



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES

Thursday, August 13, 2020, 10:00 A.M.

Willowbank Office Building  
420 Holmes Street, Room 146  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

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### I. CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting of the Centre County Board of Commissioners was convened at 10:04 AM by Chair of the Board Michael Pipe.

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith, Director of Human Resources Kristen Simkins, Human Resource Analyst Geri Sorgen, Director of Financial Management Tom Martin, and Controller Jason Moser.

County personnel present included Chad Joyce, Colleen Kennedy, and Mary Kay Williams.

### II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

### III. MEETING MINUTES

Minutes from the Thursday, July 30, 2020 and August 6, 2020 Board of Commissioners' Meeting.

**Action:** *On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from July 30, 2020 and August 6, 2020.*

### IV. COVID-19 PLANNING AND RESPONSE

#### A. Personnel

Tax Assessment - On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the a of the reinstatement of Gerald Dann, Senior Advisor, from on-call/occasional furlough to on-call/occasional status effective August 24, 2020, pay period 18 - Dept. 121

### V. PRESENTATION

Ordinance 1 of 2019 Airbnb Hotel Room Tax - Report

Treasurer Colleen Kennedy joined the Board to provide a report of the Hotel Room Tax payments received from Airbnb in accordance with Ordinance 1 of 2019. She

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reported that in March of this year, Airbnb claimed no revenue. In the months following they began to claim revenue, but have recorded it as an exemption. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Airbnb's revenue is in the hole and therefore they have not been making hotel room tax payments. With Airbnb reservations the customer payment and tax is collected up front. When the pandemic hit they were forced to refund those payments for cancelled reservations. It is assumed that Airbnb is considering payments previously made to the County as a credit and deducting the tax of new reservations from that balance.

Commissioner Pipe suggested that the County replicate what was done in 2013 or 2014 where the County contracted for a spot audit. The exemptions Airbnb claims were not provided by the County and this information was not reported by Airbnb until approached and questioned by the County.

Airbnb claims to remit tax payment when the clients booking is complete, not when the clients stay is complete. A booking may be made months in advance of the actual stay. The Board questioned if this is accurate and they further discussed auditing Airbnb. Commissioner Dershem expressed concern that Airbnb may not be willing to release those documents. He also asked about the County's enforcement ability under the current ordinance. Colleen explained that is charged at \$100 per day if there is a finding and 1.5% interest per month.

Colleen reported that several other counties are still receiving payment and others are faced with the same situation as Centre County. Hotel tax is down nearly 90% as compared to last year.

Commissioner Pipe made a motion to request a recommendation from the Controller and Treasurer how to best audit Airbnb, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Higgins and passed unanimously. Travis Walker stated that in conversation with former Treasurer Rich Fornicola, he was advised that the governments cannot audit Airbnb in accordance with the State agreement. Controller Jason Moser was still in support of the motion.

**VI. PERSONNEL ITEMS**

- A. Aging -- On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment for Maria L. Krug, full-time Aging Care Manager 2, Aging, (p.c. #31, non-exempt, new), at SG-N12A(01)--\$16.36/hour, effective August 31, 2020, pay period 19. Conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements. Salary savings for 2020 \$14,111, annualized salary impact for 2021 \$7,976 - Dept. 521.
- B. Emergency Communication 911 -- On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the personnel requisition for full-time Director of Emergency Communications, Emergency Communications, (p.c. #01, exempt, replacing D. Neff), at SG-S58, effective August 13, 2020, pay period 17- Dept. 354. Commissioner Pipe expressed his appreciation for Dale Neff and the work he has done for the county.

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C. Correctional Facility

D. On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve Correctional Facility items i-iv.

- i. Consider approval of the personnel requisition for full-time Records Specialist-CCCF, Correctional Facility, (p.c. #137, non-exempt, replacing C. Woodring-Shearer), at SG-N09, effective retro to August 10, 2020, pay period 17- Dept. 333.
- ii. Consider approval of the personnel requisition for full-time Corrections Officer, Correctional Facility, (p.c. #104, non-exempt, replacing L. Spyker), at SG-N10, effective August 10, 2020, pay period 17- Dept. 333.
- iii. Consider approval of the personnel requisition for full-time Kitchen Supervisor, Correctional Facility, (p.c. #122, non-exempt, replacing J. Kephart), at SG-N08, effective August 10, 2020, pay period 17- Dept. 333.
- iv. Consider approval of the personnel requisition for temporary on-call/occasional Senior Advisor, Correctional Facility, (p.c. #138, non-exempt, new), at SG-N09, effective August 13, 2020, pay period 17- Dept. 333.

VII. REPORT ON JUDICIAL PERSONNEL ITEMS

VIII. REPORT ON ROW OFFICE PERSONNEL ITEMS

IX. NON-PERSONNEL ITEMS

A. Human Services

i. Children and Youth Services

1. Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022 Children and Youth Needs Based Budget- Dept. 511.
2. Child Welfare Information System Data Sharing Agreement for the period of October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021 - Dept. 511.
3. Quarterly report for the period of April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 - Dept. 511.

