

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

The first regular meeting of April 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 Schmalzle and Waldron; Commissioner Osterberg via telephone; Chief Clerk Gromalski; and Solicitor Farley.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda – none.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the April 5, 2023 Agenda.
VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the March 15, 2023 Commissioners' Meeting Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the March 22, and 29, 2023 Commissioners' Conference Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve payment from **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of **\$625,922.38**, subject to further review.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve payment from **ACT 89** in the amount of **\$8,430.00**, subject to further review.

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

PERSONNEL

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to hire **JENNIFER ZOSCHAK** as Caseworker 1 for Children and Youth Services for a 40-hour work week, effective April 10, 2023, with benefits after 90 days, pending drug test results. This is a replacement position.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to hire **ANITA CONLEY** as full-time Clerk in the Prothonotary's Office for a 37.5-hour work week, effective April 3, 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 Osterberg, to promote **DEBORAH RUNNALLS** to Civil Process Office Manager in the Sheriff's Office, effective April 9, 2023.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to hire **EDWARD REEVES** as Assistant Public Defender in the Public Defender's Office for less than 1,000 hour per year, effective May 1, 2023, pending drug test results, 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 Osterberg, 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 Osterberg, to adjourn the Salary Board Meeting and reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

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

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adopt Resolution No. 23-17, National County Government Month, April 2023.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read Resolution No. 23-17 aloud.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adopt Resolution No. 23-18, Child Abuse Awareness Month, April 2023.

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

Commissioner Waldron read Resolution No. 23-18 aloud.

District Attorney Raymond Tonkin thanked the Commissioners for their support of the Resolution and of the Dickson House. District Attorney Tonkin also thanked all the partners from Children and Youth and Rob Rohner, new member of the Advisory Board and Shannon Wiesniewski who does a lot of help on the Advisory Board and Carbon, Monroe Pike Drug & Alcohol, and everybody who wore blue today, Jill Gamboni from Representative Joe Adams office who is integral on the Child Death Review Team, which is important going forward to prevent deaths and our partners at VIP (Victims' Intervention Program), who are integral in this community in helping victims heal – thank you. District Attorney Tonkin also thanked Director of Victim's Services and overseer of Dickson House, Sarah Loeb.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the following Human Service Payment Vouchers, on behalf of the Office of Human Services: Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2.0 in the amount of \$114,874.15; Homeless Assistance Program in the amount of \$1,000.00; and PHARE in the amount of \$3,149.00.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the CDBG Payment Voucher payable to Pro Solutions Home Renovations LLC, in the amount of \$8,445.50, 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 Osterberg, to approve the CDBG Payment Voucher payable to Pike County Dispatch in the amount of \$160.00, 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 Osterberg, to approve the CDBG Payment Voucher payable to Pro Solutions Home Renovation LLC, in the amount of \$8,287.00, 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 Osterberg, to approve the CDBG Payment Voucher payable to Pro Solutions Home Renovations LLC, in the amount of \$16,371.00, 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 Osterberg, to approve the Affordable Housing Payment Voucher payable to Pro Solutions Home Renovations LLC, in the amount of \$5,654.50, 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 Osterberg, to authorize the Vice-Chairman to execute the Housing Rehabilitation Lien for Surrey Lane, 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 Osterberg, to authorize the Vice-Chairman to execute the Housing Rehabilitation Lien for Pinto Court, 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 Osterberg, to authorize the Vice-Chairman to execute the LSA Payment Request Forms, 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 Osterberg, to authorize the Vice-Chairman to execute the Agreement for Engineering Services between Pike County and MHE Engineering, D.P.C. for Professional Services Related to Bennett Ave Building #2: Central Filling.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Rachel Marques to the Open Space, Greenways, & Recreation Plan Study Committee, representing Pike County Conservation District.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Frank Tarquinio to the Open Space, Greenways, & Recreation Plan Study Committee, representing Pike County Planning Commission.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Tim Dugan to the Open Space, Greenways, & Recreation Plan Study Committee, representing DCNR Bureau of Forestry.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Cheryl Schmitt to the Open Space, Greenways, & Recreation Plan Study Committee, representing Porter Township.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Tim Morey to the Open Space, Greenways, & Recreation Plan Study Committee, representing Blooming Grove Township

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Dr. Maria Farrell to the Open Space, Greenways, & Recreation Plan Study Committee, representing Milford Borough

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint the following individuals as At-Large Representatives to the Open Space, Greenways, & Recreation Plan Study Committee: Joe Dunne, Kelly Daly, Chris Monroe, Jaclyn Ellefsen, Nick Spinelli and Tim Foglio.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adopt the Network Security policy and Spousal Coverage Eligibility policy into the Pike County Employees' Manual.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Pike County and Teamsters Local Union 229 (Detectives) for the period of: January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025, and Schedule A, on behalf of the District Attorney's Office.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

- PennState Extension Calendar of Events
- 25th Annual Fishing Derby- Saturday, April 15 – Commissioner Schmalzle announced that sponsoring this year's Fishing Derby at Lily Pond is Northwell Health Systems, a group of people coming to the community to have Urgent Care Centers and they are providing the sponsorship of \$5k which will pay for the stocking that Blooming Grove (Hunting and Fishing) Club does. Thank you to Northwell!
- Comprehensive Plan Community Survey- Michael Mrozinski, Office of Community Planning Director – Director Mike Mrozinski thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity and said up to this point we were doing background studies and getting grants to fully fund the project. We acquired a consultant and did some group sessions. We are now looking for community input. We have a survey that's available for this month and next month ending May 31st. It's available online and the link is available on the Pike County website (www.pikepa.org) there is also a QR Code, you will need your phone to use this. This is your opportunity to let us know what you see for the future of Pike County so we can incorporate it into the Comprehensive Plan. Any questions? The Commissioners thanked Director Mrozinski.
- EMS and Fire Training Report- Tim Knapp, Office of Emergency Management Director – Director Knapp thanked the Commissioners and said every April we will do a quarterly report to let people know what's going on at the Training Center. Kyle Rohner, Operation Manager, was introduced, he handles the fire aspect and Jordan Wiesniewski will talk about the EMS part. The only thing I will talk about is this year since post-COVID now, we have partnered with 4-H Association to bring back our Emergency Responder's Camp with kids from middle and high school in the area. We teach them the basics, one of the things we do is we allow them to take their CPR certification and go through a little bit of fire, we bring in law enforcement and the bomb squad and SWAT to talk to the kids. It's a fun 4 days for everybody involved. We added, from our initiative fund that we have set aside for EMS and put money toward this camp to get these kids certified in CPR through the Red Cross. Flyers were distributed.

Kyle Rohner said he took over for Jordan (Wiesniewski) on the facility side and I am giving a report on what we've done so far. We've posted over 40 classes on fire not including EMS courses, Jordan will talk about that in a little bit. We've brought in over 624 students for class (averaging 16 students per class). Eighty hours of that is for fire training, so far we have over 500 hours on the schedule left for fire training. Junior weekend was a huge success last weekend (April 1st), a 2-day event with over 35 kids. The Pike County Basic Fire Package started Monday night which is a 90-hour course that we put on to get new members within the County certified or at least trained up to the firefighting level and there are 28 students enrolled. That is a very good number, more than we were expecting. We completed one National certification so far and we currently have 7 National certifications left for 2023 on the schedule.

Commissioner Schmalzle said he visited the Training Center this weekend and about 35 juniors were there and 20 to 30 instructors and said the only criticism is that they should hire new cooks next year!

Jordan Wiesniewski said he will be doing the EMS side now, as stated Kyle took over for me with the fire facility and he is doing a fantastic job and the numbers show it. Since 2020 we started with the Greater Pike Foundation and had donations for our EMS trainings, and we've run and completed four classes and started our fifth Emergency Medical Technician class. Since that session we started with about 73 candidates, a few dropped out and had issues with work and family, but 52 of them have completed the training program. Of the 52, 23 have successfully completed and obtained their EMT certification. Of that 23, all of them have served Pike County in some capacity at some point, with 21 still currently serving Pike County. Our latest class boasts a 57% passing rate only because some of the students haven't taken the cognitive exam yet and we're waiting for them to take it. Of the ones that have taken it, we have 100% pass. All of them are now EMT in our county and doing a fantastic job working for local agencies. We have 12 in a current class right now and we're hoping for some more. We are going to run another EMT class in the Fall. We are waiting for equipment to come in to take us the advanced level of EMT, which is an intermediate between Basic EMT and Paramedic. It gives them the ability to dispense medication and start an IV and things like that. It works for us in Pike County as a County with not having a hospital. This is going to be the best route to step up service in our area. Hopefully this Summer we'll get that class up and running.

Director Tim Knapp clarified about the 57% passing rate by asking Mr. Wiesniewski what the passing rate was before the program was started? Mr. Wiesniewski responded their first class was about 31% passed rating and we're up to about 57% passing. Director Tim Knapp said that 57% right now is probably about the State average. When you see 28 students registered for an entry level class, that's huge. It makes you start to wonder if you have

a recruitment problem or a retention problem? That helps fire companies figure out what's going on that way too. Director Knapp encourages everyone to come up to the Training Center.

Reporter Preston Ehrler said he has 2 questions. First off, a little over a year ago we did a piece on issues that counties in Pennsylvania and the Country have trouble getting volunteer firefighters. What are we seeing here in Pike County in the last year? Director Knapp answered if you're doing an entry level class and you have a lot of people, 28 people is a lot of new people to bring into a system for 15 fire departments and they're all County people. You need to start seeing if you're bringing that many people in where are we losing people on the retention side – is it work? Is it something else? Our EMT classes are always full and we didn't know by June or the end of June if we were going to bring the EMT Program back in the Fall and we now have 4 going on this weekend. This wouldn't have been possible without The Greater Pike Foundation, what we offer is free of charge and it's huge for the Responders in the County.

Reporter Preston Ehrler asked about BLS (Basic Life Support) and ALS (Advanced Life support), since the matching fund in the last year, what are we seeing in terms of numbers of BLS and ALS units growing. What are we seeing Countywide versus where we used to be? Director Knapp responded the other day I looked at the web cam and at some point we had 7 ambulances on a call and we still had a bunch available. Going forward, we need to fix BLS before we can improve ALS, that's why we're making that jump now to improve and move into an EMT program. Even the coordinators out there are saying we've got the BLS under control, let's take the next step.

Reporter Preston Ehrler asked a few years ago, how many ambulances were available, staffed and ready to go compared to now? Jordan Wiesniewski answered about 6 or 7. Reporter Ehrler asked how many would you say you have now? Jordan answered about 13.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras thanked Tim and asked how many Townships are there are in Pike County? Tim Knapp replied 13. Mr. Contreras asked of those Townships (and Boroughs) how many have full time ALS service? The answer is 2, Delaware is part-time, Lehman is 24 hours. Mr. Contreras asked if the County does not have a comprehensive ALS service that is coordinated by the County, is that correct? Tim replied that is correct. When it comes to coordination, we work with BLS groups all the time. As far as running it, it's not the Commonwealth's statute to run the ALS. Mr. Contreras asked about integrated service as far as GPS within all of the ambulance services - Wayne County is running a comprehensive service like that for about 20 something years, what about Pike? Director Knapp said no we do not do vehicle monitors, Wayne doesn't have vehicle monitors either. Mr. Contreras replied to my understanding that they have a service that is upgraded compared to the service of Pike County and they're running that service for at least 20 years. Jordan responded that Pike County services Wayne County on a consistent basis for 4 years. Director Knapp added that the system they use creates a hassle. If you have Department X sent over one unit and park by Turkey Hill and now you have Department B send another unit and park it right next to that one at Turkey Hill, now you have to decide which one you're going to go with. I am aware of the system that they have. Tim added that the GPS system is not that great due to the internet service in rural areas.

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT

Reporter Chris Jones asked about the Open Space, Greenways & Recreation Plan people – is that a new committee? Commissioner Waldron answered it's related to the Open Space Plan we've been updating. It's the idea that we have coordinated open space plan. It's not just keeping the land undeveloped so much as it is providing recreational opportunity to enjoy that property. It's being coordinated through the Planning Department, you just don't want the County itself deciding how that works best, you want the people from each of the Municipalities involved as well as people from other related organizations involved, Conservation and Planning are involved, in fact the Director of Planning, Mike Mrozinski is here, perhaps he'd like to chime in on this. Director of Community Planning, Mike Mrozinski said as far as the Open Space, Greenways & Recreation Plan, DCNR has specific requirements for the Plans to have that group of individuals from varied resources and backgrounds. They want that varied group. It's the same thing for the Pike County Comprehensive Plan, we have a steering committee made up of people from very varied backgrounds to support the plan and the guidance of those plans.

Reporter Chris Jones asked if the grant has a monetary number on it? Director Mike Mrozinski answered yes, but I don't have that with me right now, I think it's around \$60K.

Reporter Chris Jones asked what's the recreation part? Is it more than just passive recreation, walking on a trail or is it parks or ball courts? Commissioner Waldron answered that it generally gets developed by the Municipality, but to the extent that there's land or space, in some cases there might even be a dedication of open space. Yes, it gets coordinated normally by Municipalities but they have a lot on their plates so the County is coming up with a Comprehensive Plan that allows for those areas to be looked at and see if they can be developed. It also allows for Greenway, the concept of that is you just don't have a preserved area or an open space area here or there, you try to have corridors, which works really well for wildlife too and in some cases can help keep wildlife off the highways and off the streets because they can in a belt, if you will a Greenway belt, where the wildlife can flourish on their own. When you have some development, you want to make sure you leave some open space. Many of the people who come here want to spend money in our community, they want to see open space areas.

Meeting attendee Vito Dibiasi asked the Commissioners to formally withdraw their support of the mega warehouse on Milford's drinking water aquifer. Commissioner Schmalzle responded he never has given support to it and Commissioner Waldron responded nor have I. Vito Dibiasi asked if Matt was going to say something (via telephone)? Commissioner Osterberg responded nor have I. Vito Dibiasi continued, both you and Anthony (Commissioner Waldron) are Pike

County Economic Development Authority, where the Executive Director is marketing mega warehouses. I was just there yesterday, and he will not stop marketing mega warehouses and invite warehouses to come to the meetings and present – there is a cause and effect there by inviting these mega warehouse developers and accepting the Pike County Economic Authority, which is a branch of the Commissioners. There's a cause and effect there by marketing and bringing these people into Pike County. To all three of you, do you personally believe in Milford Source Water Protection Plan, that the science is correct? Commissioner Osterberg responded I was involved when they did that, I drink the water every day and in no way do I support or want to see my water get destroyed. I understand that I have to respect the Milford Water Company and the Township Supervisors and the Planning Commission to work through the ordinances when someone puts an application in and this has happened many times before. The process has to go through, it is the way it is going right now. Good luck to the developer up there as it was when the mall was being proposed 30 years ago or Home Depot was being proposed 28 years ago, they went through the same processes and it ended up in the same decision. We have to let the process work its' way through.

Commissioner Waldron added he has not read the plan, but he has learned quite a bit through Peter Pinchot, we spoke about it a little over the Winter and I am new to this job. I've done land use law for over 40 years, in fact I represented Milford Township when the Home Depot got proposed and ultimately denied, and that was one of the factors. However, supporting the Milford Water Plan there, the aquifer protection plan, doesn't mean that somebody can't apply for a zoning request. I reject the idea that the County is pushing this development. The EDA (Economic Development Authority) Director's job is to try and promote economic development in Pike County and promote jobs, which helps the tax base. Sometimes, just because properties may become available, the County has never gone to somebody and said 'you need to put your property on the market because we want to put something in there'. It's not the County's role and it's not the EDA's role either. It just so happens that Milford Township has zoned an area, just like most of the municipalities along the 84 corridor, for possible development. In fact, Pennsylvania law says you have to provide fair zoning uses in certain portions of your Township. When you don't put a commercial use in the middle of a residential development, you put it in your State highways or in the case where there's a Federal highway going through, that's typically where it's going to go. Just because it's zoned, does not mean it will get built. There's a strong belief that there's going to be a problem with the developer interfering with the aquifer, I know the Milford Water authority is making strong efforts to oppose that, the County does not have a role to do that. We're not allowed to interfere with zoning.

Meeting attendee Vito Dibiasi said in your Comprehensive Plan, the one that is in effect right now, the Commissioners' job is to work with multi-municipal goals, 94% of the people of Pike County, when surveyed, want the water to be protected. All I'm putting out there is that, because your role as moving policy along that is that makes sense, why have an ordinance on one side of Dingman Township that is effective and makes sense and one in Milford Township that is very weak and doesn't make sense? It is part of the Commissioners' job right now, because the plan was sent by the Milford Planning Commission to the Pike County Planning Commission for review. It was there for a year, reviewed, and came back with the same crazy stuff. For example, under manufacturing activities, in Zone A, on the property it shows Milford Springs. Explain to me what manufacturing should be on the actual property of the Milford Springs? Then, 400 feet out, it's allowed again. Commissioner Waldron answered that is a Township question, you keep missing that – we have no say in how ordinances get adopted. Mr. Dibiasi said but it now at the County Planning Commission to review. Commissioner Waldron said to comment, they look at the ordinances and make sure all the T's are crossed and i's are dotted. They don't get to re-write the ordinances. We don't micromanage the Townships.

Meeting attendee Vito Dibiasi said he understands, but he wants them (the Commissioners) to recommend and I want you to comment on some of the craziness and some of these things like manufacturing activities and chemical uses, 400 feet away from the Milford Springs. We want you to comment and recommend. Commissioner Waldron said if there is a new proposal on the table, us (the Commissioners) interfering with that could be a legal issue and I'll let the Solicitor (attorney Tom Farley) bring his comments.

Solicitor Farley said in fairness, he (Planning Director Mike Mrozinski) can't recommend changes in the Ordinance on policy, he has to make sure the ordinance as written ties in with their present zoning salvo as it is. He only recommends, the Townships does not have to abide by his recommendations. He cannot recommend changing policy. You and I were both at the meeting last week and if the Supervisors want this ordinance, it is up to them. That does not mean that your concerns cannot be addressed prior to approval by the Supervisors, that is the next step. It will be published, there will be public hearings, people make comments and that is where the final changes will occur. I can't say that the Commissioners' job is to force any beliefs on the Townships or separate entities. Mr. Dibiasi said in your Comprehensive Plan, policy is something that you can recommend across each municipality, trying to get multi-municipalities to cooperate. Solicitor Farley explained that is throughout the County, not about a particular parcel in Milford Township, the Commissioners must honor the authority of the Township. Mr. Dibiasi replied, I understand that, it even says that in your Comprehensive Plan, but you as leaders are supposed to have at least some sort of sense of coordination that one thing on one side of this is like 40 feet away in one municipality makes sense across the board because it fits your Comprehensive Plan and policy direction. Let's just end with the Scenic Rural Character Preservation and what we have tried to push for is that this aquifer land which is 1.7 miles wide and 2 1/2 miles long, should be in a conservation easement and that's our goal. I'm hoping down the line you will help us and petition higher leaders, such as Congressman and Senators, for funding for those conservation easements so we can bring those property owners to the table and offer something to give up their development rights. If we can show them something down the pipeline. How does a mega warehouse of 434,000 square feet fit in with the Scenic and Rural Preservation of Pike County? Commissioner Waldron replied I don't want to continue this because there are still some things we have to deal with. However, having been involved with that, I've done a lot of land preservation work, that I've personally been involved with 30K acres being preserved, by purchase or conservation easement, generally conservation easements are not at the intersection of a State and Federal highway. They are done to try and preserve open space okay? You say it's important to preserve the water, absolutely, but that's why there are regulations, DEP regulations, that can protect that. If you asked, for example Delaware Highlands Conservancy and I'm involved with the Pennsylvania Association of Land Trusts, they're going to say that's not an area where we want to put our money in because we'd much rather preserve an area where the deer can roam and there's lots of other benefits

to the community at large and not a small piece right next to the interstate. However, that doesn't mean that just because I've said to people let's not waste their money protecting this property, it can't be developed for other reasons - too many wetlands or an aquifer that can be endangered if you developed it. Sometimes the regulations protect it from being developed and the reality that Matt alluded to before, that's been true for the last 40 years, they tried to develop it and it never got developed.

Reporter Chris Jones said he has a question for Vito. I go by there often, and there's a lot of trucks parked in there, is that being used by any entity now? Mr. Dibiasi answered yes, it's actually acting as like a mini transfer station. Reporter Jones asked for trucks? Mr. Dibiasi answered yes. Reporter Jones asked why aren't you going against that; who's running that? Mr. Dibiasi answered, I have no idea.

Reporter Chris Jones asked Mr. Dibiasi if that is currently degrading the aquifer? Mr. Dibiasi answered I would think so, it's right on top of the permeable rock. There's about 12 trucks there, that's a lot different than 250 trucks there per day. Reporter Jones then asked about traffic hazards, I just drove from Port Jervis (New York) this morning and the traffic is unbelievable, but I don't see anyone coming out of that lot. Mr. Dibiasi answered I don't know, that's part of what Milford Township was saying, a reason we can put it there is because it's actually being used as a mini transfer station. That was one of their arguments.

Reporter Chris Jones asked what would go on that ground just a packaging operation, like Amazon? Mr. Dibiasi answered well I've addressed that. Report Jones continued, what it's the trucks? Commissioner Waldron replied well you have run off and you have fluids and things like that, there's lots of reasons. I'm not representing the Township or the developer, just because there's nothing being done, doesn't mean that there can't be impacts on the water quality. Mr. Dibiasi added the LBL proposed pavers which means there's blocks which have seams in them, instead of the water collecting and running somewhere they can actually allow water to seep into the ground. That's a major problem because now you have 250 trucks a day and 499 cars per day and all that liquid coming out of the machines can go 30 feet or 65 deep into the aquifer. Commissioner Waldron said I will say that we're not here to try that project okay? We've already explained what our role is and is not; the County does not have a right to take a side on something like this. Mr. Dibiasi said I understand that and I'll end with that I envision for that property to be a natural preserve because we are losing our bees, butterflies and birds and we can plant there a restoration of those 44 hours and restore those wetland to have a natural preserve for the birds, bees and butterflies and put in trails and parks for the kids and have bike trails. I envision that that land could be, not only restored naturally, but be a community resource. Thank you.

Meeting attendee Patti Coombs asked about the total amount of COVID coverage received by the County? Commissioner Schmalzle answered there were different amounts, but the main one was in the \$10M range. Commissioner Waldron added, the Recovery Act money was just under \$11M. Commissioner Schmalzle said, for background, when we did receive it, we received it in 2 installments. At that point we went out and hired Hailstone Associates to work with Robb (Ruiz, Director of Pike County Human Services) to look at how it could be distributed and what would be the best impact of distribution throughout the County. We spent hours and hours in meetings with Sarah (Hailstone) who does this for a living, in order to distribute the money we felt that would be most impactful to Pike County. Director Robb Ruiz added it was about \$10M in ARP (American Rescue Plan) funds, now when you said COVID Relief funds, there are several different ranks of money, so you need to be more specific – there were several, there is CARES, there is ARP, there is ERP 1 and ERP 2, etc. Commissioner Schmalzle said you can request all this information and we can get that to you, the money came with extensive restrictions on the use of it, that's why we hired a consultant to read through this and make sure we stayed within the guidelines.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras said I'm running for Pike County Commissioner, and I am making a Right to Know Request for the total amount of COVID, both federal and state, if you can begin to put that together, in total what the County has received to date. Chief Clerk Krista Gromalski asked if he can submit it in writing and Mr. Contreras said he has the form and will do that.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras continued and said he thinks what Vito (Dibiasi) is asking the County, although the County has to understand that the Townships and Municipalities are separate entities and have a fiduciary responsibility that's to their residents and the County has to respect that, especially in this case, I think part of the leadership, as I've said from this podium before, is that having a Comprehensive Plan that includes projects or asks for businesses that are environmentally friendly, is an important piece that the County can publicly discuss without weighing in on a particular private project. I appreciate everything that Commissioner Waldron has done in the past in working with other Townships as Solicitor and with community work, and the environmental community and I appreciate your comments, but I think what the public is asking for, especially Pike County residents, on both side of the aisles, this is not a Republican issue, this is not a Democratic issue, it is a Pike County issue resident problem – we would like to see the County focus on business development that is careful about economic development first and environmental protection. I am asking that for the County and I think that is what Mr. Dibiasi is ultimately asking for the County. I don't think in terms of leadership that's too much to ask. Commissioner Schmalzle said we agree.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras continued, in terms of the EMS, there are a couple of comments I have from the EMS forum and EMS world. The Commissioners (Ron and Matt) have been going around town talking about how response times have increased, which they have, and making that a sole measure of how things have improved or not improved in Pike County. I'm going to read a couple of things: response time historically has been used as a surrogate measure for effectiveness. The assumption was that fast is better, the quicker the system responded the higher the quality of clinical outcomes. Recent evidence based research has allowed us to better understand the relationship between clinical outcomes and response times. This current research has suggested that our response times have little impact on clinical outcomes outside of a small subset of call types. From this perspective, response times is not the best measure of system performance and greater emphasis on developing evidence-based measures of clinical quality is required. To that end, the reason I asked the question about Comprehensive ALS service is because we don't currently have it. The

measure, when it says a small subset of calls that are affected, particularly cardiac arrest, critical trauma, stroke and elevated cardiac myocardial infarction. Those calls need to be handled by ALS carriers/ambulances. Currently, we may have increased the number of BLS ambulances, which is good, I'm not saying it's not a good thing, the Commissioners need to recognize that we do not have a Comprehensive ALS service – that's something that should be discussed more and acknowledged more. We shouldn't candy coat the fact that we don't have it and that we could have it. This is something that could've been worked on. That's my issue with some of the things that have been said. Now, the last thing I'm going to say on this matter, from the Journal of EMS, this is from a doctor: 'we will continue to myopically obsess over the faster measurement of response times until we broaden our view of what quality EMS is'. Again, we need a comprehensive study, again, of what's going on in the County and our ALS service needs to be addressed. The only thing I keep hearing from you, Commissioner Schmalzle, is that you say that if we have a hospital in the County some of this will be solved. I have the minutes from the October 4, 2019 Pike County Association of Township Officials that you attended and you say: "we need to upgrade infrastructure for business opportunities even though we will never see a hospital in Pike County we'll be bringing medical services perhaps to the service area". I'd like to hear your comments on the comment that you that we'll never bring a hospital to Pike County although you've been going around the County and saying that we're going to have a hospital in Pike County. I'd like you to address that.

Commissioner Schmalzle responded that, in 2017, and this is my EMS medical research, because we authorized a study in 2017 doing exactly what you're saying we should do. My comments on a hospital, I'll answer that one first – I don't think we'll ever have a full scale hospital in Pike County in the foreseeable future, in my lifetime or your lifetime. I do feel that we will have a mini/micro-hospital that may approach 24-30 beds or something like that and I think you can take that in that context and if it was taken out of context, then I misspoke, I apologize for that because we will have a hospital in Pike County someday, it just won't be a full scale, all services hospital. When we conducted this in depth search it became something the State took on and we went on and on telling anybody that would listen about our problems in Pike County, throughout the Commonwealth and throughout the Country with an EMS crisis that had snuck up on our little world here and in the State. For many years we were well served by volunteer organizations throughout the County, and they were robust. Not long ago, Westfall was an ambulance service that provided more calls than anyone in the County. They don't exist now. Milford was a robust ambulance. When we started this process we found there were a couple of Municipalities doing a good job and I'll highlight one in the town where my businesses are, Lackawaxen Township, they passed a Referendum 2.5 mils a long time ago, it was eye-opening and it was hard work. There was a group of people coming together saying we have a problem and we're going to fix it. It wasn't elected people, it was good people from the community. The County was in crisis, the EMS services was in crisis, your community was in crisis. You sat on the sidelines, I didn't. You sat on the sidelines, I got involved, we got involved to make a change. We then took this to the State to the point where they did a public hearing and you weren't there. A public hearing with the Senate in our facility took place in Pike County where the Chairman of all of these committees that involve EMS preparedness came to this meeting. From that meeting and we provided testimony, Tim (Knapp) provided testimony, Bernie (Swartwood) provided testimony and testimony from EMS Director of Pennsylvania and Fire Director of Pennsylvania, it was a robust meeting in the Summer of 2020. From that meeting, and I thank Lisa Baker for helping bring that to Pike County, we worked with Tioga and Butler Counties to then bring that back to Harrisburg through meeting after meeting that resulted in Senate Bill 1274. Senate Bill 1274 was to allow the Counties to formulate, for lack of a better term, an authority, so that they can begin to work with the Townships in a way that would be passed through Legislation. We all felt good about that. That would have made significant changes. It would have reduced qualifications for drivers in other ways, it was a far-reaching Bill that was put on the Senate floor and does not pass on the Senate floor because the Association of Township Supervisors of Pennsylvania opposed it. They didn't want to give up that authority to the County that they have because an Act of 1933 and updated in 1981 by Governor Rendell it places that responsibility squarely on the Municipalities in writing. The Rendell addition added that they could put a 0.5 mil tax on without Referendum going to the Municipalities. Mr. Contreras interrupted and said we don't need to go into the law and he is familiar with the law. Solicitor Farley answered that Commissioner Schmalzle is answering the question. Commissioner Schmalzle continued; from that it did not pass. That is the time in 2021 we conducted a County-wide meeting of all the Municipalities and we asked, what can we do? This Legislation doesn't look like it will pass and probably will not pass, we have to find another way. There are 45 elected officials within the Townships and Boroughs. I can tell you to this day, 44 or 43 agreed and are thankful for what we did. That's not making something up, that's not placing anything on our shoulders, that's a plan that is working. It's not fixed, I agree it's not fixed, I agree we're not there. This study, just as Tim (Knapp) said earlier, fix your BLS and then begin to develop ALS. I have businesses that are frequent fliers on ALS. When we call the Comm Center, I get an ALS unit, we have flights significantly throughout the year from the ski or Costas operation. There is ALS, it isn't what it should be. A lot of times where meeting them at a transfer place or helipad to get them the service that they need. We have a lot of work to do, but to criticize what we've done to dramatically change. Lance, a public servant from Blooming Grove produces data that we want every Township to produce, it's a three page list of what happens when someone shows up with a unit. He is a public servant who has done a remarkable job and one of the reasons why we came up with a plan was his input to get everyone together and say we have a severe problem. Today, if you ask Lance if things have improved, his reports will tell you we improved dramatically. Can we do better? Are there other ways to track this, do we need more data? I 100% agree with you.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras said all my questions, unless I specifically say so, will be rhetorical. The fact of the matter is you have admitted, in the official minutes of that meeting, that you felt Pike County was not going to have a hospital system in the County, that's what you've said. Publicly, on the record this is what I'm saying, publicly on the record it's not a question we're just putting it on the record, because you have gone, and again this is not a debate, I'm making declarative statements here, on the record to say that Pike County is going to have a hospital and soon. As far as ALS service is concerned, the fact of the matter is for people that have extra events like cardiac arrest or anaphylaxis, if a BLS ambulance shows up to that event, they can't properly help them. That's why a Comprehensive ALS service is necessary. It's not as if this problem has only existed for the 6 years you've been in office, it's existed for probably the last 30 years. It's something that needed to be addressed a long time ago. Again, I'm not saying you haven't begun to address it, my problem is you're going around the County telling people everything is honky-dory and the fact of the matter it is not. That is the problem that I have with that particular issue.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras then addressed Mr. Farley and said I will make the comment that when someone is at the podium when public comment runs, I'm more than happy to entertain Ron's (Commissioner Schmalzle's) answer. I'm not saying he shouldn't respond to a direct question, my comment is I'm going to say my comments and then he may respond in kind, that's fine, that's the way public comment works. The problem with the way government works currently in the United States, including this County, is elected officials and Solicitors like you sir believe that you are the boss, but the fact of the matter is we run this County. You are elected officials; you answer questions and respond to things that we want to hear about and that's the way that government is supposed to operate. It's not supposed to operate in the way you envision it, which is you're going to tell me what my speech should be and you're going to tell me how I'm going to react to something. That is not how this works.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras said my other question is since the County received approximately \$11M in County relief funds from the ARP, then why was it necessary for the Commissioners to raise the Local Tax by 1 and ½ mils? It's one of the highest tax increases in County history, during the pandemic I would add. Do you have a response to that, a short response? I appreciate your filibustering, but I would like a quick response to that.

Commissioner Schmalzle replied I think you're aware that our Correctional Facility has an ICE contract and that is a contract that was based on about 200 occupants within our facility that pay per day when they stay there. During COVID, they took everyone out of facilities in this area that would have any kind of COVID infection or whatever, it wasn't in our control. We had weak contract that said we need to keep two hundred some odd beds available, but they could go to zero. The first week that I was in I looked at that contract and said that's a bad contract. We lost all of that money coming into the County that was part of our budget. I think you can recognize that the income from that is significant. We entered into a contract that now has a minimum so they can't do that. We are back up to 100, but we were at 200, that compiled with the raising of salaries throughout the County, during COVID, we all know we're paying people more today than prior to the pandemic. Those two reasons are the two main reasons were the main drivers and that \$11M did not cover it. We wanted a lot of that \$11M to go to area businesses and area organizations to help them survive and it was a really difficult time for them. You will see, when you get the Right to Know, where that money went to.

Meeting attendee Mathew Contreras concluded with saying one of the things he hears when travelling throughout the County, especially from elderly people, is that they are concerned about their taxes going up. Matt (Commissioner Osterberg) in particular has presided over the biggest tax increases in the County, in the history of this County, since he's been a part of this Board. I wasn't going to bring this up, but you decided to bring this up a little bit so I will make that statement. I will bring this up again at the next County meeting when Matt (Commissioner Osterberg) is here in person to make a statement. Matt (Commissioner Osterberg), when you're here, we can discuss this again in person because I don't think it's fair to discuss when you aren't here. I will say, especially from elderly residents, their main concern is that you will raise taxes yet again! Sitting on \$11M you could not find some fat in the budget to cut here or cut there? I've looked at the budget and there is fat to be cut in this budget especially when you have \$1M of Federal grant money just sitting there and you guys decided to raise taxes in the middle of a pandemic. That is my comment for today. Thank you.

Reporter Preston Ehrler asked meeting attendee Matthew Contreras if he was elected, how would he resolve the ALS problem? Mr. Contreras responded I would look into a cooperative of all the Townships and it's something that can be done in this County and it's something we should look at. I've talked to other Townships and I'm not asking the question if the Commissioners want to discuss this on their own, they've told me and they've told the public that it's something they were unwilling to do at the time. I don't know if they changed their minds since they're getting some flack on this.

Reporter Chris Jones asked Mr. Contreras if he applied for or received any ARP money from the County? Mr. Contreras answered no, I did not.

Reporter Chris Jones then asked Mr. Contreras were you affected? I believe you hire domestic help. Mr. Contreras responded I don't hire domestic help directly. We're, in essence, a headhunting agency. We don't staff directly, we staff through other ways.

Reporter Chris Jones asked Mr. Contreras if his supply of personnel was affected by COVID? Mr. Contreras answered absolutely, there isn't a business in this world that hasn't been affected by COVID.

Reporter Chris Jones asked Mr. Contreras the name of his company. Mr. Contreras answered my personal business is not something for public consumption.

Reporter Chris Jones asked Mr. Contreras how he overcame that and keep revenue flowing so on and so forth, was there any government input for that? Mr. Contreras answered I did not accept COVID money from the County. Reporter Chris Jones clarified, I'm not talking about the County, there was a lot of other money out there, all kinds of money from the Federal government. Mr. Contreras said I am misunderstanding your question, is it your assertion that I am criticizing the County for taking government money, because I'm not. Reporter Chris Jones said you (Mr. Contreras) said they're 'sitting' on this money. Mr. Contreras said I'm saying the COVID money could have been utilized in more effective ways in addition to working with the budget. Yes, people were under stress in 2021, which was only a year from the pandemic that raising taxes was not the best thing to do for the residents of Pike County.

Reporter Chris Jones, to Mr. Contreras, your expertise, you do your homework, you do your research, you have a company you said that your revenue stream was affected during COVID, the question is very simple, did that company avail itself to any of these fundings to get companies through this treacherous bankrupting sickness? Mr. Contreras answered yes. We took the minimum allowed which was I believe was \$2K.

Reporter Preston Ehrler asked Mr. Contreras you want to create a comprehensive agreement through multiple Townships and Municipalities in this County. You minimize the response time issue, but if I'm having a heart attack, I want that

ambulance at my house as quickly as possible. The fact of the matter is what I've seen the County do is bring down those response times with a program that was relatively fast acting, it's been a decades long issue, you want to create this Comprehensive Plan that's going to take all of this agreement from all the Municipalities in the County, what would you have done to minimize the problems with like Shohola's response times, where they are far, deep in the County? Mr. Contreras replied that having a Comprehensive Plan would reduce response times as well. Reporter Preston Ehrler said I want to clarify, the Comprehensive Plan is great, but it would take a lot of time. Mr. Contreras responded that is your assertion. My assertion is that it wouldn't take as much time as you say it would. I've looked into it; I don't think you've looked into it. I also think that it would reduce the response times also. We would be using some BLS ambulance services that currently exist. We're not taking away service, we'd just be enhancing service that already exist. Your assertion is incorrect. Another thing is if you had anaphylaxis and a BLS ambulance showed up, you'd be dead. That BLS ambulance would be your hearse rather than the ambulance taking you to the hospital to feel better. If you want that service in the County that's entirely up to you. In full disclosure, you've had the opportunity to either call me, interview me or ask me any questions at all including the ambulance service, taxes, anything at all. You, as a member of the press, have stood next to me at countless meetings, maybe twenty something meetings and you've yet to ask me to talk about any of these issues. If you'd like to talk about the issues, I'd be more than happy to. Solicitor Farley then asked Reporter Preston Ehrler to put an end to the questions.

Commissioner Schmalzle concluded by saying that he agreed that an authority and/or a Comprehensive Plan is good and we (the Commissioners) wanted the same thing. There was not agreement with doing it at the time and we could not do it quick enough to make a change. Going forward, there's a lot of viable options, I agree that we need an ALS Service and we have to continue to work at this and as long as I'm here we'll do that. I'm guessing if you were here, you would do the same thing. Where you want to be is a good thing, getting there is a challenge.

MEETING ADJOURNED. THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023 AT 11:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.