

Huntingdon, PA

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

1-2022

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, Walls and Thomas; Chief Clerk, Heather Fellman; Solicitor, Larry Newton; Deputy Chief Clerk, Tracey Rhodes; EMA Director, Joe Thompson; EMA Administrative Assistant, Doug Heart and Daily News Reporter, Kylie Hawn.

There were no attendees via GoToMeeting.

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

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

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls 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.

There were no items to be addressed by the solicitor.

Under new business, consideration of approval was given for Resolution 1-2022 setting the county tax rates. There are no increases from last year. The tax rate for general purposes is 20 mills of each dollar of assessed value, for the Bailey Debt Service it is .41 mills of each dollar of assessed value, and for the 911 Debt Service it is .94 mills of each dollar of assessed value. The per capita tax remains at \$5 per person. Commissioner Walls noted that he gets questions about the Bailey Special Millage. When we took that out we did not borrow any additional funds for that. There was an existing loan for the renovation of the Bailey. We rolled that into a special millage that once that debt is satisfied it will go away. The same goes for the 911 special millage. Once that debt is satisfied that tax will go away. It was moved by Commissioner Walls, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried (Thomas, yes; Sather, yes; Walls, yes).

Joe Thompson, EMA Director, requested consideration of approval for a commercial lease agreement with PRIDE for land and a storage garage for EMA in Smithfield Township. This is not a new expenditure. EMA has rented this unit for about 10 years. It is used primarily for storage of hazardous material and supplies in case of need for an emergency response. The only utility there is electricity for lights. There is

no water or heat. The rent is paid for by the LEPC at a rate of \$350 per month which is an increase from last year. It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Walls and carried (Sather, yes; Walls, yes; Thomas, yes) to approve the lease pending solicitor approval.

Doug Heart, EMA Administrative Assistant, presented an update on COVID-19. For the week ending 1/1/2022, the average number of new cases per day in the county was 23. This is down from 27 the week before. During that same time frame, the State average was 15,995 up from 9,232 for the week ending 12/25/2021. We are thankfully lagging behind the rest of the state in increase of cases. SCI Smithfield reports 71 positive inmates and 10 staff. SCI Huntingdon reports 0 inmates and 7 staff. There is nothing new to report from county schools. The Department of Health reports a total of 15 COVID cases among school aged children and 0 among children 4 and under. Penn Highlands reports a total of 10 in-house COVID patients. None are in the ICU. The ER is currently running around average volumes. COVID hospitalizations for the state currently stand at 5,629 up from 4,527 two weeks ago. In that two week period, the state saw a rise of 20% in COVID hospitalizations. The incident rate per 100,000 for Huntingdon County is 305, down from 385 two weeks ago. The state is showing 337 which is up from 321. PCR positivity for the county is 7.9% which is up from 7.4% last week. The state is at 24.5%. Long-term care facilities are doing well with few reported cases among residents. The number of fully vaccinated individuals in the county stands at 23,129, which represents about 51.2% of the population. 7,136 boosters have been administered, which accounts for 34% of fully vaccinated individuals. There were 5 COVID-related deaths in the County in the week ending 1/1/2022. Total COVID-related deaths for the pandemic stand at 203. 86 people died of COVID in 2020 and 117 during 2021. Omicron is still the dominant variant according to the CDC. The Delta Variant accounts for about 44.1% of cases, Omicron for 58.6% and .2% other. It appears that Omicron is more contagious but may cause less severe illness. The FDA has approved Pfizer boosters for children ages 12-15 as of yesterday.

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 Walls to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Heather N. Fellman, Chief Clerk.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary