

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

The second regular meeting of November 2020 of the Pike County Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Osterberg at 9:00 a.m. at the Pike County Administration Building, followed by the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag.

PRESENT: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini; Chief Clerk Orben; and Solicitor Farley.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda.

PRESENTATION OF \$75,000 TO HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Commissioner Osterberg thanked Habitat for Humanity and Mr. Donlon for their second allocation for the year. We always look forward to supporting Habitat for Humanity. This comes out of our Act 137 Funds, which is the collection of recording of documents throughout the County and it can be used for housing initiatives and Habitat for Humanity does a great job in our community. Mr. Donlon said they are working on #31 and has permit applications in for #32 and #33. Mr. Donlon stated he has the septic permits and is waiting for the building permits for those two lots. The check was presented to Mr. Donlon for Habitat for Humanity.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to recess the Commissioners' Meeting to hold a Retirement Board Meeting.

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

A RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the November 18, 2020 Agenda.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the November 5, 2020 Commissioners' Meeting Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the November 5, 12 and 16, 2020 Commissioners' Conference Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of **\$277,183.42**, subject to further review.

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

PERSONNEL:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to change the Financial Caseworker position to a Legal Secretary position in the Adult Probation Office, and to acknowledge receipt of a letter from the Courts advising that they have hired **NANCY STASYSHYN** as a Legal Secretary in the Adult Probation Office, for a 37 ½ hour work week, effective November 30, 2020, with benefits after 90 days.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to recess the Commissioners' Meeting to hold a Salary Board Meeting.

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

A SALARY BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, Motion to execute contract documents between Dunmore Roofing and the County of Pike, for the Correctional Facility WWTP Controls Building Roof Replacement Project.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 20-33, Notice of Intent to Participate in the Monroe LSA Grant Program for the Pike County Transportation/Fleet Maintenance Project for \$490,000, and to execute a letter to DCED supporting same.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 20-34, Notice of Intent to Participate in the Monroe LSA Grant Program for a Public Safety Emergency Vehicle for \$55,200, and to execute a letter to DCED supporting same.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 20-35, Notice of Intent to Participate in the Monroe LSA Grant Program for an Emergency Training Open Air Classroom for \$22,656, and to execute a letter to DCED supporting same.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 20-36, Tax Collector Compensation.

VOTE: Commissioners Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Commissioner Osterberg abstained. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to reappoint Scott Savini as Farmer Director and Kelly Stagen as Public Director on the Pike County Conservation District Board for a four-year term ending December 31, 2024.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to reappoint Commissioner Ronald R. Schmalzle as Commissioner Director on the Pike County Conservation District Board for a one-year term ending December 31, 2021.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg and Guccini voted 'aye'. Commissioner Schmalzle abstained. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the PCCD Subgrant Award Notification for the "Special Victim Advocate Program 2020" for a total of \$197,490, on behalf of the District Attorney's Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the JCJC Services Grant-In-Aid Award Notification/Invoice for a total of \$46,651.51, on behalf of the Juvenile Probation Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the MATP 2019/20 Final Report on behalf of the Transportation Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Affordable Housing Fund Payment Voucher payable to Diana T. Myers & Assoc. for the Pike Strategic Plan for October 2020 for \$13,150, on behalf of the Human Services Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Affordable Housing Fund Payment Voucher payable to the Recorder of Deeds for an Act 137 lien for \$58.75, on behalf of the Human Services Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the following businesses and loan amounts through the CDBG Small Business Forgivable Loan Program: East Shore LLC-\$35,000; Jay Haran Inc.-\$35,000; Myer Country Motel -\$26,926; Noor Shamim DMD-\$70,000; Promised Land Inn-\$51,264 and Two Rivers Grille-\$70,000.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the COVID 19 County Relief Fund Payment Voucher payable to East Shore LLC - \$4,506; Jay Haran, Inc.-\$11,584; Noor Shamim DMD-\$5,297 and Two Rivers Grille-\$11,691.

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

Commissioner Osterberg asked Director of Human Services, Robert Ruiz, to explain the aforementioned and that there are more funds available for businesses to apply for. Director Ruiz said we were able to finally do wrap up a project that we have been doing since March. Earlier this year, 2020, the County reallocated the 2015, 2016 and 2017 CDBG Funding to create Small Business Forgivable Loan Program. Today it was approved, over \$500,000 was made available. After today's approval, about \$238,000 remains available. The Small Business Loan Program are forgiven once borrowers provide documentation that a job has been created or retained for a low to moderate income individual. The business is required to create one full time equivalent, 40 hours per week, for every \$35,000 received. The County will make up the additional six forgivable loans that we still have available with the COVID-19 money. To be eligible for this loan, you must meet the following criteria: business has to be located in Pike County for a minimum of twelve months; has filled out at least one tax return; has at least one full time employee; has a hundred or fewer employees worldwide; has an annual revenue of \$1M or less; is deemed viable to the businesses based on the evaluation of the information submitted; has experienced disruption as a result of COVID-19 and that is just to receive the COVID-19 funds but if you haven't had some kind of disruption, we still have funds available as well; and is up to date on Local, State and Federal Taxes or is on a payment plan. Anyone with questions was asked to contact Krista (Gromalski) and she will get in touch with Director Ruiz. Information can be found on: pikeforward.com and you can go through www.pikepa.org as well.

Commissioner Guccini added that this is a different pool of money than the previous allocations that were made from the original CARES money passed down to the County from the State and Federal government. Director Ruiz said this is reprogrammed money from 2015, 2016 and 2017 through our Housing Rehabilitation.

Commissioner Schmalzle said he would like to find a way for Krista to encourage people, I say Krista because it's communication to the public, to apply for the funding. I believe Robb indicated that's about half of what's available and the reason that the other half isn't distributed is because people haven't applied for it. As a business owner, it's an intimidating process and a revealing process, but the help from Robb and his team can walk people through and make that process much simpler. We encourage people to apply.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- **Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau – Chris Barret PowerPoint Presentation**– Chris Barret said firstly, thank you for the CARES Grant Funding and we put it to good use and will continue to put it to good use. There was a lot of need for it. If there is anyway we can ever help you guys to communicate any of your messages, know that our resources and tools are available to you to do anything that you need and we're happy to do that. The Hotel Tax performed much better than what we could have anticipated under these circumstances. We have really forecasted that we would be at 50%-60% less in revenue. That number is turning out to be about 35%, which is a hit, but we can still function very effectively and market the destination which we're doing right now with a couple of adjustments. With this second wave, if you want to call it that, we've completely ramped up our PSA campaign. Both hospitals came to us and asked us to, once again, crank that back up about a week and a half ago. The timing couldn't have been better in getting the messages together and getting that started. The PSA campaign that we took in March through May or June, we just started again. We shot five new spots. Our visuals will include outdoor digital, pretty much the same as we did before. We'll probably spend a little bit more. We basically took the first digitals that they used to flatten the curve and now we call it wallop the wave. That's kind of what you're going to be seeing from us locally. Some of it has actually started. Most of the major stations are pushing out our spots right now. Before this announcement yesterday from the Secretary of Health, we had a fairly robust Winter campaign that was going to run in New York, Philly, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton and Lancaster-York market. Now with this new announcement, we had to change that. The order does not restrict folks from travelling into Pennsylvania so we're going to reroute our New York dollars to Johnstown, Altoona and Pittsburgh. We're also going to increase spending in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Lancaster and York to continue to have people visit us. One of the things we also did, with the new order we went back and reactivated the COVID-19 site and reopening site on our website that had already been there and updated all the information. Also, when you're on our website, you will be able to see the new orders, there's a new band across the site that advises you on the changes in the orders and what you need to do when you travel into Pennsylvania. Effective Friday we'll be pulling all of our advertising out of New York because we don't want to encourage people to come here from New York at this point in time. Once the order is lifted, we'll go back to our original campaign that would have started in the Winter. That campaign will concentrate on luxury properties, ski resorts, waterparks, retail, Pocono products and restaurants. This will be under a new marketing plan with the basic change that we won't be going into New York, our market will be opening in Pittsburgh and Johnstown -Altoona. Fifty to sixty percent of our guests come from New York. We're hoping it gets help by increasing our spending in Pennsylvania and opening up to new markets and will drive more guests to be able to come to us in the Winter. I don't know if we're going to offset fully with the New York and/or New Jersey guests would have brought us, but we're going to do the best we can. We do know that we can't go back out into New York. We've updated all of our marketing plans. Jim has done a really great job on focusing on marketing for us. He knows the bullets, he knows the stories and we are going to continue to do all these things. Now that he has more time to really tell a story and we have our own networks to run them on, he's been able to really dig in a little bit more to tell good stories about the things that are happening around COVID. We're really happy about that and we're happy he's with the team. A couple of other things that I want you to be aware of, of course we know about all the restrictions. We all know that social media and communications is the key for us to be nimble and communicate our messages as quickly as possible. They're not new positions, those hires are really exciting for us. They have a critical amount of experience. COVID has put a lot of really highly qualified people on the street. We were able to recruit two people that have amazing experience. We are looking forward to bringing them on board.

Financial Update – The second quarter we projected to get zero from the Hotel Tax, but we were stunned when it was \$1.1M. That was substantially less than what it would normally be, but it was a payment. We were able to go out on a Summer campaign with that type of payment and we did 50% of our staff and that gave us additional revenue so we were able to reinvest right back into marketing. I would say that for the 3rd quarter we are projected \$1.9M in Hotel Tax which is about 65% of 3rd quarter 2019. It will probably be a record 3rd quarter payment for Hotel Tax which stuns me. Our market continues to outpace the rest of the State. From the 11 regions within Pennsylvania our region, since June, is recovering much faster than everybody else. I would also say that Air BnB's, VRBO and those types of properties are garnering the 3% tax that we never got before. The combination of all those things is probably going to be a record payment for the 3rd quarter. Now that we're shut down, we think for at least another month and a half in the 4th quarter that will get us into the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2021 we will be able to keep up the spending pressure to market. That will allow us to open up Pittsburgh, Johnstown, Altoona and increase the spending in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Lancaster and York. One of the things that really got us through the last year is we had a \$2M fund balance and will continue to do that as we go forward. If we had hit another calamity, know we have the funds to be able to continue to market. We think that really helped us. In total, the CARES Grant Funding from all 4 Counties was \$1.15M - \$998K came from Monroe and the balance came from all 3 other Counties. That combination with what we have in the fund balance we'll be able to save in expenses and the \$1.1M in the 2nd quarter all combine to be able to have us go out in the Summer with some type to spend. We think that drove a lot of the demand, but we all know that the Poconos is in a very well position from the social distancing pushback.

Education – We're in pretty close contact with our hospitals. They give us advice on a daily basis or a weekly basis at least. They tell us where things are at and we advise our membership. Since we reopened June 12th, the lake has seen about 122K which those numbers are a lot higher than what they have been in the past. We're seeing a lot more people come to the market than we have ever had before and I think you all know our Local, State and Federal Parks have been overwhelmed and they continue to be. We are trying to help those guys as much as we can. Those folks that come to State and Federal Parks help us just having people visit the destination and leave it the way they found it. Leave it clean don't leave trash behind, do all the things you should normally do. We're trying to help them with that as well. We currently have a Strategic Planning Committee in place over the last year and a half to say where are we going to be in the next 3-5 years. We went through heavy governments. How should we change and be better governed? We set up a

number of committees that need to meet on a normal basis. We've been trying to put together a best case scenario plan and worst case scenario plan and kind of a middle plan at least for the next year. Once a vaccine is out there, we'll be able to look a little bit longer term, but that this is what this Committee is really challenged with. We might be searching for additional Board members. We'll be searching for more Board members in 2021 just keep that in mind. Anytime we can get more people involved in our Board, we are always happy to do that. We are putting together the Annual Report right now, but our Board has been meeting virtual over the last year and we've been keeping the Board informed on everything that is happening.

We have a couple of new Committees, one of the ones involves Greentown. We put that Committee together because we feel like we've invested some dollars in marketing our small towns, like Honesdale or Hawley, we want to continue to do that in a more aggressive manner so we're putting Committee people together with economic development folks in all 4 Counties. We want to use our resources to be able to help our small towns recruit retailers to be able to come in. We're actually considering Grants as well for someone who may want to start a retail business. Technically, it does fall into what we do, because we are creating product. That's kind of what this Committee is looking at, a system or process, but to also to market us more aggressively. It's very easy for us to have an economic development in that situation and that's really what we want to do.

Fall Campaign Update – Fall, as we know this year was incredibly strong because the leaves were beautiful, plus it was an outdoor activity. We saw an increased amount of folks visited us for that time period. We did spend on television and digital in our central markets-New York, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Lancaster, York and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton. We really hit our digital assets incredibly hard as well and focused a lot of our content from television. We also did some Spanish targeting and testing some different markets to drive some different folks to the market. Some of you know that we have a booking engine on our site called Jackrabbit. It doesn't charge a fee and we're trying to drive folks to come to our booking engine to book so that don't have to pay an additional fee. It's great for the guests and great for our members and we pushed that out more aggressively. We highlighted the great things to do in the Fall and we're seeing some of the digital creativeness when scrolling back and forth. They actually added more trains to the train running in Jim Thorpe. We did a ride the rails piece and the 15 best things to do in the Fall. Jim did some packages on our channel through PTN and the Fall worked out really great for us. I'd like to talk a little about Pocono Promise. We have close to 300 businesses signed up for Pocono Promise. We're going to repackage that again now with these updated Orders and push that back out. We provide all of the visuals for that so that a guest or member, whoever happens to be in the 4 County area, can come onto our site and look up everything they need and use it. It could be used as an educational source, used as a marketing campaign, it has a number of different uses. We actually saw other CDC's across the Nation start to pick this program up and use certain pieces of it. It's been incredibly successful, not only from a marketing campaign standpoint, because we did do some television spots and digital, but it was also was used to resource a lot of our businesses too because it was one place that the business could go to get everything they need on CDC Guidelines. It served a lot of different purposes for us and we're going to push that out again as we go forward. We're investing in our own television network, PTN, will soon be on streaming platforms. There's AppleTV, Firestick, Roku and all the rest of those, we're very close to getting that done. With Jim's background in television, he's taken this on as a project and has done a really incredible job with it.

Winter Campaign– We are planning, without New York, two minute segments promoted by 15 seconds of broadcast television. It will start more so in December. Outdoor broadcast television and a very strong social and digital campaign to accompany it. We're going to continue with the marketing in case there's additional Orders that we have to comply with. We do plan on doing a Winter campaign. One of the things we're not sure of is skiers going into Winter and we don't know how this is going to really affect us moving forward. Brian has been working on the Ski Committee to help them get the message out too. This is another vehicle we use to get that message out before the season starts. Chris said he would provide all with the data (from the PowerPoint Presentation) so that they have it. Chris concluded that they are working on a new travel guide and that he just wanted to give everyone an overview and, again, I will send this to you, but I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for all of your support for us, we appreciate that.

Commissioner Schmalzle thanked them for reinventing and repurposing your whole organization during this. One of the reasons I called you yesterday was because when you see anything bad happening you call Chris or Brian or Jim, but I think the PMVB is more accessible now more than ever. It has been in my long career in this industry and that is because of the leadership. Thank you. I love your Honesdale in a day spot and I hope that can be expanded to Hawley which is just over the border and Milford and even Lake Wallenpaupack. It is really, really well done. I would think that you're going to stop hearing concerns from the Wayne County people because it really puts a spotlight on a beautiful town. When I went to the mountain this weekend, Jim walked in and again, that speaks to the accessibility. It's ski season and we're up about 30%-40% in pre-season sales. I would think that's with everybody across the board. They're coming. We have a grant that we moved to all RFID and the technology route of purchase. We're putting gates in and everything is happening very quickly. We're making the rental transaction touchless as well, as much as it can be. We've got a lot on our plates. What we do know is we're going to be very, very busy. I would urge you not only to expand into the Pennsylvania markets; it really makes no sense if someone from Philadelphia can come, but somebody from Sparta, New Jersey cannot come. However, I think through education, the people in New Jersey and New York may be testing more than the people here and I think that through education the New Jersey and New York markets can come here and will come here, but they need to know how. It seems pretty simple, this whole 72 hour thing. They're coming whether they're following the rules or not. Who's going to enforce that? It's going to be a challenge, but we're not going to change our community to not be a place where New York and New Jersey people come to. I think we have to help them find a way to continue to come safely. I know it's a slippery slope and we don't want more guidance on that subject, but I think that there are effective ways to do it. I urge you to not market the area, but maybe educate the consumers that are coming from New York or New Jersey and how they can continue to come. Chris said their first thought was to continue the Pocono Promise message. We have a message that is more PSA-like than we ran in Philadelphia in New York when we were shut down in yellow. Our stations ran it gratis and so we might do that again in Philadelphia and New York. Commissioner Schmalzle added that the connection between the 4 counties and we've learned this through COVID, even

more so, is tourism. Tourism touches every part of every business and everything that we do in all the 4 counties. There was an initiative along the way, not that we're looking for more things to do, but to involve a Commissioner from each of the counties on a board level, so that we can continue to be connected. We're connected with the other 3 counties in a lot of other services, but the real biggest connection that we all have is through you and through your organization (PMVB) and through tourism. If we don't understand that tourism is the pulse of this region, we don't understand our region. I think it's really important that the 4 counties are together in what they're doing. Because it is the funding mechanism through the Commissioners and through the counties, I think it's important to bring them together and you're a perfect conduit to do that. I would urge that in the future – to have a representative be involved at the deepest levels of your organization and we have good representation through Justin, through Bridgette, through John and through all of the people here. In Pike County we have really good representation, probably stronger than we should have. I think gathering the 4 counties together adds some merit and keeps things moving the right direction.

Chris said it's interesting, throughout the State we've had meetings virtually with our brothers and sisters – our 4 counties are much more visionary than a lot of other areas in the State. It's just amazing that they have a lot more problems than we do and I think it's because you guys are so much more progressive across the board than Carbon or Monroe. You're so much easier to work with, your business friendly and you let us do our job and support us. It is not typical across the State even in areas that you think intuitively it should be. We see you as our clients and our partners and we welcome your involvement. Your counsel is very good and there are times when you guys direct us very succinctly and it was the right thing to do. We appreciate that working relationship/partnership between our organizations.

Commissioner Osterberg added that we have a website and mentioned Krista Gromalski, Director of Public Relations.

Matt went on to say that every business in this community is tied to tourism. Jim and I sit on the Board of the Pike County Chamber and this is a discussion we have every month about this. Even just opening that supermarket on Route 739. It is being built there because the amount of people that come here at different times. If it was just left to the local residents without all of the people who visit this area, we probably wouldn't see that. I think all of these businesses need to promote in our community. While this COVID issue is going on, there is so much to do in Pike County. I still think there are a lot of people in this County that don't realize the great amenities and great things that we have to offer right here in Pike County. We also have to share with them what goes on in Wayne County, Monroe County and Carbon County. If I could ask you, with some of your ads that you do and some of these promotions, if we can share them with Krista Gromalski. I think we should talk about putting them on our website, because the more visual we get out there, the better off we are. We have lots of people and Krista knows the number of how many people visit our website. It can be more than just government. With Robb (Ruiz) here, we have all this COVID money that we're putting out, but we need to promote these businesses because at some point there's not going to be any of that money left. Chris said we feel like we have a real responsibility to our communities, to serve them - our non-profit communities, our profit communities and our business communities. If there's a way and you guys have ideas and we can partner together, we will put resources behind that because I agree with you. If we can get more accomplished in this market, we're happy to do that. If we can help bring the website along for you guys and share assets, that's great for us and great for you – we're happy to do it.

Commissioner Osterberg said we have a Newsletter that goes out every months to our employees. We have nearly 500 employees. There could be a message put in there about what's going on over the holidays in the region. More the region than just in Pike County. It's an easy way to communicate with 500 people. Chris said that is awesome and even a link to our television network if they don't have Blue Ridge Cable, that's 365 days, 24/7. If you ever want to get a message out on anything, we can do a package and a half an hour later we're on television. You can even stream it if you want to, we have the tools and we're upgrading our television tools all the time. We have the ability now to shoot something live and it can stream live on Face Book, Instagram and our television network all at the same time. It'll be in 400K homes through Blue Ridge and Service Electric and, of course, our social media feeds. That's a huge voice.

Commissioner Guccini concluded that one of the things a trial attorney is supposed to be able to do is take what seemingly is a weak part of your case and make it a strong part. I was at a dinner and sat with 3 guys from New York. One guy was tested 10 times since the start of this. I don't know what the testing regimen in New York and New Jersey is, but my mind is thinking that there's a greater emphasis on testing. From the beginning of this whole Pandemic, we have been talking about testing, testing, testing, so if you really have a situation where you educate people to get tested, it just seems to work for me. If you have this test within 72 hours, you're okay to come here. Chris responded that that is the first thing we did, so that's all on there. The second piece is we have to really figure out doing something with television. What we're worried about is if it comes across the wrong way. There are ways to do it, like the education piece, there's nothing to stop us from educating the public before they come here.

Commissioner Schmalzle continued with there is something we can save for another day, but Matt and I have talked about it extensively. That is the combining of the resources of all of the other smaller organizations throughout the Counties that are seemingly not as progressive and maybe don't have the resources to move forward like PMVB is moving forward. I am talking about Chambers and Downtown Partnerships and Milford Now and all these organizations that go out on their own tangents when a cohesive message would be more effect. You will hear more from us on this because we really feel that the Chambers that we are associated with in Pike County may need to combine and maybe need to be moved under the "mothership", which could be PMVB or however. We think that is an important step in the future and we are headed that way, but maybe we should head that way a little faster. Chris added that he knows there is a lot of consternation, I was on a school board, so I get it. Our only objective is, even though our offices are in Monroe, you (Pike) are just as much in our town as much as Monroe is. We're happy to do anything you need us to do, from a resource standpoint, to help you out. We are here all the time so we don't want to miss something just because we don't know about it. If we know about it, we're more than happy to do anything you need us to do. From a marketing standpoint, I can say very confidently if someone needs something marketed, we can do it much faster and more effectively.

Commissioner Schmalzle closed with that he thinks COVID has forced you to step away from your mission statement and become something that you hadn't planned to become, but I can tell you this – you're not going back. You've taken a step in that direction and now you've taken on a larger responsibility and I don't see it ever changing.

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT:

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020, AT 9:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.