



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION MINUTES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:00 A.M.

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

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The public work session of the Board of Commissioners was convened at 11:01 AM by Chair of the Board Mark Higgins.

In attendance were Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Amber Concepcion, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator John Franek Jr., and Executive Office Supervisor Erin Good.

County personnel included Deputy Administrator Natalie Corman, Controller Jason Moser, Lee Shaeffer, Human Services Administrator Julia Sprinkle, Richard Killian, and Treasurer Colleen Kennedy.

Guests present included Kim Stank and Corey Troutman (phone).

Representatives from the news media included WJAC.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

III. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Administrator John Franek Jr. stated there are four requests/updates: the Kepler Pool update which will not be directly eligible for ARPA funding; Kim Stank stated that it could go under revenue replacement monies.

Commissioner Higgins stated there is a safety aspect of this request with not having the children of Bellefonte not learning how to swim. Commissioner Concepcion also stated there is not a lot of options for swim lessons in our area and agreed this is safety aspect.

Commissioner Higgins asked to add the Kepler Pool grant amount of \$110,000 to match the State Grant amount for the match requirements. John stated he will draft up an agreement.

John stated the second request received was from the Howard Fire Company for the purchase of an engine rescue with no specific amount stated in the request. The Board would like to have more information to go along with this request on the amount they are requesting as well as how old the equipment is that they are requesting to be replaced.

The third request is the reprogramming of EMS radios. John stated the new hospital that is coming to the area would potentially need 300-500 radios that would need reprogramming at about \$50 a radio. Commissioner Higgins stated the ambulance services would really benefit from this and the new hospital in Patton Township would be more of an urgent care.

Commissioner Dershem stated we would need to clarify how many radios are needed and see if the hospital is able to help with the funding. Commissioner Higgins would like this request added to the list and John will try to get more information on the funding and the exact cost of each radio.

The final request was from Centre County cleaning department for six vacuum cleaners and one an additional scrubber in the amount of \$8,601.30. John stated the current vacuum cleaners are past their end of lives and we currently only have one scrubber that we are transporting between the various buildings. Kim stated the cleaning equipment can be included in direct public health funds.

Commissioner Dershem also spoke about a possible Humane Officer in the County. The committee is still trying to figure out what that looks like, but it would be at least one officer and equipment needed. There is a need for a humane officer in Centre County.

Currently there is no structure in housing animals for cases and Commissioner Dershem stated it will be a substantial cost but there is no current plan. Kim will do some research on this and how funding may be used to discuss this in the future.

Commissioner Concepcion stated there is a request for a commercial kitchen for Centre Kitchen Collective, which is a non-profit organization that will work with food providers and local farmers to offer services such as flash freezing and canning of goods as well as farm to restaurant sales. They are seeking \$100,000 in matching funds and Commissioner Concepcion would like this to be on our radar as well as look into potential grants that may help with this request. Kim will add this to the list.

Commissioner Higgins was approached by Spring Creek Watershed Commission for a request for up to \$50,000 of matching money that the twelve municipalities would match as well as fund the Commission long term. Kim stated we would need to clarify what projects they intend to do to see how the funding could be applied. Kim will reach out to Spring Creek Watershed to get more information. Commissioner Concepcion would like to know more about their goals and what the funding would be specifically used for. The Board will gather more details and goals of this request and will put as a placeholder for now.

Commissioner Higgins stated the Bellefonte Historical Railroad which was responsible for the Santa Claus and Fall Color Tours to our community. The cost of historic rail cars and transportation of the cars have increased substantially, and they would like to purchase a few historic rail cars to be used for these events. They are currently working with state senators and representatives, as well as Happy Valley Adventure Bureau and SEDA-COG to help with State Grants for funding for this. Commissioner Higgins stated a rough estimate would be \$25,000 for funding for the purchase of the cars. Commissioner Concepcion and Commissioner Dershem stated this would help benefit the Borough of Bellefonte and agreed to put a rough number aside for this project.

Commissioner Higgins stated that he thinks we will need to reserve some ARPA funding for the Broadband Project for the future. Kim stated there is a line item for the Broadband infrastructure but there is not a number allocated with it at this time. The Board agreed not to associate a number at this time and table for now.

John stated the three-year capital plan summary was revisited and the courthouse retaining wall, crosswalks, paving and elevator upgrades were added.

Lee Sheaffer stated the elevators at the Willowbank Building will be about \$300,000 for the upgrades for all the cars and controls. The courthouse elevators would be about \$200,000 for the upgrades due to it being a different type of elevator than the Willowbank Building.

Commissioner Dershem stated he would like to consider the \$5 million for all of the renovations for the capital plans. Commissioner Concepcion stated dedicating the ARPA money to one-time projects is a way to help avoid recurring costs.

Kim stated the unallocated loss revenue is almost \$10 million and if there is money that needs to be moved to allocated loss revenue that can be done to get a more accurate unallocated loss revenue number.

Commissioner Dershem agreed to allocate \$2.9 million for capital expenditures. John stated the Willowbank parking lot would be another project that would need attention sooner rather than later.

Action: On a motion by Commissioner Concepcion, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board agreed unanimously to allocate \$2.9 million of ARPA funding for capital project expenditures for the year of 2023.

Treasurer Collen Kennedy stated there are \$13 million that are in liquid form at a rate of 4.84% and wanted to know if the Board would be interested in putting them back into term with term rates, which is not much higher at 4.93% and 5.08%.

Richard Killian stated he would be satisfied on leaving the money in liquid form at this point at 4.84%. John stated they are currently working through the liquidity needs.

IV. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS

V. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Concepcion seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:03 PM.

ATTEST:

John Franek Jr.

Administrator