

**Commissioners' Conference Minutes
Wednesday, June 28, 2023**

PRESENT: Commissioners Osterberg and Schmalzle; Chief Clerk Gromalski and Treasurer Gilpin. Commissioner Waldron present via phone.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to call the conference to order at 11:01 A.M.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda- NONE.

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

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from the following: **GENERAL FUND (County Bills) \$490,009.05**

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

PERSONNEL

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to create the position of Aging Care Manager 1 Supervisor in the Area Agency on Aging for a 40-hour work week.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Motion to recess the Commissioners' Conference to hold a Salary Board Meeting.

A SALARY BOARD MEETING WAS HELD

Motion to reconvene the Commissioner's Conference.

NEW BUSINESS

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: PHARE in the amount of \$4,341.00; Homeless Assistance Program in the amount of \$6,659.00; and Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2.0 in the amount of \$54,540.08.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Pike County Home Program Payment Voucher payable to GateHouse Media, in the amount of \$194.20, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Affordable Housing Fund Payment Voucher payable to Pike County Recorder of Deeds, in the amount of \$63.75, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Housing Rehabilitation Lien Satisfaction Piece, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Exemption Status Determination, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Environmental Review for the Camp for Children with Developmental Disabilities Project, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Agreement for Information Technology Products and Services between Avenu Enterprise Solutions, LLC and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Recorder of Deeds Office.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Purchase of Service Agreement between Cornell Abraxas Group, LLC and the County of Pike, on behalf of Children and Youth Services.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Agreement for Subcontracted Services between Caregivers of America, LLC and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging.

VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Agreement for Subcontracted Services between Serving Seniors INC. and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging.
VOTE: All members voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT-

Meeting attendee Pierre Tardy said he had sent some suggestions, an idea, about love and respect. Maybe you want to use some of it, I don't know what you're going to do, but it seems that each side can come here and feel sorry for themselves and accuse people of doing things to them and I think you had so many people and I think you are in the middle also. Whatever we can do to support you, we're fine. I have other things to do than be here actually. If you see what happened in New York two days ago, we don't want this and I don't even know why parents bring children to those places. I blame the parents more than anything else. Just to let you know, we're welcome to help if we can. I know you're in the middle and trying to figure it out. Commissioner Waldron said I don't know about that. Commissioner Schmalzle answered middle or any place, I think we want to hear and listen and respect what we're hearing. I do thank you for your contributions and we have since conducted meetings with the State Police, with Task Force, with a number of people, to better understand how we can support everyone. The plan right now is to put together a Task Force that is similar to what we do in a lot of different areas and involve members from all sides of the community and all views of the community to come up with a plan, a goal, just to make it a better place to live for everyone. Whether we agree with one side or don't agree with one side, I think it is important that we listen to everyone along the way. That is what we are elected to. We appreciate it and you will hear more from us. Thank you.

Meeting attendee Kerry Williams from Matamoras said she saw the Channel 13 broadcast commenting on the June 21st Commissioners' meeting, and I have to say that there's a narrative that the media is supporting that is one-sided - that LGBTQ is being harassed and that they feel unsafe. John Helman (of Triversity) is talking about this a lot at school board meetings as well. I don't know if you know, but you need to know that neither side is perfect. I don't claim perfection and they shouldn't either, but I am going to read one testimony, her name is Terry Riley: 'on February 18, 2023, my friend who was running for school board on the Democrat/Republican ballot and I, who was running as well, decided to go to a petition signing gathering in Failte restaurant in Dingmans Ferry. We went to meet the Democratic candidates with the best intentions - to trade signatures for the Primary ballot. Almost immediately after entering the back room we were being accosted by a tirade of verbal abuse. John Helman a/k/a Bell Pepper started berating me as soon as I opened the door. My friend dropped her papers amid the barrage of insults. I bent down to scoop them up, when I saw I faced a dozen cell phones all held by the LGBTQ advocates. They continued to hurl insults at us, we were screamed at as Nazis, racists, Fascists as well as other hurtful and demeaning monikers. I was finally asked why I was there and I simply replied I thought we could do a barter system, you need Republican signatures and we need Democrat ones - I came to help. This was recorded by many people. On that note, they all started chanting 'GET THE F*** OUT' over and over again. My friend and I then left, quite shaken and fearful of retaliation these people might take on our persons. When inside the restaurant I truly felt that John Helman a/k/a Bell Pepper was going to strike me as well as damage my property. My friend was, in fact, aggressively shoved during this encounter. After this extremely upsetting experience we decided to go to the Blooming Grove State Police Barracks to file a hate crime report, this was in fact filed on February 20th. We cited John Helman a/k/a Bell Pepper and his group of antagonists in what was supposed to be a peaceful exchange'. Kerry Williams said it is important for the Commissioners to be aware that there's no testimony of us doing anything close to this. I want to state for the record that someone who is practicing their First Amendment rights at the meeting on the 21st was outside expressing his own opinion and someone from the LGBTQ community called this man's place of employment and called him a homophobe and demanded that he lose his job. You have to know that it's not that people want to be loved and accepted, they are viciously attacking those of us who may hold different views. I think it's very important for the Commissioners to be aware of what is happening.

Commissioner Schmalzle said thank you and answered we are aware. We appreciate what you're sharing. Your first statement was the most accurate - none of us are perfect. People do things and make mistakes along the way and it's not our intent to judge, it is our intent to try to bring more peace somehow. There are mistakes made on both sides of this and I know of them intimately. I appreciate you coming here and sharing that and speaking out and that's what the public forum is for. I really appreciate you actually responded to what I said, because I've been at certain meetings and it's like a wooden block. I just appreciate you recognize me as a human being and likewise. I want to say that's why I think a love and respect would be a really good moniker for us to get behind. None of us is perfect, why don't we all try to love and respect one another? Commissioner Schmalzle said my only comment on that, but I believe every day should be love and respect and it doesn't really need its own place the way that pride should be every day and not needs its own place. People tie things to thing that maybe is unmeaningful, but I hear you, we hear you, and you are always welcome to come and speak respectfully to us and we will listen.

Commissioner Osterberg added that he has lived here for a very long time. I'm very saddened when I hear this stuff that goes on, whether it's against you or if it's against LGBT, or the gentleman out there. We have to recognize that this is going on here. Some people are thinking it's not going on, so I'm glad to hear you tell us this side of it also. After that meeting (the 21st), we had a meeting with a State Police Officer who recognized us. He knows all of this is going on and he told us, you need to take this seriously. Again, it's everybody, I gave you some examples last week. I know some people don't want to believe that I countered that with that African American family, but I certainly did and that saddens me that I live here this long, and I've never heard this before. We as a community will probably talk about this at a Task Force for us all to come together. We may have a lot of difference, but certainly we should not be making it so we are uncomfortable to walk down the streets of Milford, regardless of what your beliefs are - it should not come to that. I appreciate you coming here and talking about that.

Meeting attendee Theresa Brown said she appreciates the opportunity provide for us to speak here. Standing up and talking this way is the most uncomfortable thing for me. I struggle although I did teach for twenty-five years. I really feel for what you're going through as elected officials today. The world is so different. You look at ways that a person could interact with the community in the past in an authoritative position and the kinds of decisions that needed to be made and the battles we're facing now is just insane. It's disheartening to see so many of our values being attacked from so many different directions. A lot of us don't know what the proper response is. A lot of us are really praying and turning to God for answers and solutions more and more. We don't really know what his plan is, we just try and be obedient and faithful. What you are facing, even at this local level, it's really insane and as John Helman mentioned at the last meeting, I am the failed school board member/candidate that he mentions during that meeting. I ran because I have experience and knowledge at taught at community college for twenty-five years. I liked being at the community college level because of my background and the way I was able to help people who weren't elites. The kids that go to community college can be eighteen years old and have odd issues or fifty years old. I could reach people who were struggling the way I had struggled, and I felt that I made a difference in ways that I could never had made at university. It meant a lot to me to be that person and Kerry (Williams) just described the situation at Failte and I went there with Terry that day. My goal, because I was running on the Democrat and the Republican ballot, was to talk to them. I don't know if anybody knows if they are a Republican or a Democrat anymore. We're just seeing everything so confused from what it used to be. My goal, from the time I got into the race, was to talk about values. When I would talk to people and they would say are you Democrat or a Republican, I'd say let's talk about values. Everything is being used as a label these days. I went over to Failte with Terry and Michael to talk to them and meet them and discuss things we have in common and as Terry described we walked in and it was really shocking the way that we were attacked. I didn't even know they knew who I was. After I got shoved, I told the woman don't push me and I looked up and every camera in the room was on me and I laughed and said you guys are filming this? It was just outrageous to me. Afterwards, somebody said you better watch out their going to be posting those videos and I was like I don't think so. I didn't think they would be posting those videos because what those videos are showing is that I just wanted to talk to them and being very polite, very respectful of everybody in that room and I was attacked.

Meeting attendee Theresa Brown continued, back to the issues that we discussed last time, we're seeing and I'm sure you've seen these videos of Pride Parades in Seattle and other cities like that where there's naked people on bicycles in front of children and there's transgender people with their buttocks exposed and they're twerking on cop cars. It's evil and I don't know how to stop it, but we know if it's not stopped, we're going to be seeing that in downtown Milford and that's why I'm scared. Thank you so much.

Commissioners' Conference was adjourned.

THE NEXT PUBLIC MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2023, AT 11:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.