

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

The first regular meeting of June, 2022 of the Pike County Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Osterberg at 11:00 a.m. at the Pike County Administration Building, followed by the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag.

PRESENT: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron; Chief Clerk Orben; and Solicitor Farley.

Commissioner Osterberg announced that there will be two Amendments to today's Agenda.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to amend the Agenda with 2 new items, update Item #2 under New Business, to reflect the Human Services Payment Voucher in the amount of **\$429,812.69** for the American Recovery Act Funds for Pike County Nonprofit Recovery Fund Grant awards on behalf of the Office of Human Services; and to include out of **ACT 137**, Affordable Housing Payment Voucher a payment of **\$75,000.00** for Habitat for Humanity on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda – None

Motion to recess the Commissioners' Meeting to hold a Retirement Board Meeting

Motion to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Affordable Housing Payment Voucher for from **ACT 137**, in the amount of **\$75,000.00**, for Habitat for Humanity on behalf of the Office of Human Services .

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Commissioner Osterberg presented the check to Mike Donlon from Habitat for Humanity and said this money comes from the recording of dollars that the County collects every year. Mr. Donlon said there are 33 houses that were built in Pike County and last year was the best year ever, they built 3. Thank you, not only for the money, but 2 lots were donated by the County that were in Repository. This year we are having a little problem on account of land. Out of 33 lots, we only bought 2 lots, all the land was donated. Now that pool has dried up. We bought a lot and our next house is going to be in Gold Key, we had to buy that lot. We're having perks done this week and we're buying in Sunrise and we have another lot out there that failed the perk test, we're not buying that of course. We're also building ramps. Two weeks ago we built a ramp for a lady in Delaware Township and I'm on the way right after this to Lehman Township to build a ramp for an elderly gentleman. That's all volunteers to do that. We're late getting started this year with our house because we had to buy it and we couldn't get it perked because the ground was frozen and then we couldn't get it perked because it was flooded after heavy rain. Then I couldn't get a surveyor over there. I'm on the surveyor's list for the past six weeks. They're going to survey the property this Friday. The building inspector in Dingman Township told me he issued 80 permits in 2 weeks. I guess it's a good sign for the economy that the contractors are working. We will be starting, we have a family picked out and we will build that house. Thank you very much for this!

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the June 15, 2022 Agenda.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Schmalzle and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the June 1, 2022 Commissioners' Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the June 8, 2022 Commissioners' Conference Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of **\$1,205,223.92**, subject to further review.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **ACT 13 ADMINISTRATION FUND**, in the amount of **\$363.60**, subject to further review.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **BRIDGE ACCOUNT**, for the Kimbles Bridge, in the amount of **\$243,654.02**, subject to further review.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **ACT 89**, all for Bridges, in the amount of **\$10,287.75**, subject to further review.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **PIKE COUNTY EMPLOYEES' HEALTH INSURANCE FUND (PCEHIF)**, in the amount of **\$179,296.24**, subject to further review.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

PERSONNEL

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to promote **KIM WALKER** to the position of Collection Unit Manager in the Adult Probation Department, for a 37.5 hour work week, effective June 20, 2022. This is a replacement position.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to recess the Commissioners' Meeting to hold a Salary Board Meeting.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

SALARY BOARD

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to convene Salary Board Meeting.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the June 1 and June 8, 2022 Salary Board minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to set the hourly rate of **KIM WALKER** at \$19.64 per hour, as Collection Unit Manager in the Adult Probation Office, for a 37.5-hour work week, effective June 20, 2022.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adjourn the Salary Board Meeting and reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to award the bid for the Owego Turnpike Repaving and Drainage Project to Wayco, Inc. in the amount of \$652,553.05 for the Base Bid only.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to award the bid for the Lake Paupack Road Over East Branch Wallenpaupack Creek Priority Maintenance Repairs to Fabcor, Inc. in the amount of \$143,815.00.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

Commissioner Osterberg commented that we are doing all this work on our bridges, funded mainly out of the \$5.00 Registration Fees collected. It is a big accomplishment with the final payment for Kimbles Bridge, which was in dire need of repair. You can call this Pike County's infrastructure bill. We took this on our own without waiting for others in higher places to take this on along with the paving now of Owego Turnpike, that's always been a hot topic for the residents that live on that road. Not that other Commissioners couldn't do it, they just didn't have the funding sources. Now with this type of money being spent, that's a big number, that is with all the drainage and the repaving of a little over a mile of County road. It's the only County road that we really own besides some little pieces. I think it's important for the residents and taxpayers that are paying that \$5.00, understand that the money being spent every year on their \$5.00 Registration Fee is being used for good purposes. It's mainly coming from that, some of it is from State funding.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to advertise bids for the Pike County Jail WWTP Bar Screen Replacement in accordance with the Drawings, Specifications and other Contract documents prepared by MHE Engineering.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Pike County Nonprofit Recovery Fund grant awards via the Human Services Payment Voucher for American Recovery Act Funds in the amount of \$429,812.69, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

Commissioner Osterberg said this was a program that was put together through our office and Human Services. We have Robb (Ruiz) here to speak a little bit about the 23 organizations that qualify for this. While we funded as much as we could to everyone that applied, I think every organization will be notified today of the full amount. There are 23 of them here. We took that money that we received from COVID, and that's where this money came from, the Recovery money that the County received, and made sure it was spread out through the County among all of these Non-Profits. From the Pike County Public Library to the Pike County Historical Society to the Lackawaxen EMS, a number of places received this funding.

Director of Human Services, Robb Ruiz, said several organizations applied for the funding. If you have any questions on that, please let me know.

Commissioner Schmalzle said there are a number of representatives from the various organizations here today. I commend you all for going through the process of the application and working with Robb's office. Congratulations on continued good work throughout the County to all of the Non-Profits.

Commissioner Waldron thanked Robb Ruiz. He said, because from a government standpoint, it went quickly and smoothly in getting the money out in a relatively short period of time.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the following Human Services Payment Vouchers on behalf of the Office of Human Services: Emergency Rental Assistance in the amount of \$73,180.18; Emergency Rental Assistanes 2.0 in the amount of \$52,087.80; and PHARE in the amount of \$90.30.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the following Affordable Housing Fund Payment Vouchers on behalf of the Office of Human Services: C. Martin Final Inspection in the amount of \$922.85; C. Martin Payment 3 & 4 in the amount of \$12,350.00.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the 2017 Community Development Block Grant Program Payment Voucher in the amount of \$2,400.00 to vendor: Ray Evans, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Election Security Grant Funds Request to the Pennsylvania Department of State in the amount of \$5,506.54 on behalf of the Elections Office.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Happenings Magazine Advertising Agreement in the amount of \$515.00 on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Certification Statement for the 3rd FY 21-22 Child Welfare Act 148 invoice, on behalf of Children and Youth Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 22-23 Child Safety Week, June 10-17, 2022.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye. Motion carried.

Commissioner Schmalzle read Resolution No. 22-23 aloud.

Commissioner Schmalzle said we often talk about people who come into our area from other areas, and we hope that we continue to be a very welcoming place in Pike County. Two people that came into our area that I've known for some time, Rick and Rose. They've come and done a lot of good things. They not only come and speak about the good things they've done for our community and taken their experiences from other areas, but they do also it. Commissioner Schmalzle then asked Rick to say a few things about the event that they held this past weekend.

Rick introduced himself as Rick Cross and his wife, Rose. My parents would take me to Pike County as a child and I fell in love with this place. This is where we're going to stay. Regarding child safety, it is of most importance. I witnessed too many times when children suffer needlessly because people aren't equipped, whether it was not knowing CPR or didn't learn things. What we tried to do is put an event together where we teach children in advance what they can do and what parents they can do. With the help of Jeff Shook and Heather and, of course, Pike County's Tim Knapp (EMA Director), we were able to get everyone from the Red Cross to Fire Departments to Ambulance Corps. to get everybody together for child safety. I've been doing this for 19 years in other States and it's vital that we teach kids how to get out of homes if they're in trouble and how to connect with adults and how to use 911. Which is something you really don't think about it until you need it. I'd like to thank the Commissioners and the folks of Pike County and all the volunteers that showed up that day. It was great. It's a pleasure living in the County.

Commissioner Waldron added that he had the opportunity to attend the event Saturday and it was an amazing set up in terms of the various organizations. There were 15 different organizations, close to that number anyway. The 4 fire companies for Lackawaxen were there too and someone pointed out that was the first time that all 4 fire companies were in the same place and he wasn't afraid. I want to thank Tim (Knapp) because he actually participated, they had a neat instruction for the kids. Various people came up and explained some things. I learned, for the first time, and I think Ron did too when I told him about it, that you can text 9-1-1. Pike County was the first County to do that (one of the first). If you can't make a call, for whatever reason, you can actually text 9-1-1. It's a great thing for the adults as well as the children! It was a really nice event, there was a great demonstration to learn CPR on dummies and it was a nice day out there. Thanks for hosting it!

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Mike Donlon, Habitat for Humanity – Check Presentation –
- EMS presentation by Tim Knapp, Pike County Emergency Management Director – Tim said they put this report together starting in January. It's still a fluent report because it's the first year of funding and some stuff will be updated later in the year when we get more funding. It's not 100% yet. We put this report together to show you just how much changing the structure and the County coming on board for the EMS Agencies changed everything. Tim followed with PowerPoint Presentation.

Commissioner Osterberg said the reason why we wanted Tim to report on this only 6 months into it, we don't take spending tax money lightly and we made a commitment at a meeting a year and a half ago to spend 2 mill in taxes which is worth \$2M of County taxpayer dollars. We didn't see any other solution to fixing this crisis. It wasn't going to get any better, it was only going to get worse. These are life changing numbers; these are life saving numbers. The impact that it's had even with our surrounding municipalities. I've monitored calls out of Milford Borough, and I see them lending mutual aide to Port Jervis and they (Port Jervis) come out here. It benefits the whole surrounding community, the entire region. The training knowledge you can't get that. That was private money from 2 individuals in the County to come up with that money, Jason Ohliger, Esquire, and Bill Lovejoy. They stepped up to the plate. They put up substantial money between the 2 of them to the tune of \$35K-\$50K from their pockets because they saw the need as private citizens.

Commissioner Schmalzle added that we attend statewide meetings on EMS since I've been involved here and the content of the meetings hasn't changed. It's very frustrating and when we tell them what we did here, they don't want to hear it because they don't want to shoulder that responsibility. Thank you, municipalities for working with us and allowing us to implement a plan that we felt strongly about, but you really don't know until it's in place. I think what you tell us today tells us very loud and clear that it is working. We hope to continue the support, as long as we're here and beyond. We do know that we found a solution – thank you Tim and your crew for your continued leadership. Commissioner Waldron said he was the Solicitor for one of the municipalities for several decades. A little over a year ago Palmyra Township felt they had to push the issue that there was an uneven distribution of services. We forced an issue and it led to some meetings. During one of those meetings I attended, I'll never forget it, Eric Earhardt was sitting next to me, and Matt and Steve (Guccini), my predecessor, were there. They got up and said we're going to put some money into this to match the millage rate. I turned to Eric and said that's a game changer. I cannot take any credit for this. It is Ron (Schmalzle), Matt (Osterberg) and Steve Guccini, when he was Commissioner, for saying we got to get something done here. They did a great job. This is out of General Fund money, and they're dedicated to making sure it's there every year. I really appreciate what they did for the County, I think it benefits all of us and I'm glad I can be a part of it and see it through.

Director Knapp concluded with on the 25th of June at 6:30 PM we will be having our graduation at the Pike County Training Center for our EMT graduates and fire academy graduates. Also, we will be holding this in our brand new open air classroom at the Training Center – all are invited. COVID messed things up, we will be having 2 1/2 years of graduating classes because we did not want to do them virtually. Flyers were circulated.

- Penn State Extension Calendar of Events – May 15-31, 2022

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT

Reporter Preston Ehrler asked Tim if he could go into detail a little about what you're seeing that would cause drops in response (timing)? Tim responded training and better trained staff, that's the deciding factor. All around us we are plagued with EMS problems. It's nice to send them an ambulance or two when you need to now because we're in good shape now. Some are paid staff versus volunteers. We don't like to see volunteers go, but it was good when we had about 150 calls a year. We now have about 1200 calls here.

A meeting attendee asked about the matching of funds. Are you only matching the municipalities that had a referendum for 2 mils? Do you give the money to everybody who has an ambulance? Commissioner Osterberg said we do. Everybody who qualifies and puts in a request to us up to 2 mils of their taxes. Once you put that 2 mil referendum in place like Milford Borough, Porter Township, they have to fund that with that money. It's showing the commitment to the voters because I think like 95% of voters supported that. In Lackawaxen you had overwhelming support for that. The only requirement we have is that the money is to be used to bolster EMS. We don't want this money to build infrastructure. We don't want to put a roof on the ambulance building, we just feel that there are other funding sources to do those type of improvements.

Reporter Chris Jones asked if this is a match, they have to have a tax? Commissioner Osterberg said no they don't have to have the tax, they just have to show they're funding it. It is tax money, you're right.

Reporter Chris Jones asked if by referendum a township says I want to put 2 mils, do you match that 2 mils? Commissioner Osterberg said up to 2 mils, only 2.

Reporter Preston Ehrler asked about the Shohola Police Department that shut down years ago, can this money be used for police services as well or just EMS? Commissioner Osterberg said just EMS. We haven't gotten into public safety yet. This was strictly to address the issue that we were facing with weak EMS service in the County.

A meeting attendee asked about response times, emergency response times in the river corridor and there has been some conversation about cell towers. There is no cell service along the Delaware River of the Lackawaxen River, if there is an emergency you can't make a phone call – what do you think about that? Commissioner Osterberg said they could certainly look into that, as well as Tim (Knapp) and Bernie (Swartwood), because I'm sure it's affecting 9-1-1. It's always been an issue even down here (Milford Borough). The meeting attendee said a prime example was Rick Cross talking about the cow, the cell on wheels at the Children's Safety Fair and that's the first time I got a cell phone call in Veterans' Park. That's when the cow was across the street and my brother was calling me. Commissioner Osterberg asked if they're contacting the Federal government? The meeting attendee answered I think it's the National Park Service. There's homes in the last couple of years that were bought in the river corridor and they have cleared acres of land so they can see the Delaware River. That was the reason they didn't want cell towers. Now we have it because of people clearing their land. I don't know which is worse.

Commissioner Waldron added that he thinks that, a couple of years ago, zoning was pushed to prohibit cell towers on the ridge tops because they detract from the view. Director Tim Knapp said he thinks the National Park Service is reevaluating that. Commissioner Osterberg asked Tim Knapp to look into that and Tim answered that he will look into that.

Rick Cross added what we can try to do is put together a public/private partnership involving us. Last year we had 7 or 8 fatalities on the Delaware River. There could be areas that we could, the technology is improving. There's a lot of things we can do and we can get funding from the Federal government, State government, or National Park Service, or the cell phone carriers themselves. It's a matter of safety – if you can't call from help in the river corridor, let's just say nobody cares about the cost of the fire extinguisher until they smell smoke.

A meeting attendee stated we are still without a hospital. Wasn't the County trying to solicit a hospital to move into our County? Commissioner Schmalzle responded that it's been my top priority since I became a commissioner. We are so very close. We never have had a hospital in Pike County for numerous reasons. I've been here for 4 generations and the reason was, nobody really lived here, but now people live here. The population during my lifetime has gone from about 15K to 60K. In the next couple of months, you will see announcements of the opening of an urgent care in Pike County. We're hoping this will lead to collaboration with major health providers and, hopefully, one of them becoming the first hospital in Pike County. We think this will also change the EMS response in doing this and this is another place where we will put money into this. There is a \$2M line item on some of our relief money that will go to that type of service, improved services within the County, whether it is a mini or micro hospital. We also want to go beyond that to create some sustainability for that organization that comes into the County. It is all 3 of our top priority. We are pleased that we are closer than we have ever been, and we will have success.

A meeting attendee then asked about the National Park Services locking the gate to 209 (Route 209). Commissioner Osterberg asked during a snowstorm? The meeting attendee answered yes or when there is an accident or a tree down, they lock it. That's one of our main hospitals (E. Stroudsburg or Port Jervis). Commissioner Osterberg stated they did bring it to their (National Park Service's) attention at a Road Task Force meeting when they put out a notice up at 8:20 that they were closing 209 at 8:30. Tim (Knapp) spoke to them and that was one of our major concerns – they can't give us 10 minutes notice, not when you know about a "planned" closing. We have been in communication with them. They talked to us, they were here and they were responsive – I'll let Tim speak on that. I know there's been better communication. The reason they

said they needed to close it was they couldn't find equipment for the stop signs. Our response to that was, if you had called us, Tim would've gotten them the stop signs, the automatic traffic lights, within a couple of hours. They kind of operate on their own. We'll do our best to do that, but they are difficult. Tim said they were made aware of the situation that they cannot give us 10 minutes notice that we can't go down that road.

A meeting attendee asked Commissioner Schmalzle to define the difference between a mini and a micro hospital?

Commissioner Schmalzle said a micro would be 16 beds or less. The mini would be very similar to what they opened up in Dickson City – 24 beds and 24 ICU and a full-service emergency room care center. We'd rather a mini than a micro, but we'll take whatever they give us. Commissioner Osterberg added that we also have offered acreage on our Blooming Grove site. We'll give them the land if they come here and put some type of facility here.

Director Tim Knapp added that this year's class that Wallenpaupack finished up, will graduate on Friday. Next year starts their junior year. The sophomores are going to law enforcement and the juniors are going to EMS. What we decided to do, working with the school, is those 25 to 28 kids will become nationally certified EMT's at the end of the year. We're putting 25 people back into the system.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2022, AT 11:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.