

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

The first regular meeting of March 2023 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 Gromalski; and Solicitor Farley.

Commissioner Osterberg asked everyone to remain standing and said there are many public servants in this community that dedicate their lives to this community. Recently in the last week, we heard about the passing of Karen Kleist, the secretary of Dingman Township for 26 years. This woman knew exactly how to operate in that position. I dealt with her very much while I was Borough President of Milford considering we are the neighbor to Dingman Township. This is a great loss to our community. A bigger loss to her family – George, I went to high school with him and they are a great family in our community. I wanted to take a moment to remember Karen and her family and also the residents of Dingman Township. They are going to have a tough seat to fill in that Township. A moment of silence was taken.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the March 1, 2023 Agenda.
VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the February 15, 2023 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 February 22, 2023 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 **\$269,053.96**, 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 **LIQUID FUELS** in the amount of **\$2,083.80**, 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 REPAIR ACCOUNT** in the amount of **\$54,263.48**, 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 exonerations presented by Gina Rios, Tax Claim Bureau Director for three properties in Greene Township all deemed abandoned.
VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve exonerations presented by Gina Rios, Tax Claim Bureau Director for 80 properties sold out of the County Repository between November and December 2022 and the taxes were exonerated.
VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

PERSONNEL

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to acknowledge receipt from Warden Lowe advising that he has hired, with Prison Board approval, the following individuals as full-time Correctional Officers for the Correctional Facility, for a 40-hour work week, effective March 13, 2023, with benefits after 90 days. These are replacement positions. **ANTHONY CARDONE, DAVID GRIMM, JACQUET ESTELINE AND KHASAUNDRA PRICE.**
VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to acknowledge receipt from Warden Lowe advising that he has hired, with Prison Board approval, **DONNA TYLER** as full-time Food Production Supervisor for the Correctional Facility, for a 40-hour work week, effective March 13, 2023, with benefits after 90 days. 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 acknowledge receipt from Warden Lowe advising that he has hired, with Prison Board approval, **JEROMY JAGGERS** as full-time Food Production Supervisor for the Correctional Facility, for a 40-hour work week, effective March 20, 2023, with benefits after 90-days. 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.

A SALARY BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

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

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to advertise for bids for the Pike County Jail ICE Building Roof Replacement Project.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 23-05 Designating the month of March as Colon Cancer Awareness Month and March 30, 2023 as CASUAL Day in Pike County.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read Resolution No. 23-05 aloud.

Commissioner Osterberg reminded everyone how important it is to get proper cancer screenings, many of us in this community have suffered from some form of cancer and, with the right type of awareness and treatment, it can be written out of your life. Take heed of what this Resolution says and take care of yourselves.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the DirectTV Terms of Service for Business Viewing Customers Agreement, on behalf of the Correctional Facility, as approved by the Prison Board.

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 Annual Cathodic Protection Inspection Agreement, on behalf of the Correctional Facility, as approved by the Prison Board.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, authorize the Chairman to execute the Otis Elevator Company Service and Repair Order.

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

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 \$3,900.00 and Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2.0 (ERAP 2.0) in the amount of \$110,582.30.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the CDBG Payment Voucher in the amount of \$7,050.00, payable to Pro Solutions Home Renovations, LLC, 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 Pike County Rental Assistance Contract #63, 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 Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Lien, 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 Renewal Application for Existing Certificate of Compliance, 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 authorize the Chairman to execute the Civil Rights Compliance Attestation, 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 execute the Special Victim Advocate Program- SVAP 2023 Grant Application to the Federal Victims of Crime Act for full- and partial- personnel salary and medical benefits reimbursement, on behalf of the District Attorney's Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to request a Contract Amendment for Extension Request to the Community Development Block Grant Agreement, 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 approve the PA DEP 903 Grant for Reimbursement of 50% of Recycling Coordinator salary/expenses for the 2022 calendar year, on behalf of the Office of Community Planning.

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 State Water Obstruction and Encroachment Permit for Springbrook Road Bridge.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Request for Quotation from Fabcor Inc. for Pike County Bridge #18 on East Sugar Mountain Road.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

- PennState Extension Calendar of Events – The 4H Future First Responders Camp – June 26th – June 30th – Commissioner Osterberg announced that this program is organized by Angie Smith, a dynamic, vibrant woman who runs our 4H Program. I would hope that the Press will publicize this because it's so important that we continue to move our young people into the services of Emergency Responders, whether that be EMT's or joining Tim (Knapp, Director of Pike County EMA) and get into the Young Firefighters Program.
- Pike County EMS Matching Grant Fund 1-year Report - Office of Emergency Management Director Tim Knapp and Aaron M. Rhone, Bureau Director, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services – Director of Pike County EMA Tim Knapp thanked everyone for coming and said it is very vital to release the year findings. We did a six month finding that was very positive for us and now we want to release the full findings of what we've found. I think you'll see it's very positive. As you know, the County started matching 2% millage of the ambulance fund of certain Municipalities and offered the least millage of some sort. We knew going into this, we knew what it comes down to basically is money. You have to pay staff; you have to pay ambulance crews and basically it's most important to have ambulance services and emergency services to our citizens. I just want to commend you (the Commissioners) - there's not that many Municipalities or Counties out there that have done something to this level, so we're a one off pretty much and it's working. Director of Pike County EMA Tim Knapp then presented a PowerPoint Presentation. At the conclusion of the PowerPoint Presentation, Tim Knapp announced that they will continue to monitor this yearly and see if we can make any changes here or there. Tim continued that they are finishing up their training for the year and will be coming down in a couple of weeks to talk about how we've gotten the manpower to provide these services. At this time, I would just like to bring up Director Rhone to let him speak a little bit on behalf of EMS across the State because he sees it all.

Commissioner Schmalzle thanked Tim and said he wanted to point out two things. One, we recognize it is not the County's responsibility to do this. We feel it is our responsibility because it's public health and safety. We just were at a District 7 meeting that is all of Northeast Pennsylvania and the first topic on the agenda was the EMS Crisis. In a couple of weeks we will head to CCAP, which is a Statewide organization, all the Counties, and the first thing on the topic will be How to Resolve the EMS Crisis? We get up and speak and tell them how we do it and they say you guys are crazy. We're okay being crazy and we're okay with the criticism that maybe we overreached to help the Municipalities. We had no choice but to do this. Now we are starting to get the feedback from the other Counties to say how did you do it? Can we figure out how to do it? It is a line item in our budget. It isn't any Recovery money, it's a line item in our budget and we hope that that line item in the budget in the County stays forever. We're proud of your work and proud that it's a safer place to be. Some of the bigger numbers on there like John's (Treasurer Gilpin's) Township, Greene Township, we're going to get them on board and maybe some of the others who haven't put what we think they should be putting into it. When they leave matching funds on the table, we have no idea why they would do that, but this is our proudest moment over the past five years and something we probably shouldn't have done. Thank you.

Commissioner Waldron added that the District 7 is a group of Northeastern Counties and last year when I went to the conference and we had a District 7 meeting they were like, why the hell are you doing this? This last one, we there on Friday, they really wanted to hear from all three of us and they were all like, we got to try to figure out if we can work in some ways. I made the point, it doesn't have to be 2 mils, even if it's 1 mil, that's going to certainly help to increase the voids. I can't take credit for this because these guys (Commissioner Osterberg and Commissioner Schmalzle) and my predecessor, Steve Guccini, were really the ones to implement this. It really is a great thing for the community and having done a lot of Municipal work, I know how much it is appreciated at that level.

Commissioner Osterberg said part of our job is managing emergencies. You look at the list of things in there that the Commissioners do, our feeling was we better manage this before it turns into an emergency, because it will. As Tim (Knapp) has told you, it was getting very dangerous for the safety of people in our community. On a note, with the District 7 meeting, we have a meeting coming up in the next couple of weeks where Bradford County is coming to meet with us to discuss this further. All of those Counties want to come and talk to us about this. We've been telling them what we've done and they're very impressed. We will share this report with them. This may push them a little bit towards it also, because as Tim (Knapp) has shown you, there's mutual aid that we're going into Wayne County. We all need to do that because we're all in this together, we all look to be safe, we all travel, and we expect when we travel someplace that there is an adequate ambulance service there. Getting more of the Counties involved in this will reduce that mutual aid because if there is a stronger ambulance service across the border in Monroe (County) and stronger ones in Wayne County, it just strengthens the one here in Pike County. This is good for everyone in the Commonwealth.

Aaron M. Rhone, Bureau Director of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, thanked the Commissioners for having him here today. Bureau Director Rhone said he will be very brief because they covered a lot of things that I had intended to discuss. The biggest thing is we now, from the Bureau, are using Pike County as an example.

The issues you were facing in 2017 are not just faced in Pike County, they are faced across the Commonwealth and faced across the country. In talking with the Eastern Regional Directors of the National Association of EMS Officials, it's all the State EMS Directors from across the country, we have a Northeast group that covers everything from West Virginia to Maine and we've used this example to explain what a County can do to assist in the cost of readiness and helping EMS agencies be better suited to serve the constituents of a county. While it is a local responsibility, local is relative in this case utilizing the Municipalities and the County has really made an impact. I've used this example across the Commonwealth as I go to speak. As a County, you have the availability to help in this situation. We often feel to realize is that EMS is paid for transport. When they're taking care of someone and transporting them to the hospital, that is where they get their reimbursement money from. There is a whole cost to EMS that we never discuss – the cost of readiness. To have that ambulance sitting there, waiting for a call, costs money. There are medications that will expire that have to be replaced, but they are required to be on the ambulance. They are required to be there for someone to receive care if they need it, but if they don't use that medication on somebody, they can't bill for it. Your stepping up and your way of engaging your Municipalities and using County funds to support this has helped offset the cost of readiness. You have seen response times decrease and actually bring more ambulance services into the community to serve them. From my perspective, you are the shining star and we're using it as the example. I want to thank you Commissioners and the rest of Pike County and Tim for doing what you've done to address the EMS Crisis in the County of Pike. You've made a huge difference. Thank you for what you've done and thank you for allowing me to continue to use Pike County as an example. Bureau Director Rhone continued, you mentioned earlier about going out of County or going to a neighboring Municipality. Those are struggles we face every day. I would say that's a conversation we have countless across the Commonwealth. This is a prime reason why I'm hopeful that other people will take on the Pike County model and start coming up with ways to help support it from both the Municipal level and the County level. Thank you for your time this morning.

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT

Reporter Chris Jones asked in reference to EMS Matching Grant Funds, that's the 2 mils, right? Commissioner Osterberg answered up to 2 mils, that's correct. Reporter Chris Jones asked there is no other donations? Commissioner Osterberg answered the donations would come through the EMS Services' individual agencies, whoever is running the ambulances. They're still doing fundraising and all that, this is just more money to put into that pot. They do get some reimbursements from insurance, but all of that was not enough to do what we have done here.

Reporter Chris Jones asked about the Tax Anticipation Bill, is that just a routine thing or is it something special about this year's budget? Commissioner Osterberg answered that the Treasurer, John Gilpin, is here to talk about that. Some years we've gotten so close to putting the paperwork in, this year we just felt, for obvious reasons, about some revenues that normally come in from the State. We get a lot of revenue reimbursements from the State and they come in a timely fashion. This year, that 'timely' is not the time we expect it. The State runs on a different fiscal year than we do. We also operate where we send our tax bills out so there is always this delay in not just the County, but even the Municipalities, so January hits but the tax bills, where we get most of our revenue, just went out now. There's a lag in the middle there where we always have to be sure that there is enough money in the coffers to make sure we can take care of standing bills and some of it has to do with just the timing. This is a cashflow issue really because of the timing. Also, many businesses always have a line of credit and in the County's respect, we just can't take out a line of credit. We're not allowed to just have a standing line of credit. We have to put this through the process with DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development). John (Treasurer Gilpin) can explain to you what the delay in some of the cash that's coming in from the State. Treasurer Gilpin announced that this year, in particular, some of the reimbursements from the State are delayed, we expect them soon. I asked them to do this because of the advertisement with DCED just to have it ready, as a safety net. We're going to do everything in our power not to utilize it so we don't have to pay any interest or anything like that, but because of the advertising there's a time process involved, I asked them to go ahead and do it just as a safety net in case we need it. I can tell you a lot of Counties just automatically do it every year, Milford Borough did it every year. Commissioner Waldron added, Wayne County does it every year and, quite frankly, by April this won't even be an issue. By then we'll start getting all the tax revenue. Commissioner Osterberg added there are reimbursements to Children & Youth, there's reimbursements to Probation, there are a lot of State agencies that help fund these organizations. People may not be aware that C&Y (Children & Youth) is not funded 100% by the County. The number is somewhere like 80% State (money coming from the State) and 20% (money coming from the County). There's a mix depending on what the services are, but we have to wait sometime for that money to come in. Treasurer Gilpin added, we have to wait because we have to pay it up front, submit an invoice to the State and then get reimbursed. This year it seems to be delayed.

Reporter Chris Jones asked how come you do it at a Conference? Commissioner Osterberg answered because DCED has a certain time element that we have to be able to do this and the next time we could advertise and do it. We were hoping this money would come from the State. If we had gotten the money by the State, we wouldn't be having this conversation. All the way up until this week we were talking on the phone about do we need to do this? Sunday night, when I was talking with the Treasurer, we said Monday morning we need to move on this. Commissioner Waldron added that the Dime Bank didn't approve the loan although we knew it would get approved until last Thursday, so we couldn't advertise until we knew that was a done deal.

Reporter Preston Ehlers asked if the Commissioners could talk about what Municipalities passed on not putting funds to EMS? Commissioner Osterberg said some of them didn't take all of the 2 mils and for whatever reason that is their decision to do that. Most of them did though I believe. It was \$1.8M and 2 mils in the County is \$2.2M. There's \$400,000.00 laying on the table, some of them for whatever reason decided not to participate in this. I'd rather you ask that question to them than to us. Reporter Ehlers answered he doesn't know which one (Municipalities). Commissioner

Schmalzle answered we can give you that list. Commissioner Osterberg said Tim (Director of EMA Knapp) can give you the list, I don't have that here right now.

Reporter Preston Ehlers asked, concerning the Ohio train derailment, there's obviously a lot of concern about toxic materials moving throughout the United States, we've got a rail system that's pretty much completely abandoned, it runs down the Delaware, crossing over the South Narrowsburg and coming back into New York over Port Jervis. Do you know what toxic materials are moving through our County? Commissioner Osterberg replied I don't think we know, but I think we're prepared. The EMA Director, Tim Knapp, and they respond to any of these truck accidents. Tim, if you want to speak to it, there is a trailer up there, there's equipment and I believe we have a contract with an organization in Pittston who is on 24 hours' notice if there is some form of an accident. Anything can happen on any given day, but I believe we are ready with a Hazmat Trailer. Go up to the EMA Training Center and see all the equipment that is there. EMA Director Tim Knapp answer Northeast Counter-Terrorism Task Force has supplied us with a lot of stuff. The State code also mandates us to have a certified Hazmat Team. Commissioner Osterberg added but knowing what's coming down the highway, I'm not sure we would ever know. EMA Director Tim Knapp said here's the problem, we go to reply on placards and I'll give you an example. Somebody takes 15 little 30lb propane cylinders to go get them filled up and put them in the trunk of their car – that's hazardous material. That's one of those things that you've got to be prepared more than knowing what is coming because you have to be prepared for everything.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023 AT 11:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING