

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

The first regular meeting of May 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 requested a moment of silence for the passing of Dave Chant, we all know Dave’s importance to this community. When people think of the Poconos, I think they think of Dave Chant. He was beloved by many and a mentor to many. A moment of silence was observed.

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

Commissioner Osterberg announced that they will need to amend the Agenda first.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to amend the May 3, 2023 Agenda to include Resolution 23-27 (Item 2A under New Business).

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the May 3, 2023 Agenda.

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

Commissioner Osterberg announced they would, under New Business, Item #3, ask for a motion to adopt Resolution 23-25, as Tick Borne Disease Awareness Month, May 2023.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 23-25, Tick Borne Diseases Awareness Month, May 2023.

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

Commissioner Waldron read Resolution No. 23-25 aloud.

Commissioner Waldron said he has learned a lot in the 16 months since he became Commissioner about the fact that it’s not all about just Lyme disease. There’s a lot of other diseases and quite frankly, I’ve learned a lot about how to deal with it if you do find one. Only 2 weeks ago I had a tick on my arm. I followed through and sent it down to East Stroudsburg, they provide a great service in terms of lab work, and they got back to me within 2 days that, fortunately, it was not a disease carrying tick. What we’ve been able to do here, with the Commissioner before me, was set up this Task Force and it’s been really good for our community. In fact, we’ve become the model for the whole state and we’re grateful that they did that and we’re grateful that we are able to continue to provide that service.

Commissioner Osterberg added that it’s extremely important because it is an educational component in our County. In 2015 the person who founded this was Mikki Weis who lived in Milford Borough and brought this to the attention of the County Commissioners and us, not fully understanding of how much of a crisis it was in the County; how many people were suffering from some form of Tick Borne Diseases. Our goal here with the Task Force is a very active committee that meets once a month here and its basic role is to educate the public about ticks and the different diseases that they carry and trying to remove from people’s vocabulary the words Lyme disease. It’s not just Lyme disease, if you’re tested for just Lyme, you could be missing the other pathogens that Tony (Commissioner Waldron) talked of. It’s quite extensive. It should be called ‘Tick Borne Diseases’ not Lyme disease. The State has recognized Pike County as a leader in this. We took this on in 2015 and there’s a continual meeting here. Many times there are 8-10 people here in the room or on ZOOM and from everybody in this County, whether the Aging office or 4-H, our representatives in Harrisburg trying to all come together so we can educate the public. Education not fear – we’re not telling people that they shouldn’t go into the woods in Pike County, they should just be aware of their environment and surroundings. I’m so glad that the children at the school here are being educated on this because that’s the other component that we do – making sure the young people in our community are educated about the things that can occur if you get a tick bite. We tell their parents if they get a tick on them, they can at least know if there are going to be any symptoms.

Commissioner Schmalzle said it’s nice to see all the young people here and thanked them for coming today.

Commissioner Osterberg introduced Brian Snyder of Community Planning and Rosie (Schoepp), both from the Tick Borne Disease Task Force to talk about the art contest.

Rosie Schoepp thanked Delaware Valley School District for allowing us to have this art contest. It was an art contest that encourages children to create posters that explain what you should do if you find a tick on you or where the ticks live. We had one class that got together and did a beautiful poster that has lots and lots of information on it. The kids did such an amazing job. I know you all had something to do with making that poster and I’d like to thank the teachers and staff of that class for helping them. Just remember, now that you know about ticks and you made this beautiful poster, it’s your job to tell everybody, so they know what to do and not to be afraid, but to tell someone you have a tick on you. Rosie then distributed the certificates and shirts for each child. The poster was made into tee shirts for each of the children.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the April 19, 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 April 26, 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 **\$1,691,516.49**, 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 34 properties sold out of the County Repository between January and March 2023.

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

PERSONNEL

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to hire **CHRISTINA BEDNAREK** as Administrative Assistant in the Public Safety Department, for a 37.5-hour work week, effective May 11, 2023, pending drug test results, with benefits after 90 days.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to hire **RILEY CROUTHAMEL** as a summer intern in the District Attorney's Office, for the period of May 8 until August 11, 2023, without benefits.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to hire **THOMAS SMALL** as Central Booking Technician in the District Attorney's Office, for less than 1,000 hours per year, effective May 8, 2023, without benefits.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to hire **CIARRA CALABRESE** as Dispatcher in the 911 Center, for a 40-hour work week, effective May 22, 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 Schmalzle, to acknowledge receipt of a letter 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 May 1, 2023, with benefits after 90-days: **MICHAEL SEVERO; KURT KELLER; ROSANGELA FERNANDEZ; JOSEPH RIOS; DARIUS PRICE; JUAN TEJEDA.**

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to acknowledge receipt of a letter from Warden Lowe advising that he has hired, with Prison Board approval, **CHRISTOPHER LEDIARD** as temporary Maintenance Staff Member for the Correctional Facility, for a 40-hour work week, from June 1 until August 26, 2023, without benefits.

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 adjourn the Salary Board Meeting and reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

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

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to Motion to award the bid for the Pike County Jail ICE Building Roof Replacement Project to Pro Solutions Home Renovations, LLC, for the total contract amount of \$74,500.00.

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

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to advertise bids for the Springbrook Road Over Rattlesnake Creek Bridge Replacement Project.

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

Commissioner Osterberg announced that this has been a number of years that we're getting this done. This is another one of the bridges in the County that we are able to take care of with the \$5.00 Registration Fee. If you're not familiar with Springbrook Road, this is a road that leads into a development and this bridge needs to be replaced. Without this bridge, there is no other way into all of those houses back there. I know that we all pay that \$5.00, but you can see what happens every year with that \$5.00 Registration Fee. Things are getting done, infrastructure is being replaced in this County. I know the fire companies, everybody is very appreciative and so is Dingman Township that the bridge is going to be replaced. This is moving in the right direction. We've been putting band aids on that bridge for decades.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 23-24, Mental Health Awareness Month, May 2023.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read aloud Resolution No. 23-24. Commissioner Schmalzle announced after he reads the second

Resolution (No. 23-27) they will have a combined conversation.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 23-27, Prevention Awareness Month.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read aloud Resolution No. 23-27, National Prevention Week, May 7 -13, 2023.

Commissioner Osterberg said these are really important issues that the County Commissioners deal with. This part of the population that is suffering through both substance abuse and mental health are very well connected. We meet every other month at the Joinder Board and talk about these topics and talk about what we're going to do as counties to help solve some of these problems. The suicide rate in this County, sometimes we lose sight of this with all the issues going on around us, there are family members and friends of ours that are suffering; between 2021 and 2022 the suicide rate went up 47%. That is an enormous amount of people that are suffering out there. We'll have some speakers come up from Carbon Monroe Pike Drug and Alcohol and they work diligently to make sure that we can bring support and services to these individuals before those terrible acts occur in their lives. The ages of them are all over the place. We're trying to identify who they are because if they're people that are veterans, then we need to bolster the veterans' services. If they're senior citizens, we need to bolster that. If they're young people, we need to figure out what's going on, but I feel the County and the residents need to know that most of live really comfortable lives in this County, but there are people in this County that are suffering. We as County Commissioners and you as residents need to be aware of that and work together as a team to bring help to these individuals through alleviating stigma in all of these things. Mental health has a stigma attached to it and substance abuse has a stigma attached to it and we need to get over that and accept these people back into our society and help them where we can. There's not a person in this room that has not be affected by either by something in mental health or substance abuse. You all know somebody in your family and we need to work together to alleviate this. Commissioner Osterberg asked Shannon Wisniewski from CMP-Drug and Alcohol Commission to speak to the attendees.

Mary Beth Koniarski from Hemlock Farms said she has a son that suffers from schizophrenia, and we've lived here about 5 years and it has been a struggle to take care of him. He lives with us and he has been hospitalized at least 3 times. At the end of the last hospitalization either he could come home to live with us or go to a homeless shelter. That's shameful! I didn't know where to go or what to do. We took him home and he's been with us for 5 years. He has someone come to the house, a psychiatrist, therapist and life coach that come every week and I am very grateful for that. This illness has taken him from a person that was studying for the CPA exam to a person who is barely functional. My husband and I refuse to give up on him and I have searched everywhere to get every resource available for him. When I came here 5 years ago, there was no mental health support for people like us or for people who suffer from mental illness. I looked up NAMI, (National Alliance on Mental Illness) in New York and I had a vision to start a support group in Pike County and other outlying counties like Wayne, Monroe, etc. The mission was accomplished. We have support groups that meet at Grandma's Bakery in Pike County outside of Hemlock on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. That has helped me and has helped other families that are dealing with loved ones that are suffering. In addition, I am a facilitator and a teacher for NAMI, I teach family to family courses and if anyone is interested in us, come into our organization and talk about mental illness. We would love that! On the third Wednesday of every month I run a support group for people that suffer from mental illness. In order to be a NAMI volunteer, one has to had walked the path. I have walked the path. I have had depression in the past, I understand and I understand family members that struggle with this. On that note, I would just encourage everyone to have less of a stigma for mental illness is terrible. One of the hospitalizations I was waiting outside of my son's emergency room door and he was in full blown crisis. When I was standing there, emergency medical people were there with a stretcher, and they were rolling their eyes. Upon observing that, a voice just came out of me and said how dare you do that-you never had a person with mental illness screaming in that room like a lunatic? That hurt me and affected my perception of how people really view mental illness. Even people that were in the health field. I remain positive that we can all change. Understand and listen to the people that have mental illness in their families and suffer themselves from mental illness. Your support will be appreciated. Thank you.

Shannon Wisniewski said she works with the Drug and Alcohol Commission and sits on a number of different task forces who work with the Commissioners very closely on making sure we have the resources we need in this County. Obviously, we're constantly in need of additional resources: therapists and psychiatrists. Outreaching to NAMI, outreaching to our office, outreaching to MH/DS (Mental Health/Developmental Services) if there are additional needs regarding mental health, reach out to one of us! We'll definitely help you get connected in the best ways that we can right now. We continue to have conversations about how we bring additional resources here like NSPI (Northeast Suicide Prevention Initiative). We continue to bring suicide awareness out into the community, and we do a number of different events throughout the community with drug and alcohol and with mental health. Those of us who worked in Human Services in this County can definitely bridge some of those connections when it is possible.

Carol Kneier, Wayne Memorial Hospital Representative- said with suicide prevention, we try to work closely in the community with schools. During the pandemic we know that many students are struggling so we try to provide resource cards so we touched on six different school districts, grades 7th-12th. That's over 7,500 students that we provided resource cards to. If it even helped one person, we are happy with that. We continue to do that and we are working closely with NSPI and Wallenpaupack High School right now to hopefully initiate a program for our student athletes. We know there is increased rate of suicide or pride performance which can lead to mental health and suicide in individuals in that category. We're working with them to help support that. We work closely with NAMI, all different chapters to support them. We're working with younger students with our Wayne and Pike County system of care group. With NSPI we're going in and reading the book, The Hugging Tree, which talks about resiliency with youth and children; to bring awareness that they can ask for help – there are people out there to provide help. Last year we were in Wayne Memorial Hospital with our Together School Program and we work with many organizations including NAMI where they went in with 7th graders and provided a program in four different school districts about saying it out loud which means if someone is struggling with mental illness or need help, you should go to their counselor, teacher or a trusted adult where they can ask for help and continue on with that help. We all work together, it is never with just one group out there that provides this education to try these resources at any age out there. Thank you.

Rob Mikulski CMP MH/DS thanked the Commissioners for their support. We go to Joinder Board Meetings with all three sets of our commissioners. We're really happy to have the backing of the Joinder Board. I think we're at a crossroads with prevention. Pennsylvania finally adopted Pennsylvania Prevention Week. We're focusing more on evidence-based programs. It's not the days of old where we just say we like this program because somebody liked it, it's based more on size, on data, it's

matching your data with your risk and protective factors. One of the things we're going to be focusing on up here is increasing those protective factors. Most of the time people look at risk factors and say that's where we're at. If we increase those protective factors, I think we really have a shot at the risk factors. That's one of the things that we do. We meet with the Superintendents and staff and we try to keep everything above board with the pace. I was doing a meeting with the Judge from Monroe County and he was talking about 27% of the students in Monroe County reported having a suicide plan when they took the test in 2021. That'll be done again in 2023. Unfortunately, they didn't have one in Delaware Valley. The District did not do that in 2021, we're hoping to do it again in 2023 and get some of that data. The food insecurity, homelessness, suicide ideologies and thoughts which you think wouldn't be an issue, are really starting to come to the top. It's becoming an issue of not just drug and alcohol; it's mental health, case management services. We adopted that saying a couple of years ago – not everybody needs treatment, but everybody needs prevention of some sort and that's kind of the basis that we follow in the Drug and Alcohol Commission.

Elaine Tucker said there are a lot of programs for our students in our schools, not only education programs and evidence-based programs but also support groups, sessions on an individual basis. I served the Delaware Valley School District as well as East Stroudsburg North, we sit on all their student assistance teams which identify students at risk and offer students services for mental health or drug and alcohol or whatever their need be, be it homelessness or whatever their situation is. There's always prevention, everyday going on in school and our faculties are aware of it and our students certainly benefit from all that because there are support groups and outreach and we identify students and offer them services. It's a continual, daily job to provide prevention. Rob Mikulski added that one of the things we're doing is working with the Area on Aging doing some gambling programs and drug take back. We try to get that out to the community and hit all the various levels, for people to get rid of unnecessary medications, outdated medications or they don't need it anymore and not just focus on middle and high schools, but also focus on the elementary.

Elaine Tucker said throughout the year we are out with the Dispose RX, we're at school events and at different community events, being able to say it's not just about making sure to have the conversations with your kids as important as that is, but also making sure those access pieces. The Dispose RX we can hand out at any point in time, having Narcan in the home even if you don't have someone who is actively using, you never know when you're going to run into somebody who is struggling. It's not just the person who is actively using, but maybe, we do it with the aging population, if you forgot and take a second pill of your medications. We see that different dynamic. One of the things that we'll be doing is making sure that the schools are able to post the prevention awareness materials, the QR Codes give access to all the different brochures, there's new tips that they give out about why to talk to your kids about drugs, how to have those conversations, being able to guide parents through all of the differences that we've seen in drug trends. We have new information about talking to teens about vaping. We've seen at all of our schools this has been a huge uptick. There's tons of resources about how to talk to your kids and how to access different treatments if need be.

Elaine Tucker said we have to remember that the average age of the first use for a child is eleven years old. When we speak to fifth graders, I say how old are you and they say ten and I tell them that fact and they say no, that can't be true and I say it's really true. Sometime, somewhere, within that next year or two they're going to be offered vape, an alcoholic beverage, they're going to be offered some form of a substance and they need to make good decisions about that. The age, unfortunately, is getting younger than that. We've had ten and nine year olds that have been vaping. It's very ever-present. Rob Mikulski added that all the things we are talking about is given at sixth, eighth, tenth and twelfth grades, this year they're actually offering it in fourth grade. The Department of Ed and Department of Drug and Alcohol see it is starting earlier so we need to get this out and they implemented a fourth grade base survey. They did a test in 2021 and this is really the first year everyone has access to that.

Commissioner Osterberg said at the last meeting we talked about fake pills. This is turning into a very serious issue. It's down in Lehigh Valley and I think it's coming this way. How crucial is it that people are aware there are fake pills out there that are being sold and laced with fentanyl? When we have these discussions we always this is about children doing this or young adults or people with addiction. I brought up a topic and I think it should be really thought about, because of the costs of medications sometimes people are going to say wait a minute, maybe I can get that same prescription on the street for a third of the price of what I'm paying the pharmacy, and this can happen to seniors and everybody else. We discussed this that everybody needs to be aware that they're making these pills that are supposedly going to be Percocet or whatever the name of them are and they are laced with fentanyl. As reported at the last one, there was a gentleman who was in recovery and had a bad back and instead of waiting to go to the pharmacy to get the right prescriptions, he bought one on the street and overdosed and nearly died. This is a program that I know Carbon-Monroe-Pike is going to start to push out, but we always want to put people in a category, but it can be anybody that can fall into this for financial reasons thinking they're going to get inexpensive prescription drugs from somebody on the street. That program is going to be moving forward to really educate people about this and this is what this is really about – educating people as we deal with this crisis in our communities.

Mary Beth Koniarski asked the meeting attendees if anyone has a question.

A meeting attendee, Cindy Defebo, asked if they had reached out to any colleges, we're talking about seniors and talking about students, but those college kids are facing new challenges and run into those problems as well? Carol Kneier answered absolutely, we've talked about it at all the different task force meetings that we attend. These kids are seen everyday in high school and they have different people and they have trusted individuals and they are sent to college and it's, well, good luck! Some of the programs at the colleges have, over time, with COVID and things like that, you're seeing someone on your screen and your seeing them in little snap shots not walking around campus, not doing those things. We have done different outreach with the different colleges in the area. We've outreached specifically within Carbon-Monroe-Pike, ESU and different community colleges within the three counties. Carol Kneier added that NAMI just did a mental health first aid training for the medical students at Geisinger CMC in Scranton. Talking about college, but also the people going out in the field to increase awareness of the individuals that they're going to be working with on a daily basis. There are many programs out there for the public and the community to increase that awareness of mental health and mental health first aid. How to approach someone or talk to someone, not solve their problems, but how to help them get the resources they need as a layperson. Mary Beth Koniarski added if you ever have to call 911 for a crisis in the home, ask for a person that's been trained in CIT (Crisis Intervention Training). They have been specially trained to handle emotional episodes like that.

A meeting attendee Vito DiBiasi asked if you can speak as to one of the ways of maybe lessening the stigma. To talk about genetic component, because I myself suffer from depression and my mother had depression and it's similar to my inherited

genetic component of my father with heart disease. Depression was a genetic component in my mother that was passed to me also. They're very similar. Just because it's heart disease and I get it, okay then you have a lot of resources, but if it's mental health genetic component that I inherited then you're into something else and resources for mental health are not as great as say for medical when you talk about heart disease and things like that. My wife is a therapist and worked as a therapist and worked with suicide patients and you know the resources and pay is just not great – this is reality here, because of the stigma, because of the genetic component, it's being passed down, it's in our genetics and we should acknowledge it and treat it as a legitimate disease.

MaryBeth Koniarski replied that she has a similar background, my mother suffered from depression and, as a child growing up, you don't realize that your house is different from your friend's house. Now I recognize it of course. Each of my four children has a component of mental illness, not to the degree that my son has, but they have anxiety. Anxiety is prevalent and that's a mental illness, depression is a mental illness. The meeting attendee agreed and said aging, because my mother had anxiety that was passed down, but when she reached 67, she was a woman who dressed people, she sold clothes and she was reduced to saying in front of her closet, shuffling back and forth, saying what do I put on? I don't know what to put on? People can age into this. She aged into a very debilitating depression and that's hard to watch.

Mary Beth Koniarski continued we talk about the stigma and things like that – so much of that is learned behavior right? We've seen other family members that have struggled with it. If it's a family issue and we don't talk about it, how are other family members going to feel comfortable talking about it? The more we address our own issues and are open about that and open with our families about those dynamics, yes there's a genetic component. We see it with tick borne illnesses, right? One of the symptoms of tick borne illnesses is depression, anxiety. The things that come out with the different medical conditions we look at and say okay we're addressing it and getting the medications and dealing with that part, but what do we do now with the life change that comes with that? If we're not addressing that whole person. We look at it in drug and alcohol and we look at it in mental health. Are they going to their medical appointments? Are they getting their blood work tested? Are we seeing any other symptoms in their physical health that could be causing more of those mental health issues that could be causing the addiction issues? This could be causing why we're seeing this progression in a fully, functioning, stable person then not being able to do that. It's why we have to, as a community, address all of those different pieces and being able to open to talking about it and being okay to get help. For a long time, it's something we didn't talk about. We didn't talk about drug and alcohol, we didn't talk about mental health. If you had a problem, it was alright, we're not dealing with this, rather than "I see you struggling, why don't we make a call together". We have doctors and gone through tons of primary care physicians working with our local doctors and being able to say if you're noticing any of these things, make those referrals, make the calls with them and do the outreach. As long as we're talking about it, it's going to be okay.

Commissioner Waldron said you talk about the stigma, that's why these awareness programs are helpful. We do have some resources, they're not perfect, but they're there. The people have to come into the door or reach out to your group, for example, that's why I'm proud to admit that I'm a recovering alcoholic and drug addict. I have 43 years of sobriety and that's been great. One of the reasons why AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) works is because people come in and say I'm not alone, I'm not the only person that has this problem. If it's a mental health issue, as you found out, both of you, there's a lot cost involved. Some people, because they have a mental health problem, they self-medicate because they don't know what else to do. Then people who are involved in addiction, that's a mental illness okay? The fact that you're doing that and just because you stop drinking or using drugs or both, as in my case, doesn't mean you're mentally healthy. You still need some treatment opportunities and sometimes just even group therapy which is what AA is and other types of programs out there. They help you maintain some mental health balance, but that awareness is important. We have to get that out. One other thing I'll mention is my Child Health Death Panel Review which we hadn't done in a few years then I took over for what Steve (Guccini) was doing and two of the kids, young adults, nineteen and twenty I think it was, suicide. The pressure people feel these days from so many different ways, is very, very difficult. One of the ways is try this drug, it's okay, it's just a pill. There's also cyberbullying, which we don't always know about it because it's internal. It's a big problem in high school these days and they're trying to deal with it, but they can't always monitor that. Families have to be aware of what's going on when the child is up in that room in front of that screen, maybe they're being traumatized and just don't want to admit it. The worst thing is, they don't see any other way out so suicide is their only option. That's very sad, but it's happening.

Commissioner Osterberg asked if they could give the commissioners the contact information because he knows the organizations in this community that always are interested in having people come and speak to them about topics in the community. This is a very important topic if we put it out there so if you can just leave it with Shannon (Devuyst) and we'll talk to you about how we can do this, and the Commissioners will be promoting this with press releases and whatever we need to do to bring awareness. As Tony (Waldron) said, awareness is one of the most important components we can do here.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 23-26, Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, May 2023.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.
Commissioner Waldron read Resolution No. 23-26 aloud.

Commissioner Osterberg introduced Scott Fahey from Total Control Training, instructor and examiner of the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program. Mr. Fahey said while ABATE (Alliance of Bikers Aimed Toward Education) is a major driving force in the Motorcycle Safety Program created in 1985, Motorcycle Safety Program is its own entity based off of PennDOT and currently through a few contractors, one of which is Total Control Training. We're the boots on the ground that actually provide them here and in 2019 we brought the first training site to Pike County. We train a large amount of students every year here and look forward to keeping everyone safe.

Commissioner Osterberg asked where they do the training?

Mr. Fahey answered currently our classroom is at Best Western (Matamoras) and the riding range in Shohola Elementary School. Total Control Training website is www.learnTORIDE.com.

Commissioner Osterberg said they could add a link to the County (www.pikepa.org) website to learn about motorcycle safety and said if you tell us when the training will be we can help you get the word out. Mr. Fahey said we do it two to three times a month on the weekends and we run a basic course and we are working with Best Western to bring an intermediate class to Pike

County. We ran one last summer and we have had some logistic issues and we're working that out.

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: Homeless Assistance Program in the amount of \$1,500.00; Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2.0 in the amount of \$92,656.51; and PHARE in the amount of \$1,975.85.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the CDBG Program Payment Voucher in the amount of \$4,398.50 payable to Green Trees Learning Center, 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 Worker Protection and Investment Certification Form, 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 execute the Contract for Professional Services between Pediatric Support Services of America, dba Avenna Healthcare and the County of Pike, 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 Service Agreement for Housing Out-of-County Juveniles between the County of Bucks and the County of Pike, 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 Certification Statement of the 2nd Quarter FY 22-23 Act 148 Invoice, on behalf of the Children and Youth Services.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to table item #11.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to table the Agreement for Information Technology Products and Services between Avenue Insights & Analytics, LLC and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Recorder of Deeds Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to appoint **CHARLES GILLINDER** to the Pike County Economic Development Authority Board to fill the unexpired term of Maryanne Monte, ending 12/31/23.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Beach Lake Sprinkler Agreement, on behalf of the Correctional Facility, as recommended 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 C.L.E.A.N. Agreement, on behalf of the Correctional Facility, as recommended 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 Addendum to Psychmedics Corporation Standard Agreement, on behalf of the Correctional Facility, as recommended by the Prison Board.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Project Modification Request for Grant 32996, 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 authorize the fiscal year 2023 first quarter payment from Pike County Emergency Medical Services Matching Grant funds to Dingman Township in the amount of \$88,005.60; Milford Borough in the amount of \$10,000.00; and Lehman Township in the amount of \$89,190.00.

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

Commissioner Osterberg announced that public parking, we know it's coming close to Election Day and as you can see we have construction going on in the front of the building. What we have done because it is a little inconvenient because people are parking in the front, there are now some public parking in the back of the building, approximately six spaces. Just so people know there is some convenience to get to the back because that is where you need to enter (the rear of the building) that way and exit that way. Just take notice of that and it will only be just another week or two. It's much needed construction that needed to be done out in the front of the building. Commissioner Waldron added that people bringing in mail-in ballots should be aware of that because they can just park there and the drop box is right inside the (rear) door next to the Sheriff Deputy.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Robb Ruiz – Director of Human Services/Transportation – Rider Appreciation Week May 8th – May 12th – Director Ruiz announced that next week will be holding our First Annual Rider Appreciation Week. On Monday all three commissioners have agreed to ride on our buses and ride with the riders. On Tuesday I'll be taking out some riders as well and going on different routes to talk to the riders. On Wednesday we will be doing free rides so they will be completely no cost at all. On Thursday we will be doing a free week on selected rides and then on Friday we'll be doing Feedback Friday and conducting a survey. If you have any questions, please let me know. It's our way of saying thank you for taking Pike County Transportation and it's a chance for us to get out there and meet our riders.
- Penn State Extension Calendar of Events – May, 2023
- Business Incubator Presentation- Workforce Development Agency Director, Cindy DeFebo – Commissioner Osterberg announced that the Planning Department has relocated to this building and they have joined the Mapping Offices. That alleviated some office space in the Shohola Complex where Workforce and Planning was. Our intention now is to take that space and develop it into a business incubator which Cindy Defebo will discuss. It's in the early stages and there's some partnerships going on here between ourselves, Work Force, East Stroudsburg University, Lackawanna Junior College and maybe some others. Director Defebo said our department is very excited about this because not many people know that not only do we have job seekers but we work with employers, that's the other half of what we do. This will be an opportunity to have a location where startup businesses can share space and share resources. We will apply for a grant and work with Planning. The Commissioners are going to hold on to that space until the end of the year until we have time to formulate the plan and proposal. It's a great opportunity for businesses to create, grow and network. Some of our partnerships as you mentioned, we're hoping the University of Scranton SBDC (Small Business Development Center), United States Small Business Administration they're an active partner with us already, they come to all our events. Lackawanna College is on board to provide resources through their office. Economic Development will be relied on, there will be classes, training programs and Pike County Chamber has a wide variety of services for employers. We visited East Stroudsburg University their incubation center, they have a great facility and we can only dream to have something like that, but they started small too and built this beautiful building and they're 80% capacity. I was at Lackawanna College yesterday in Jessup and they are almost at capacity and it's an exciting opportunity. It's a place to start your business, have office space, have a meeting room, have technology and partners that they can collaborate with other small businesses in the area.

Commissioner Osterberg said he thinks this is a great idea and it gives small businesses the opportunity in Pike County to find a home and get their feet wet. I know there's a number of them out there that I know are going to be extremely excited about having this come to Pike County. It was a great idea you (Cindy Defebo) had – she knew there was a space being vacated up therein and she asked what about a business incubator and we said, perfect!

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT

Meeting attendee and volunteer for the Dingman Township Fire Department Steve Raider said it was not the last Commissioners' meeting, but the one before that, there was some statements made and I was personally offended. There was a statement made that response time doesn't really matter, if you're in the ambulance and you had a heart attack or anaphylactic shock, it's nothing that BLS (Basic Life Support) can do, and I was really offended by it. We try to do the best, the community, the volunteers do everything they possibly can to ensure the safety and the life of our residents. I want to personally thank the Commissioners for supporting us for as long as you have and your continued support. I do believe the system can get better, but we need leadership like we've had to make it better. Thank you.

Meeting attendee and Friends of Milford Aquifer member Vito Dibiasi said he was just piggybacking off the last topic. Didn't the surgeon general just list loneliness being an epidemic in our society? We should be aware of that because obviously longlines can lead to other mental illness problems. One of the solutions I've seen effective is to, not just being a teacher but go beyond that and to be a mentor to somebody and that could have a tremendous effect on some kid that doesn't have many people to help navigate them through that. I had asked you to make any kind of written statement that involved water protection, did you give that any thought? Commissioner Schmalzle answered we have and we will. It was kind of a last minute thing and we appreciate your advocacy and I think our position on it has not changed. We certainly want to protect the water and will be putting something out through Krista (Gromalski, Chief Clerk). Mr. Dibiasi said I think my mission overlaps what you're doing, You have the Imagine Pike County 2035 and includes the Comprehensive Plan, which includes a survey right now on your website. It was hard to find, but maybe you could put it up more in front. Chief Clerk Krista Gromalski said it is the first thing up at the top of the website. You've done the Pike County Conservation District Teaching Plan 2020 and you've done Pike County Mitigation Plan, so all these address the water issue. Commissioner Osterberg said right now I'll add to that because I want to find out about this, we do have twenty one monitoring wells in this county that Conservation District monitors monthly throughout the county, different regions of the county. There is active procedures to make sure that the water stays at a certain level so that if something does affect the water, they're going to be able to know that. If something impacts it, they'll know where to point it to. Commissioner Waldron said that the three of us were at an event to honor the RSVP which is helping seniors who are oftentimes lonely. Robin Skibber our Area Agency on Aging Director is here and that's something that people can volunteer to do. Sometimes it's just being willing to call somebody and we also don't have complete transportation in the community as much as we'd like so it is an opportunity for people to volunteer.

Brian Snyder from Pike County Planning introduced himself and said right now the Comprehensive Plan Survey is live on the website and takes about fifteen or twenty minutes depending on how detailed you want to get. It covers everything from housing, infrastructure, transportation, recreation and open space. There's spaces to put or mark in depth details and you can put it in. At the end of the survey you can put your email or contact information and you'll get invited to the focus group that will happen later on this year. The survey ends at the end of the month/beginning of June. Any questions?

Robin Skibber, Director of Pike County Area Agency on Aging said the Senior Chat Program is also a way anybody can get involved with being a phone buddy and those people are vetted and would set up with those people who would like to be called and there's also the Healthy Ideas Program done at the Aging office. This is working with people who are lonely and need to get back to what they used to be, feeling much better about their life and things like that. Any of this information will be on the Pike County website (www.pikepa.org).

Meeting attendee Kevin Holian said he is a second home resident and he just drove up from Long Island early this morning and on both sides of Raymondskill from the north end on Route 6 and people are running for different positions. There are tons and tons of political signs and I'm bringing it up because two of them I think are in opposition to Matt and Ron. I feel I need to give a sign of appreciation to the three commissioners. A Long Island doctor in the early 2000's told me I had gout. A Pike County doctor told me I had Lyme disease. Mikki Weiss said I should get my doctor to test for co-infection which he did and I ended up with ehrlichiosis. A couple of years later in 2017 I had several heart conditions and went to the urgent care in Milford and Milford Fire Department 33 showed up and asked me what hospital did I want to go to because I was having a heart attack and they recommended Sussex and Delaware Township showed up and brought me very effectively out to Sussex. The response time and support and leadership, there's a heck of a lot more leadership from a government standpoint and volunteer standpoint here in Pike County than in North Shore of Syosset, one of the richest neighborhoods on Long Island, NY. I just wanted to give my appreciation to the County Commissioners.

MEETING ADJOURNED. THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2023, AT 11:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.