purchase of service agreement with Pentz Run Youth Services. This is for contract year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. They offer residential and transitional living services. These are state-approved rates and it is a renewal from last year. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Joe Thompson, EMA Director, provided a COVID-19 update. Huntingdon County remains in the high rate of community spread. There have been 5,570 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Huntingdon County since record-keeping began. There have also been 139 COVID-19 related deaths. Over the last 7 days we have had an average of 18 new cases per day. There have been 124 new cases in the past seven days. The state percent positivity rate is 8.2%. The Huntingdon County rate is 10.7%. Hospitalizations are up. There are currently 5 COVID-19 patients at Penn Highlands. Most of the local hospitalizations are among unvaccinated persons. The number of local ER visits is down slightly but the number of ambulance calls is starting to increase. Unfortunately, the virus is far from gone. The delta variant is driving these surges. It is more than two times as contagious as previous variants. The CDC is now reporting some data that suggests the delta variant may cause more serious illness than previous variants in unvaccinated people. Patients infected with the delta variant are more likely to be hospitalized than people infected with the original virus. Unvaccinated people are significantly more likely to require hospitalization and are more likely to die from the disease. This strain is affecting people of all ages, and particularly younger people. Vaccines will be our best defense against this disease. The total number of eligible people who are vaccinated in Huntingdon County is 18,181, or 44% of the eligible population. Vaccines.gov can help you find a place to get vaccinated. Masks are now mandatory in all K-12 schools, early learning programs and at child care providers. State employees in healthcare and congregate care facilities are now required to be vaccinated or undergo weekly COVID testing. There is an effort underway for those who may be immunocompromised to receive an additional dose of the vaccine. Hospitals may be changing visitation rules again in the near future. Many businesses are back to requiring masks. The additional \$300 weekly unemployment benefit ended yesterday. Other aspects of pandemic aid still exist including rental assistance and the expanded child tax credit. Contact the Center for Community Action for local aid information. Commissioner Sather thanked Mr. Thompson for his excellent reporting. Commissioner Thomas commented that this should not be a political issue. Through the history of the United States when there has been a pandemic and we were fortunate enough to get a vaccination people have

taken it to save lives. Don't make this a political statement for either party. Get vaccinated to protect your loved ones and protect others. It is scientific fact that the vaccination is very effective and saves lives.

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 Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather N. Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary