

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

The second regular meeting of June, 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.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda

Meeting attendee Pierre Tarde said he was going to speak about 'Point #3' (Resolution No. 23-32, Pride Month, June 2023) As you all agree that we should do a Pride proclamation... if you do this, you have to do it for other people. I would suggest that we do another proclamation in August. I recommend that we would change the proclamation to the Love and Respect Proclamation.

Meeting attendee Patrick McCarthy, a resident of Milford, Pennsylvania, said he was also speaking about #3. I don't see where it's necessary to in order to fly another flag for an entire month when there is a United States of America flag as when we had the opening, we said the Pledge of Allegiance and it encompasses everybody. If we're going to have something like that, like the gentleman (Pierre Tarde?) alluded to, you'd have to have a heterosexual or whatever. A lot of places where I see the Pride flag go up, there is diversity automatically put in. If somebody doesn't go along with it, they are being racist, negative or whatever. I believe the United States flag is good enough for all of us, especially for all those people who served in wars that make this flag possible. Veterans get one day, Jesus Christ only gets two days; I believe that there are other things we can do that encompasses the entire community such as keeping the American flag and not flying any other flags for a cause of diversity at a risk to the community. We've always been accepting of everybody and anybody that comes here. I'm a member of St. Patrick's Church. We also are accepting the presence of everybody and anybody that wants to come to church. I don't see any reason why we should fly a special flag for an entire month in order to go ahead and recognize a special group of people. As I said before, I believe the United States flag, in our opening we pledged allegiance to the flag-it says it all.

Meeting attendee Kerry Williams said she is a resident of Pike County and would like to present an alternative – love and respect faith. That loving and serving all members of the community is the foundation of a healthy society. Pike County encourages its citizens to practice love and respect toward every person. I sincerely believe that every person in this room deserves my love and respect. Love thy neighbor and keep Pike County a wonderful place to live. I think that would be a wonderful way to embrace everyone-we're not leaving anyone out. I have to say that to have Pride month I would be incorrect if I didn't bring up that there is a larger cultural agenda and what is happening is the legitimizing of LGBTQ doesn't come without illegitimacy. Right now there are four bills in the House of Representatives 10-24, 10-25, 10-26 and 10-27 that would make it punishable by law if I were to say let's at a school board meeting, speak out against what I believe to be the indoctrination of our school children in a particular lifestyle. I really think the government has no business in celebrating one lifestyle above the other. I would ask that you please consider rather than holding up one lifestyle, which admittedly has received persecution. How about we love and respect everyone – that's my proposition.

Meeting attendee Theresa Brown said she is a citizen of Pike County. I think we are seeing a great deal of tyranny of a minority. When we have elected officials upholding the Constitution as it was written – it was written to protect against tyranny of a minority. We're not seeing the voice of the people, we're seeing the voice of small groups of outspoken individuals and behaviors of leadership that is highly questionable. By highly questionable, I mean some people are asking who is paying whom to make decisions that are against the will of the people? A situation like this, a question like this, is of great concern to the community and the entire community should be involved in decisions of this nature. That's the way America was created. Something like this may not meet some guidelines for a vote, but it's not something one or two or a handful of people should be making a decision like this for an entire community.

Meeting attendee Jeanne Navarro wants to know what the Resolution accomplishes? Is it just for today and how is it used? Commissioner Osterberg answered it is to bring awareness of hate and intolerance in our community and I'll speak more to that later. Jeanne Navarro then said she didn't know when she read about the part on the 14th Amendment and I didn't see the words that you have in your Resolution exactly stated in the 14th Amendment. How were those words chosen? Who prepared the document? Commissioner Osterberg said it was a joint effort. Jeanne Navarro said I think that if we are going to use the terminology LGBTQ+, I would like to have it spelled out. If we're trying to end the intolerance, I would ask that. I don't even know what that terminology is could you tell me what they stand for LGBTQ+? What does the plus mean? Meeting attendee, John Helman answered LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and the '+' is meant to be encompassing people who identify non-heterosexual/cis-gender, but don't identify with those words, like gender non-conforming or non-binary, etc. Jeanne Navarro said I was thinking of the whole community since you're making this Resolution for the entire Pike County, not everyone, like me, might not be aware of all of that and if you're going to make it in the Resolution then it should be more clear that all of these things are going to be encompassed. When I read the article in the newspaper, and it was brought up about a white, heterosexual man came to their community and asked if they would maybe do a Resolution, if we're going to put all of those descriptions into the Resolution, then we might want to put in like the other speaker spoke about, all the people – the white heterosexual too because I feel like it's coming down on everyone, the hatred. I would like to have all of the things that you recommended – LGBTQ+ and also all people – love and respect and hope for all of the people of Pike County.

Meeting attendee Matthew Contreras said I wasn't going to say anything until the Chairman said I don't know what it means. He's going to vote on something that he doesn't know what it means and that's part of the problem here. LGBTQ+, The Constitution protects everybody. That is what we need to remember here today. If you don't know what LGBTQ+ means, then you shouldn't be voting. If you don't understand what the plus means, then you shouldn't vote on a resolution, you have no clue about. When you know, darn well how divisive the topic is in the community. The plus sometimes means minor attracted persons, or the more common term - pedophile, has been included to use that term. It also means other sexually deviant behaviors that the rest of society may or may not conform to. My problem with this Resolution is very simple. As I've said before, the Constitution protects everyone, if you want to guarantee that people are protected, you should have a Constitution month, not a Pride month. You should have a celebration of say the Second Amendment, the First Amendment - have that month, but no, you decided to have Pride month for some reason and that reason is you continue to pander. You pandered before and you're pandering now. It took the Second Amendment Sanctuary four years before you would even

consider their proposal. After phone call after phone call after prodding, and only when it suited you for re-election, did you then decide to bring it before the county, only then, and now you want to celebrate pride. What is pride? Everyone here is American. I don't begrudge anybody for what they do in the privacy of their own bedroom. I thought that's where we were. Twenty years ago, that's what we were talking about. We just want to be left alone to do what we want do in the privacy of our own bedroom as Americans. I still feel that way, I want to be left alone to do what I do in the privacy of my own bedroom, it's my right as an American. I think you all should be entitled to do the same thing. I really do. Bringing these types of Resolutions to the community only further divides the community, that's all it does. We are giving the people the very extremes what they want, which is more tribalism which is more division and that is not what we should be doing. What we should be doing is celebrating what real pride is in this county and that we all have something to be grateful for – that we're all Americans and we have something to be prideful for. I think even we can agree on those types of things even though we disagree on many, many things and my question to the Commissioners is why not celebrate those things? Why not talk about those things? Solicitor Farley said just comments, we are not having a debate please. Matthew Contreras said they don't have to answer. I know you want to be the fourth Commissioner counselor, but there is only three. My question, rhetorically, is why not celebrate those things? I wish everyone a happy day.

A meeting attendee said, I got an email from Triversity saying that they needed support that's why I am here. I didn't know exactly what was going on, apparently, it's about a flag. I don't understand why we are here because what is the big deal about a flag if people feel better about it, if people feel more protected about it? I think the Constitution is wonderful, but I think it needs to be updated, but it is not protecting these people and it is not protecting a lot of people. Something has got to be done so it can't be just the American flag which is also not protecting people. They have a right to feel good about themselves, they have a right to feel that they don't have to be worried about going down the street and getting bullied. Is there anyone here that was never bullied in their life? I know I was, just because I was Jewish. This is ridiculous in my opinion; this is about respect. If someone feel better about having a flag. Is it about the money? We will all chip in. I mean this is me but I don't get it. I just don't understand how people have to decide if we should respect someone or should we not respect someone. They need to be respected just as everyone here needs to be respected. Yes, everybody, no matter what. Give them a flag if it makes them feel better. I understand that I am not sitting where you are, but I don't get what the big deal is. I hope to God it is not money because that is a ridiculous reason. Everybody here should not be scared of being bullied and ridiculed and ostracized. No one should feel that way, give them the flag.

Meeting attendee Dave Halston said we have some police officer here, is there a high rate of gay bashing in Milford and do you think that by putting a flag up, it's going to stop it? That's all I'd like to know, if there's such a big amount of gay bashing going on that we need to put up some kind of flag up? Solicitor Farley said just as I said to that gentleman, just comments please. This is not question and answer.

Meeting attendee Nicholas McIntyre said he is a local attorney, and he doesn't think the LGBTQ+ community here today is saying that they want special treatment, or we want this, or we want that. The reality is that their sect of the community has higher suicide rates than the rest of the community. They go through harder times in school than the rest of the community because they look different, they act different, maybe because they like members of different sexes or same sexes or whatever sex they choose. Putting the flag up shows them that we stand with them regardless of what they choose to do or how they choose to behave. If you're a member of this community, you'll be supported. It is not to put down the police. It's not to put down anyone else. It's to uplift members of our community who quite frankly need it. You know, we've gone so long where it has this stigma that you know, it's wrong or it's this or it's that and they get bullied more than everybody else whether we want to believe it or not, it's what statistics show. I think putting the flag up would be a great thing for the month, it's not about the white heterosexual. It's not about saying they're not this or they're not that or they don't deserve this, or they don't deserve that. It's about they have a different experience going through life than a member of the LGBTQ + community. Just saying that they don't because we have an American flag flying for their protection doesn't make it true. The truth is that they are discriminated against in various different ways much more than the white heterosexual. Putting that flag up here shows them that we stand with them whether we agree with them or not. That we stand with them, that they are welcome and that they are accepted especially in light of the Proud Boy stuff we had going on outside the school. That's here in our community and if we don't show those people that we stand with our LGBTQ+ community, that we stand with the African Americans and that we stand with the Jewish folk in the community, then that Proud Boy stuff is going to fester. Is that what we really want in Pike County?

Meeting attendee Pastor Eddie Pinero said he is a Pastor at Calvary Chapel in Milford. The reason I am here and you never see me out at protests, you never see me out at rallies is because I believe my place is being a pastor to a community that I love dearly. I live in Pennsylvania for ten years and I am a retired New York City Police Officer from New York City as an NYPD officer. I am a chaplain now with the Pennsylvania State Police. It's been my heart to help people spiritually. It's been my heart to be a spiritual leader in this community. Not too long ago my wife and I were praying at the Knob for our community, and we pray for all. After I found out that this was going to take place at first, I didn't want to be a part of it. The one thing that stood out was that the LGBTQ community felt threatened by a church. When we say church, we think all churches are included in that. I stand here today and let you know that is not from my church and that's not from my heart. That's not the God I believe in. I believe in God which is a Jewish God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I believe in the Son Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Everything in the scriptures from Genesis to Revelations, all sixty books speak of God and I stand with you if anyone says they hate you and threaten your lives. That is not what Christ teaches. Christ teaches love and unity. I see photos with a flag behind each and everyone of you (the Commissioners). I have been here before and opened up in prayer and I think all of us as a community, those residents of Pike County, should have a say and this should be toward the majority. That's not the case. We had a star that just hung up on the mountain during Christmas and it was taken down. Why? It was a Christian symbol. Inasmuch some have been victims and my apologies for that, regardless of whether you're a believer in Jesus Christ or not, I think it's wrong. That is not what I voice. I voice peace and love, but we need to be fair. Maybe a day for Christianity? Maybe there should be a Christian flag hanging? In the same way we say separation of church and State, we know that's a misunderstood statement, it doesn't mean we don't include God, our founding fathers were Christian. Christianity has been persecuted well before the Bible was even canonized. We've all been persecuted. I've pastored in churches for many years, even when I was in law enforcement I was a pastor and a police officer at the same time. We see problems with all people. There are even problems within the church because of why? People. That's why we go to church, that's why we go to hospitals, we go to jails, but I think as a community we need to first think about the Creator of the universe who loves all people. Not everything we love is good and we use love loosely to understand what love really is, but we talk about the love of God for God so loved the world he gave his only Son that you

might believe in Him to not perish. We're talking about a life after the life you live now. I stand here as a believer in Christ, I believe in the word of God says that homosexuality is a sin before God. I know many have misrepresented that, but God loves the homosexuals. He refuses to leave us all that way. I was a murderous at heart, I was a person full of sin, but because of Jesus Christ, he loved me, and I was not perfect. God doesn't love me more than he loves the LGBTQ community. He loves us all equally. God created us for a reason, for a purpose. In a way God has beautifully and fashionably designed you in his glorious image – that is the image that we should be in. Everybody has free will, God created us all free moral agents, we choose, he doesn't force himself on you. God loves you and I'm here now as a pastor saying that I don't stand with Christians that promote hate, violence, and threat, that's why you rarely see me at any of the rallies and the protests in the community, because I speak of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I say, as one of those Christians, that I want to pray and love the LGBTQ community, even though we do disagree on what the Bible has to say and what God calls it or what it is. I stand here as a pastor in this community and continue to pray at service – God bless.

A meeting attendee thanked the Commissioners for dealing with issues that affect the community. Every single person in here, regardless of how you feel or experiences you may have, I am here to tell you we respect and love you. That's part of being a good neighbor and trying to move our community forward. None of us here have thrown a rock at each other, I believe we support each other, the reality is this – I think every person in here has a family member who has chosen a different lifestyle. Everyone here has chosen a way of life that is independent. The issue I have is the relationship between government and those freedoms because pride is a sin. It has nothing to do with LGBTQ, if you want say Christianity pride – I will tell you the same thing. What it really is about is respect and love for each other. Love and respect of community, love and respect of your neighbor, love and respect when someone is in their time of need, you help them, love and respect when somebody's being attacked, you defend them because you love and respect your community. If something like this goes through, not because of sexuality, I couldn't care less about that, there's going to be more requests for things that will divide this community. You will have groups coming in here for this month for Christianity, this month for heterosexual families and it really opens up a Pandora's box in my humble opinion. While we love our neighbors and respect our neighbors, I believe if we as Pike County adopt a Love and Respect Month which means we hold each other's hands, we'll just stand next to each other and say we love you. As we're listening to the speakers, I'm also analyzing the audience. There are people rolling their eyes and being disrespectful and that type of thing, we love them. They might not love us, but we love them. Commissioner Schmalzle asked for the attendees' attention please and said they are going to speak to this first and change the Agenda because obviously there's a number of people here on both sides of this. It is not our intention to create more divide in the community. It's our intention to bring people together. It is our intention to make sure that if we can help a segment of our community to feel safer to feel better about being in this county that we would like to do that. I had an exchange with Pierre Tardy that opened my eyes a little bit. I heard it again today and the one thing I am going to advocate doing is to change the title of the Resolution to Love and Respect Month. I believe that is far broader reaching and I think it is respectful and I think it makes more sense for us. We do not want to create division. We want to create inclusion. I think we can accomplish both with some little word changes with similar meaning. I am speaking for myself. That is my own voice for myself and I can feel the tension and I don't want it. I am not caving, don't laugh, don't laugh at me. This is a hard decision, we want to make sure the community knows we respect all and that's why we were considering doing this in the first place. Commissioner Osterberg said we sat here last week and let me tell you this, I have a real problem hearing hate regardless of what group they belong to; whether it's LGBTQ+ group or whether it is the Jewish community or when I hear from African American families. You weren't here last month to hear the stories about people being targeted in this community so if anything that's happening here today is at least we're all together talking about this. This is happening here. I even said at the meeting I don't live in a bubble, but I was not aware this population felt threatened walking down the streets of Milford. We can say, has there been any police reports to this? It doesn't matter because. I did ask them last week because that's the stigma of being concerned about going to the police department. I told the story of my and my wife sitting at the community house two weeks ago listening to the music when a young woman came up with her little baby and her two children who moved here from Queens, and they are a black family. They're sitting there talking to them and I said where do you live and she said such and such. I am not going to tell you where because I don't want to identify this person, and I said that is really nice and she said you know we can't wait to move out of here. Her son, who is fourteen years old, I thought was going to start to cry, in school, he is being targeted and called names. The name that he was being told when he moved into this area when he got to school. The kids said to him well tomorrow I think we're going to bring the whip in. What do you think that says to me as a leader in this community? Am I supposed to just turn my back on that and say this doesn't happen or that I shouldn't be concerned by that? I apologized to the woman, and I apologized to the young man. This is terrible, I never knew this occurred here. I've lived here for fifty years. I went to school here; I never remember that. Patrick, you went to school with me. Do you remember that happening? Patrick replied no, nothing like that. Commissioner Osterberg continued right, nothing like that. Something has changed in our community, and something must change in our community, and something has to be said about it, Whether I go with all I wrote that as somebody said that, maybe it was Patrick, Love and respect. I don't take this lightly to do this but at the same time I don't sit here as a community leader and try to put people in segments and say okay, they're a minority I don't care about them. At that meeting we also sat here and listened to a woman talk about, she is of the Jewish faith, her son was targeted on the school bus. I don't remember that either. There is something going on in our community. If we are thinking that we should just ignore it, we're absolutely all wrong. When you read our Resolution, we talk about all human beings in here. Obviously, this was brought to attention by us by Triversity and by that organization. They're the ones who created this day in 1968 or whenever it was done, it's not like it is something new. I don't know where the flag thing came from. Nobody is putting a flag up on the Commissioners' office. That's never been mentioned here. What we are talking about is hate in our community. Is that what we want? Do you understand these individuals from Triversity feel hated in our community? Is that what we want? Does anybody here want to raise their hand and say that is good by me, because that is what is happening. We as leaders of this community cannot sit here and ignore it. We can respect everybody who is heterosexual and everybody, but they are being singled out. I have many friends being singled out. I have many friends who fall into that. I feel terrible thinking they are living a life where they're hated in a community that we have all loved to live. I moved here as a kid, and I never wanted to leave. I never had felt this but now I am feeling it. You know it is no different than understanding that there is domestic violence. Well, it doesn't affect all of our lives, but we know it's there, we don't ignore it right. We have a month for it, don't we? Because it is that important. We can reword this. We are not looking to divide the community at all. I know Triversity doesn't want to divide the community, but they want this to be inclusive and for some reason, this is causing this type of discussion. Well, in my respect this is a good discussion to have. We need to know that this is going on here and if everybody here thinks that Proud Boy flag was a good

idea for our community, don't vote for me. Okay, do me that favor and do not vote for me and if you don't think so, look up Proud Boys and think if that is a good sign for us, I don't think so.

Commissioner Waldron added I was mainly responsible for bringing the Proclamation here from my attention. We all discussed it. Quite frankly, we didn't get it to the very end of May. In terms of being able to meet together, there's a lot going on in May so we said you know what, we're not going to do it on June 7th but the three of us agreed that we would hear from people. A number of people came here and a few of them are here today. Most of you who spoke were not here. Quite frankly, we heard some sad stories about how children are being affected. How they are even being affected because they might happen to have two dads or two moms. That is not right, and a few people mentioned that this is going to divide the community. Unfortunately, the community is already divided, we are trying to bring it back together. We are trying to be more inclusive. Quite honestly, I believe a lot of this is at the fault of some national politicians and some national media who have said it is okay to hate. Who have preached the idea that if you are not like me, I don't have to respect you or like you. We can't live that way and we don't want to live that way in Pike County. I admit, the three of us all said you know maybe because of the circumstances we are in life, we are somewhat insulated. We're somewhat insulated because we sit here and listen to people than some of the other people that I know in the community but nonetheless, we needed to learn more here and yes, this group of people unfortunately do not feel safe in our community today and that proud boy sign which in fact one of the Triversity members climbed on the rocks to remove, put right across from the street from our high school Delaware Valley High school was certainly an indication that there is hate in our community because one of the Proud Boys top agenda is anti-gay. It is also other anti-minorities unfortunately and anarchy. We can't live with that, we don't want that in our community and quite frankly that was the main reason to try and include everybody. Can we broaden it? In fact, quite frankly the message that came to us was a little more specific than we were comfortable with, so I rewrote some, Matt rewrote some. I think what Matt explained to you is better than I could about why we were doing this, it wasn't to divide community at all. You could say well we should have a heterosexual month. Heterosexuals do not get treated they way gay people do. They do not, I am sorry. You know last year, we had to deal with a Second Amendment Resolution. It is true that it came through a couple different iterations over the years, but as a municipal solicitor, I dealt with that at several different municipalities. The initial draft said we are going to spend taxpayers' money to fight the federal and state government. There is no way we could approve that, that is why it got shot down several times. Finally, that was taken out of there and the idea was we acknowledged that we respect the rights of the people of the Second Amendment rights and all other Bill of Rights to the US Constitution because quite frankly, even though I did not feel that was a minority that was being persecuted, since every time the case involved with the Second Amendment goes to the Supreme Court is in favor of gun rights. Nonetheless, it got adopted and that is okay, but we don't call out everybody we just try and respect everybody and under the circumstances, I think doing this was a sensible thing to do. I will certainly refer to the idea that if we want to edit a little bit, unfortunately it will be out of the month of June next time we have a public meeting which will be July 5th but I will certainly go along with that plan given the circumstances.

Meeting attendee John Helman introduced himself as a Pike County resident as well as the vice-president of advocacy for the Triversity pride center and a local drag queen. I wrote this under the impression that there was going to be no changes and I would say before I read the statement that I would encourage you to support the statement as is and potentially do something else if there is enough people to request it for a Love and Respect Month. I don't see how they are mutually exclusive, but I will get into that in a second. I am here to support the recognition of June as Pride month in Pike County which would be the first time that this would happen in history. The LGBTQ community, we are your neighbors, we work at local businesses you shop at daily, we serve you as elected officials, we are veterans, we are teachers, we entertain you as performers, we join you in fellowship at local religious services, we are parents of some of your children's classmates and some of us are your children's classmates. We are a rich part of this community and it's a beautiful day for our entire community that people say that the place that we live, that the local government officials that we elect, and we vote for, recognize something so important to the movement in our county's history. As it has been clear sitting here, there are a lot of comments and conversations happening about why we recognize Pride month. I would like to give a brief history and I promise that it is brief. On June 28th 1969, bar patrons and neighborhood residents in the Greenwich Village area of NYC, at the Stonewall Inn, which included homeless youth, lesbians, drag queens, trans identified individuals, fought back against the unfair harassment at the hands of the police that LGBTQ+ people were commonly subjected to at the time. This event was known as the SOHO Rights, sparked a six-day uprising that led to the development of the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement. In 1970, the first pride month in NYC commemorated the SOHO riots and in 1999, former president bill Clinton was the first president to recognize the month of June as LGBTQ+ Pride month which was also recognized later by Former President Barack Obama and current president Joe Biden. We already celebrate Pride month as a reminder of the people before us who fought bravely to make sure that we could live and love according to our feelings, thoughts, and desires. They fought before us so that we could exist in public without police harassment and threats of violence from our neighbors. They fought before us so that we too, can realize what has been afforded to us as Americans, which are certain unalienable rights including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Just think about what we specifically are fighting for. We are fighting for access to healthcare, equal treatment in public accommodations, equal protection and recognition under the law, the rights that we're going to afford food and shelter, the right to bodily autonomy. How many of you are fighting for these things? The truth is if those in power can deny us these things, there is nothing stopping them from denying them to anyone. You don't have to like the LGBTQ+ community, you don't have to set aside religious, political or moral beliefs, you don't have to come to drag shows or march in our parades, but all of you should support us and celebrate our pride because we are fighting for a better world for all of us, including you. A simple recognition of that is a giant step toward making Pike County a nicer, more sustainable, safer, more beautiful fun and more affordable place for all of us. I just want to address a little bit of the comments that have been said that I've led to sort if the conversation about changing this. I would be remiss to draw the comparison that if we were recognizing Juneteenth and the Pike County Commissioners that there would be changes to accommodate people that support the institution of slavery. I would be remiss to say that if someone came here to honor Autism Awareness month that that would be changes to support people who think autism does not deserve any recognition. I would be remiss to say that I would be really shocked if someone celebrated black history month that it would be accommodated to support their white supremacist ideology and not recognizing black American's contribution to our country. I also want to address the idea that the security of the minority. In actuality, the majority of Americans in every poll shows an increase in this over time support LGBTQ+ rights and recognition and its actually the tyranny of the minority that are now failed school board candidates and commissioner candidates that did not get enough votes, are the minority that are trying to tyrannize the rest of us. There was a comment about pedophiles. I don't know why they try to make this about

LGBTQ+ people and drag queens because every single peer-reviewed research study shows that the overwhelmingly majority of pedophiles are heterosexual cisgendered members who are relevant or related to the victim. If you are concerned about pedophiles, the call is coming from inside your house, not mine. I also want to lastly address the religious part. I went to Boston College. I went to private school my entire life. I am not a priest, but I am very studied in Christian and Catholic tradition and just in case people didn't know, the Bible was originally written in Aramaic and Hebrew. There is no word for homosexuality as we understand it today in Aramaic or Hebrew, so there is no mention of homosexuality as we currently understand it in any original source document in the Bible. In fact, homosexuality was included in the King James Edition. It was in 1944 when Germans included it in the King James Bible because at the time, the Nazi movement was interested in using Christianity to persecute not only Jews and Gypsies and political opponents, but in persecuting homosexuals. I would please urge all my fellow Christians to read the Bible that you claim to support because what you are supporting had nothing to do with what is actually in the Bible. Thank you.

A meeting attendee said I will keep it super short. I just wanted to say I apologize for my facial expressions. The reason I think it is important to keep it as Pride month is exactly what the Commissioner said: this community is being singled out, so we need to single out what we need to do to stand up for them. I think let's have pride, let's have acceptance day, let's have constitution day. It doesn't cost anything to do a proclamation. Let's do them all. Equality is not pie, there is enough for everyone. Everyone can have their thing, its okay. I think it is really important to say and mean LGBTQ+ pride specifically because that is specifically the community that is being targeted and I think removing that would be a real loss to the community. We should all be accepting but the reason that this is divisive is not this the reason this is divisive because the community is facing hate, because the hate crimes are on the rise, the reason this room is full is because people do not want to see LGBTQ people represented and being pride. That's why everyone is here in the first place, because there are no sides when it comes to hatred, so we need to stand up, name the problems and be very specific. This is about LGBTQ+ Pride month. Let's also have Kindness month. God knows we all need it here, but this is a specific request for a specific community, and we shouldn't water it down because people are trying to muddy the waters. That is my request.

A meeting attendee said I'd like to give my own personal views. I grew up and I still feel this way today: what makes anybody in this room feel like the world owes you anything? You know for as much as you say other people are hurting you, maybe that's different with people out there and myself. What do you do to us? What do we owe to you? Solicitor Farley said that is enough, comments to us. The meeting attendee continued are we not suffering because the abuse that we get in meetings? Why do these people deserve anything? I don't understand it, why is a month needed? We don't need a month for this or that. That is all we have, and you know what we should all respect each other and the ones that are doing the voting, punish them, and its coming for their families too probably. I don't think our whole community or county should be held hostage to this because I don't hate anybody, any of you.

Commissioner Osterberg said that is good to hear. You wonder why we do Proclamations - we do it for awareness. That is exactly why we do it. We do it for awareness, so people realize there is something going on. As I said earlier, there is something going on in our community. I am not here to cause more division in this community, I am not here to divide you. I am here to support you and I am here to support every single person, but at the same time, if you don't think that hate is going on, that is not true, it is going on. My suggestion and I know, I am not doing anything because I want to make sure that we are unified in this community between your group and the other groups that are in here because I think that what we've heard is that some people didn't know there is hate going on and I told you that last week. I really think that we should, and I am going to say this and I don't want applauding because this is a serious issue in our community, this is not something to take lightly. I did not take this lightly; I think about this every night because I am concerned that there are people in this community that are being targeted. Even if it is one person in this world being targeted, none of us in this room should stand for it but I know that there are people that do stand for it. There are people who like that flag on that mountain. My suggestion is that we are going to table this and what we are going to do is consult and talk about something that talks about love and respect for everybody but what everybody in this rooms has to do is start thinking like we do about your neighbor and what they are going through each day. You know this whole thing about thinking they are pedophiles, that is horrific. That's not true and most of you know that that's not true but what we do know is that there are people in our community as I mentioned to you that young African American boy who wants to move. He has only lived here for six months and he can't wait to get out. His dad is saying give it more time and he's like I can't give it anymore time and now its summertime and hopefully he will have a nice summer, but can you imagine going to school and being that child? That's why we are here and also for the people in this community. We have to recognize the issue that they should not be persecuted that they should not be pointed they should not lose any rights as the rest of us. This is my suggestion, that we talk with some other groups, we talk with Triversity some more, we talk to other organizations in this community that wants to talk to us, the religious group and how we come up with something that talks about love and respect in our community so that we all make sure that we all live as kind neighbors. That's my Christian life and I'm going to tell you about this. Yesterday, somebody attacked my Christian beliefs over this. Can you believe that? I didn't adhere to their Christian beliefs or their beliefs that they attacked mine. That is insulting to me, and it should be insulting to everybody here. We all have the right to think the way we need to think and come up with a solution to this problem because this is a problem that is running through our community and just watch the news every night if you don't think it is happening because it may not be as strong in Pike County, but it is certainly strong throughout this nation. That's my recommendation - I make that motion that we would table this and come up with something. Solicitor Farley said you can't right now because we are only on number one. We have to move around the agenda. Commissioner Osterberg said that's okay, I run the meeting.

A meeting attendee, Tim Nagle, Pike County resident, asked can I say one thing? Commissioner Osterberg answered you can. The meeting attendee continued, the gentleman said there is nothing in the Bible, if you look at Leviticus 18 verse 22 'you shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is an abomination'. That is what the Bible says, so if you're Christian or tell me about the Christian school or wherever you went, Leviticus is a pretty important book. Just to correct the statement, it doesn't say homosexual, but it implies it. There are sins of commission and sins of omission. Commissioner Osterberg said its okay, we are going to move on. I am going to make the motion to table this.

Commissioner Schmalzle said I really believe that everybody who got up here to speak from however that they feel spoke respectfully and spoke about caring for their fellow neighbors and I want to thank everybody who got up and spoke. I think it's helpful and its educational for us to get some feedback from all angles and we do want to do something to make this a better community for everyone, so I am going to second the motion that you are going to make.

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to table the voting on Resolution No. 23-32, Pride Month, June 2023.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg and Schmalzle voted 'aye'. Commissioner Waldron stated he was opposed. He stated he was going to work with the Commissioners to try and refashion this. I just think that doing this during the month of June has some significance. However, I do understand, and I do think we need to listen. I do think we did that today in an effort to try and bring people together and I will certainly work with them because we work really well together, we really do. I just felt that it was appropriate to try and do it at today's meeting. Thank you.

Commissioner Osterberg added just remember one thing, love your neighbor - if you got anything out of this today. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the June 21, 2023, Agenda.

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

Commissioner Osterberg said now we are going to move onto NEW BUSINESS.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 23-30, Child Welfare Professionals Appreciation Week, June 5-9, 2023.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read Resolution No. 23-30 aloud.

Commissioner Osterberg said we have some people from children and youth here, but we will speak to them first of how important their job is in our community and why those jobs are so important in protecting children. We wonder why we pass Resolutions just to give awareness to those individuals in our community. If anybody thinks that job is easy, they should go upstairs and try to do it. Commissioner Osterberg invited Michele Burrell to speak.

Director of Children and Youth Services, Michele Burrell said caseworkers are hardworking individuals who risk their lives daily to keep kids safe and to support families with the hope that they can become better parents and thereby reduce the number of child abuse incidents that we face each year. This job would not be possible without the support of our community partners like PSP (Pennsylvania State Police), the DA's (District Attorney's) office, and the CAC (Children's Advocacy Center) who assist us when we need support in dangerous situations as well as providing a safe place for a child to be interviewed. Our drug and alcohol liaisons are CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Mental Health and Human Services, who all support us and our families by helping our families overcome drug addiction, homelessness, and mental health issues which is often related to child abuse incidents that we see. Our community churches and food pantries allow us to freely gather food to give to our families in need as well as ensure their lives are a little bit better by providing us, free of cost, space that we need to do our trainings and activities to improve the families that we work with. Finally, thank you to our Commissioners who have been our strong supporters and who are always willing to engage in conversations, even the uncomfortable ones, on how to improve the lives of the caseworkers. Our workers are placed in difficult situations daily. They persevere and push through simply because of their love of the job and their desire to see our children safe. We applaud their hard work and we support their dedication and hope that this small token of our appreciation will go a long way toward them feeling supported and will empower them to go out and continue the fight to improve the lives of our children and families in Pike County.

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

A RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING was held.

Motion to adjourn the RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING and reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the June 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the June 14, 2023, 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 the **GENERAL FUNDS** in the amount of **\$473,063.12**.

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

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to advertise re-bids Bennet Ave Building 1 Interior Renovations Project (GC & EC).

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

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

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

Solicitor Tom Farley announced there are two bids and opened them. Fabcor \$1,652,000 and Rutledge \$1,180,463. Solicitor Farley recommended they table the awarding of the bid to the Commissioners' July 5, 2023 meeting for the engineer to review.

MOTION:

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute Change Order #1 for the Bennet Ave Building 1 Roof Replacement Project.

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 Change Order #1 for the Pike County Courthouse Exterior Repairs Project.

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 Notice to Proceed on the Pike County Jail ICE Building Roof Replacement Project.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 23-31, A Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of Pike County to Utilize Whole Home Repairs Program Funding as Grants to Homeowners in Pike County.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the following Human Services Payment Vouchers, on behalf of the Office of Human Services: Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) in the amount of \$21,864.84; Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP 2.0) in the amount of \$36,353.13; Homeless Assistance Program in the amount of \$3,156.65; and PHARE in the amount of \$3,501.34.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Pike County HOME Program Payment Voucher payable to Frank De Esch, in the amount of \$675.00, 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 Schmalzle, to approve the Pike County HOME Program Payment Voucher payable to GateHouse Media, in the amount of \$264.08, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Affordable Housing Fund Payment Voucher payable to Hailstone Economic, in the amount of \$625.00, 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 Schmalzle, to execute the Purchase of Service Agreement between The Children's Home of Easton 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 Purchase of Service Agreement between Justice Works Youthcare 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 Purchase of Service Agreement between Pathways Adolescent Center 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 Purchase of Service Agreement between Community Service Foundation 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 Purchase of Service Agreement between Hoffman House 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 allocate \$19,000.00 of Act 137 Funding to Pike Autism Support Services for a Local Affordable Housing Study.

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

Commissioner Osterberg announced that there are members here from PASS (Pike Autism Support Services) and said that this Act 137 Funding comes from the recording of documents in the County. This is the same funding source that we use to fund Habitat for Humanity. This funding is a long time coming to be able to develop housing for people with autism and intellectual developmental disabilities. We met last week with PASS and met with the person they want to have do this study who is out of Texas I believe. We're all impressed by what they're going to provide to PASS. This is a PASS contract, not a County project, so we all understand that this is something that we and, particularly me, have been working toward for the entire time I've been in this office to provide better services for those who are suffering from disabilities and that is both an employment opportunities, housing opportunities and also medical services. The check was presented to Jeannemarie Passaro of PASS.

PASS Vice-President Nicholas McIntyre said he has been the Vice-President of PASS for two years and Jeannemarie and John (Passaro) are the catalysts for this. We are very thankful to the Commissioners for everything that they contributed. This is a great first step toward getting something on paper for what we're looking to do for members of our community with disabilities. We cannot thank you enough – thank you.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- PennState Extension Calendar of Events – June 21, 2023
- Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau (PMVB) Spring Update PowerPoint Presentation by Chris Barrett – Chris Barrett said he would like to commend the Commissioners on their leadership today. I've seen you care for everybody all the way going back to COVID. PMVB supports all of you one thousand percent. If there's anything we can do to assist in this process, please call us. We appreciate your support of us and your constituents are really well served. We had a very strong first quarter and we weren't sure how this year was going to look. We are slightly ahead of 2022. PowerPoint Presentation followed.

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT- NONE

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