**Action:** On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the FY 2021-2022 Children and Youth Needs Based Budget *to Thursday's Consent Agenda.*

B. Elections - Agreement with Midwest Presort Mailing Services, Inc. for the provisioning of presort services required to support and sustain first class daily letter and flats processing for the 2020 General Election - Dept. 131.

**Action:** *On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agreement with Midwest Presort Mailing Services, Inc.*

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- C. Facilities Management – Purchase and installation of blinds in Court facilities by Top to Bottom Interiors. Total cost is \$2,336 – Dept. 151.

***Action:** On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase and installation by Top to Bottom Interiors.*

X. LETTER OF SUPPORT

Letter of Support for the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology's Community Facilities Direct Loan Request from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to support construction of the health sciences building – Dept. 111.

***Action:** On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to approve the letter of support.*

XI. POLICIES

XII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Jana Marie Foundation use of the Courthouse Steps

Administrator Margaret Gray presented a request from the Jana Marie Foundation for use of the Courthouse Steps for the annual Suicide Prevention Rally. Commissioner Pipe asked that participants be mindful of masking and physical distancing.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION REPORT

XIV. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS

XV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 10:59 AM.

XVI. CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting of the Centre County Board of Commissioners was reconvened at 11:52 AM by Chair of the Board Michael Pipe.

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith, Chief Information and Records Officer Chad Joyce and County Relief Block Grant Coordinator Mary Kay Williams.

XVII. COVID-19 County Relief

Chief Information and Records Officer Chad Joyce provided an overview of the grant application prepared using Qualtrics. This software will apply scoring to components of the application and will automatically tally a score. The application requires basic demographics of the business and questions pertaining to other funding received in response to COVID-19.

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Grant Coordinator Mary Kay Williams asked the Board for insight related to the scoring metric. The Board discussed the scoring for the length of time a company has been in business and the number of employees. Commissioner Dershem expressed concern that a metric may not work in every situation for example a new business that has no revenue history. The metric will be a foundation to rank businesses, Commissioner Higgins explained that applications can be reviewed more in detail from that point.

Commissioner Pipe reviewed the Board's opinion on the scoring metric. He is in favor of smaller businesses receiving more points and Commissioner Higgins is in favor of larger businesses receiving more points.

Commissioner Pipe is then in favor of newer businesses receiving more points and Commissioner Higgins is in favor of businesses that have been around longer receiving more points.

For clarification, Commissioner Higgins offered his opinion that if an employer has 70 Centre County residents than they should be ranked higher than an employer with two employees with a Centre County residence.

If a businesses started in late 2019 or in 2020 Commissioner Dershem suggested that they should be reviewed on a case by case business. The older businesses with a higher number of employees may be hit harder. Another point of consideration is whether they have received funding or assistance through other COVID-19 programs. Mary Kay explained that this will be a question on the application that affects a business's ranking. To compromise Commissioner Pipe suggested giving more points to businesses that are smaller and for the other discussion give more points to businesses that have been around longer; Commissioner Dershem agreed.

Qualtrics will automatically calculate the point based ranking based on each applicant's response. If applications are all over or the data is not satisfactory Commissioner Pipe asked Chad if the formula could be adjusted and run again. Chad will follow up with Qualtrics.

Earlier this week the Department of Community and Economic Development released the first round of business grants. Of the awarded grants there were 47 business in Centre County who will receive the funds. Commissioner Pipe requested that a question be included on the application to ask if a business was awarded funds through this program.

Through the COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant the County will be providing relief funding to each of the counties 35 municipalities. Administrator Margaret Gray reviewed the Board's discussion of proposed allocations to the municipalities. Margaret presented three proposed allocation formulas to distribute \$1,700,000. The formulas are based on taking the population of each municipality and multiplying it by \$10 per person. There are nine municipalities that would receive an allocation of less than \$10,000.

- Option one would adjust the base for those nine municipalities so there is a base of \$10,000 with each receiving \$10 per person.

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- Option two has a base of \$8,000 for each municipality with an additional \$9 per person. This exceeds the targeted amount by \$41,465.
- Option three has a base of \$7,000 for each municipality with an additional \$9 per person. This exceeds the targeted amount by \$6,465.

Commissioner Dershem would like a supplemental allocation to Bellefonte Borough as the County Seat for providing police coverage to the county. Once the county gets through the first round of municipal allocations, Commissioner Pipe said the Board will consider this at a future meeting.

It was the consensus of the Board to stay with option two. Mary Kay is preparing a draft letter to announce the allocation for each municipality. The letter will be prepared as a mail merge by Natalie Smith for the Board to sign. It will then be distributed by email. The Board agreed that October 15 would be the deadline for receipts to be submitted to the Controller for review and reimbursement.

**XVIII. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to move into executive session at 12:39 PM.

ATTEST:

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Margaret N. Gray  
Administrator