

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

2-2022

The regular meeting of the Huntingdon County Commissioners was held on the above date and time in the Commissioner's Meeting Room with the following present: Commissioners Sather and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman; Solicitor, Larry Newton; Planning Director, Jim Lettiere; CYS Director, Shannon Walborn; EMA Administrative Assistant, Doug Heart and Daily News Reporter, Kylie Hawn.

Commissioner Walls and Natasha Brubaker from the Center for Community Action attended via GoToMeeting.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner Sather. 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 Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

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

There were no additions to the agenda.

Under announcements, Commissioner Thomas urged residents to get the COVID vaccine and the booster, if eligible. He also encouraged residents to allow their children to be vaccinated against COVID. He commented that he hopes everyone will do their part to help keep everyone safe.

There were no public comments.

The Solicitor noted that closing on the TAN occurred on the 4th and it was funded on the 5th. He also noted that he is currently working on changes to the inmate housing contract with Centre County.

Under new business, Natasha Brubaker from the Center for Community Action requested consideration of approval for three semi-annual PHARE reports. The first one is from 2018. It is for the Wood Township rehab. \$36,184 have been spent. There have been three jobs completed and two are in the works. For the 2019 PHARE \$715 has been spent. That was for one individual for a security deposit. The 2020 PHARE remains unspent. Commissioner Sather commented that the amount of the 2018 PHARE funds totaled \$100,000. The grant has expending \$36,184. For 2019, the total of the PHARE funding was \$100,000. \$715 has been expended. The 2020 total funding is \$200,000 and there have been no expenditures to date. He asked what the deadline is for expending these funds. Ms. Brubaker commented that they have received an extension for the 2018 funds. For 2019, the deadline is 1/27/2023. The 2020 fund deadline is in 2024. Commissioner Sather asked what the new deadline is for the 2018 funds. Ms. Brubaker answered that it will probably be in June of this year. Commissioner Walls asked what the likelihood is that this funding will all be spent by the deadline. He further questioned why there seemed to be a problem using this funding. Is it an issue with educating the public, or lack of need? Ms. Brubaker answered that it is mostly because of the ERAP funding that came in and the way it

overlaps with the other available funding. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Jim Lettiere, Planning Director, requested consideration of approval for an application for payment to Midstate Construction for the Library Elevator Grant Project. The payment amount is \$19,429.92. 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 Resolution 2-2022 for the adoption of the South Central County Solid Waste Agency's 2021 Joint Municipal Solid Waste Plan. Each county's board of commissioners must vote on the resolution. The other counties involved are voting this morning as well. The terms of this agreement will cover recycling and solid waste disposal for 2021 through 2030. Commissioner Thomas commented that basically this plan spells out where you can haul solid waste to. You have to be in the plan for one of the haulers to be able to take the waste. The rural counties cannot afford to keep the recycling bins. DEP is dedicated to keeping them and I think recycling is a good thing too but they need to raise the fees a little bit to make it feasible for the counties to continue with the recycling. There are still some sites open in the County but it was a shame to have to close the ones that had to be closed. He commended Commissioner Walls who stops frequently at the recycling sites to help ensure that they are being used properly. He reiterated the importance of using the recycling sites properly. We want to keep the sites that are left in the county. Do not throw trash there and if the recycling bins are full do not throw your recycling on the ground. Commissioner Thomas commended Mr. Lettiere for the hard work that went into this plan and the great job he did. It was moved by Commissioner Wall, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Walls, yes; Thomas, yes; Sather, yes).

Shannon Walborn, CYS Director, requested consideration of approval for the resignation of Caseworker Ryan DiMarco. His final day will be January 13, 2022. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Wall, yes).

Shannon Walborn requested consideration of approval to set a start date of approximately January 24, 2022 for CYS Intern Joshua Lopez. This is the second year that the agency has been working with Juniata College's Social Work Program. He will be interning with the agency for 3 months and will work approximately 27.5 hours per week. He has passed all necessary State and County screenings. The program is very beneficial to the agency and the lasts intern that we had is now a Caseworker in our agency. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes).

Shannon Walborn requested consideration of approval to attend the virtual PCYA Training. The total cost of this training is \$25. The date is January 19th. 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 retirement of EMA Director Joe Thompson. The Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Mr. Thompson's hard work and dedication in the face of a series of difficult situations that the county has faced during his tenure. They remarked that Mr. Thompson has done 20 years' worth of service during the five years that he has worked for the county. He is what you would exemplify as being a public servant. Mr. Thompson's last day will be March 31st. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Sather and carried (Jeff, no; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Doug Heart, EMA Administrative Assistant, presented an update on COVID-19. For the week ending 1/8/2022, the average number of new cases per day in the county was 51 which is up from 23 the

previous week. During that same time frame, the State average was 25,848 which is up from 15,995 the previous week. SCI Smithfield reports 198 positive inmates and 27 staff. SCI Huntingdon reports 2 inmates and 17 staff. The concern here is that with the increasing number of inmate cases, we are seeing a corresponding increase in the positive cases among staff and the staff members are the ones who are going out into the community here. We are going to be keeping an even closer eye on this situation moving forward. There is nothing new to report from county schools. The Department of Health reports a total of 24 COVID cases among school-aged children and less than 5 among children 4 and under. Penn Highlands reports a total of 11 in-house COVID patients. 7 are in the medical surgical unit, 1 in the behavioral health unit, 1 in the ICU, and there were two in the ER waiting to be admitted. The ER volume has been up and down. They are seeing a lot of instances of people who had COVID before and are continuing to have problems now that they are no longer positive. Long COVID is becoming an increasing problem. COVID hospitalizations for the state currently stand at 6,891 up from 5,413 last week. The incident rate per 100,000 for Huntingdon County is 605, up from 305 the previous week. The state is showing 1,074 up from 337. PCR positivity for the county is 17.3% up from 7.9% the previous week. The state is at 34.1%. Long-term care facilities are doing well with few reported cases among residents. The number of fully vaccinated individuals in the county stands at 23,328, which represents about 51.7% of the population. 7,439 boosters have been administered, which accounts for 35.7% of fully vaccinated individuals. There were 2 COVID-related deaths in the County in the week ending 1/8/2022. Total COVID-related deaths for the pandemic stand at 205. Omicron is still the dominant variant according to the CDC. The national variant distribution as of 1/1/2022 stands at Delta Variant 4.6% and Omicron 95.4%. Commissioner Thomas noted that this goes to show how important the vaccine is. COVID impacts people so differently. Some people can look healthy and generally be healthy, some people will die from it and some people feel like they just have the sniffles. Why take the chance? The vaccination saved my own life and I encourage others to get their shots. You cannot take a step outside without bumping into someone who has COVID. Kylie Hawn asked how deaths are accounted for with COVID by area. If a person resides in Huntingdon County and has COVID and dies at a facility outside the County, is that counted in the total deaths for Huntingdon? Mr. Heart responded that it is supposed to be accounted for in the county of residence.

There was nothing discussed under 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 10:16 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather N. Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary