

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

The second regular meeting of December 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.

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 December 16, 2020 Agenda.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the December 2, 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 December 2, 4, 8 and 14, 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 **\$696,808.21**, subject to further review.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **LIQUID FUELS FUND (Lattimore-sanding)**, in the amount of **\$233.00**.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **ACT 13 FUND (Lattimore-Brooks Rd. Repairs)**, in the amount of \$9,250.00.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **PC EMPLOYEES HEALTH INS. FUND** in the amount of **\$1,090,871.41**.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to award the bid for the fresh bread and baked items for the Correctional Facility to Bimbo Bakeries for \$78,175.

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. 20-38, Request for Modification of Community Development Block Grant Fund for FFY 2018 to DCED.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to advertise for groceries and frozen foods for the Correctional Facility.

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 Juvenile Probation Services Grant-In-Aid Award Notification second allocation for 2020-21 in the amount of \$84,152.49.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Cooperative Site Use Agreement between Wayne County and Pike County, on behalf of the Communications/Department of Public Safety for the use of tower and equipment shelter space.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Chief Elected Officials/Fiscal Agent Agreement designating Carbon County as the Fiscal Agent for funds received under the Workforce Development Agency.

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 Department of Human Services Office of Long Term Living Home & Community Based Waiver Services Provider Enrollment Information Form, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

- David P. Shallcross, Attorney General's Office – Holiday and COVID Scams and Outreach – Mr. Shallcross was introduced by Chairman Osterberg. Mr. Shallcross said they have virtual trainings and are able to put out information that is very important to everyone of all ages from children to seniors. They have educational programming available and said the Commissioners could encourage their agencies to book a presentation, all free of charge. Attorney General Shapiro has taken a stand that we want to present as much information to benefit everyone. Everyone is vulnerable to fraud, scams, identity theft and other concerns. We are educating the public on scams, drugs, bullying and more. I have been with the office going on 13 years in the Office of Public Engagement and I'm also the Director of our Senior Protection Unit. We do a lot with our older adults as well. We have brochures, booklets, presentations on PowerPoint, presenters able to do speeches and talks regarding the office and our abilities available to you. I've been up to Pike County numerous times and have given presentations at Senior Centers and with the Office of Aging and we continue to do that. We want to make sure everyone is aware of what's available and what we can do for you. We have a program on Identity Theft and Skimmers, which are a big problem, especially right now. While we're engaged in the holiday season, while shopping in person and on-line. Full presentations are 35-45 minutes, but I want to give a quick tip on this. If you are using a card to make a purchase, a credit card is much more secure than a debit card. Also, your debit card is money that you have accumulated, your savings, your account, while that money is taken out for a purchase, it's physically gone. In case of fraud or a dispute, you have to fight to get that money back and that's very difficult. A credit card, obviously you haven't expended any cash yet – you have credit and it's usually a 30 day window to make your payment. That gives you that time to dispute the charges and a lot of the credit card companies actually fight on your behalf. These are the types of tips that are included with the identity theft and skimming programs. Skimmers are magnetic card readers that steal data off your credit or debit card while it's being used at an ATM or a shopping retail terminal. Even just out of your wallet in some cases. We have our "Avoiding Holiday Scams, Fraud & Theft" and this goes into more detail about shopping, consumer awareness, issues at the stores, issues on-line and web shopping. We talk about WiFi and how that signal can be intercepted. We talk about if your going to a store to park under a lit parking space – underneath a lamp post even though you're at the store and it's still daylight. It gets dark early this time of year. Park close to the exits and entrances and be sure that your packages are put away out of sight in the trunk rather than the backseat.

Social Media 101 for Parents is another important program that we offer. Right now with everyone being at home due to COVID, we encourage people to stay home and, of course, that's going to lead to more on-line presence. We will have more people on-line utilizing social media applications, shopping, banking – a lot of on-line activity and parents need to understand what the dangers are for their families and their children. Child predators are a very serious matter. Our Office of Attorney General has a child predator section that is very successful in investigations and prosecutions. Unfortunately, we don't know about situations until it is already unfolding, so we encourage parents to be aware and watch out for these types of predators contacting your family and children on-line. We give a lot of great tips and resources. I think it's a must have for families.

Combating Veteran Fraud and Theft Program is cut out just for our veterans. My wife and I volunteer at the 111th Attack Wing of the USAF and Air National Guard in Montgomery County and we have an Office of Military and Veterans Affairs within the Attorney General's Agency. We help our veterans, who have all sorts of resources, understand fraud and identity theft and protecting their pensions. We have our Novel Corona Virus Protect Yourself from Fraud and Scams presentation. We're dealing with people right now that they're taking advantage of folks over the fear of COVID and Corona Virus. Things such as "invest now" because the vaccines are coming out "you can profit". They will be soliciting you to invest in these companies that are developing these vaccines, but is it a legitimate offer? Is this a real opportunity to invest? How do we check these things?

We are going to share with you the definition of price gouging and what that means for the public. Every penny counts today, especially when employers are tight and businesses are closed temporarily. Some going out of business, it's a tough time for everybody right now. We have fear contracting the virus, we have fear of losing our finances and spending for our families is the first thing on our minds. This is going to give you examples of how to avoid be price gouged, how to look out for scams, watch out for counterfeit products, is your face mask really doing the job that you expect it to do? If you bought one that is a knock-off, it's not the high-end brand that you were looking for with all the features, you might have gotten a counterfeit product. How does that put you in danger? Again, we want to make sure we're emphasizing all the things that we need to know and this presentation certainly does a good job of that. It gives you a lot of information about COVID regarding scams and fraud and how to protect yourself – that's our goal.

Scams against seniors – unfortunately we all get scam calls. We get them on our phones, text, e-mail and even in the US Mail. Fraudulent scams are all around us – we need to know how to navigate and stay away from these fraudsters and protect our assets, especially our older adults/seniors. Once you retire, that money is what you have to live on, you're dependent on that. You certainly don't want to lose it to a fraud. We talk about everything from sweepstake scams to charity scams to romance scams and give tips. Another issue you may not know about is bullying in the senior community. This can happen anywhere, not only at a senior center or senior hi-rise apartment building, it's in private homes, businesses and it's all over the place. It's both the seniors are bullying and being bullied. We're going to provide resources and tips. We learn about different reasons why people might be less than friendly and why some of these issues occur and what can we do to improve that environment? How can we make it a little more friendly and encourage people not to be mean. We want the seniors to know that we can work around these issues and just give it a try.

Romance scams are part of our top 10 scams. This is taking people's money and breaking their hearts, especially when we're looking at romance scams with older adults. This can happen to anyone at any age. Catfishing is when people go on-line and pretend to be someone their not to deceive others and it's usually a friendship that's being built that might blossom into a romantic engagement. Of course, it's on-line in most of these cases, however we do have cases where someone is bold enough to locally come and meet face to face to take people's money. We have to be cautious and it's great to be complemented. When we're lonely, like right now while we're all trying to quarantine and stay home, here's an opportunity to meet someone, but we have to be cautious. Check everybody out, know who you are dealing with and never send money or personal information to an unknown person who you only met on-line no matter what they claim to be the circumstances

Our Senior Crime Presentation is a video clip program which gives you different scenarios and we talk about things that are very important, including Power of Attorney misuse. I think this is something a lot of seniors don't quite understand. When your being trusted as an agent on someone's Power of Attorney to assist them with their finances (and with this program we focused on the financial, not the medical directives), someone that you appoint could, depending on how that form is written, have full authority over everything that you own including your credit. There's a whole lot at risk when we sign a Power of Attorney and we hope that it's someone we know and we trust. How do you set up a Power of Attorney? What do you do, what can you do when you believe you're being abused and misused financially during a Power of Attorney engagement. It's a great program and offers a lot of information and I like the fact that the video scenarios really set the stage.

We also have a full presentation of home improvement program fraud and talks about the Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act that was enacted in 2009 to give people some benefit of what to look out for, how to guard yourself and protect yourself from a predator contractor. Unfortunately, we have seen in complaints where a person comes in, starts the job, rips things apart – maybe opens your roof, and then takes the money and runs. Not only are you out the money, but now you have still have the problem in your home and it is now worse because it is opened up and construction has started and maybe was done inappropriately or incorrectly. You now have to find someone else to come in and do the repairs and we have to go after these people. It is a civil and criminal matter and we explain your rights and what the Act offers you here in Pennsylvania.

We also have programs for our children and students on bullying, digital safety, how to act appropriately on the internet and digital citizenship and drug messaging and so on and so on. Our programs are there if you go to our website at: www.attorneygeneral.gov. You can click on the tab for Public Engagement and see all the different programming that's available. You can click on the map of the State of Pennsylvania at the bottom for what County you reside in and that will send an email directly to one of our specialists who can come out and provide that presentation, whether we move back to in-person presentations or set you up with a virtual presentation. Any questions or comments on our program? Commissioner Osterberg asked Robin (Skibber), Director of Area Agency on Aging, is she is running these types of programs now? Robin responded that they would like to offer this in the very near future. We have a number of those scams just recently and it's very sad at this time of year. We will be offering them and getting them out to the media after Monday's meeting. They're excellent programs. Since we didn't get an Elder Justice Day, this year we're going to be doing some virtual events through the holidays and into the New Year. Commissioner Osterberg asked if Krista (Gromalski), Director of Public Relations, could help promote that to the general population and maybe we can think about all of those different programs that goes to the general population, not necessarily just the seniors. I think it's important because a lot of people, regardless of age, can fall for these scams pretty easily. All the time I think we need to make sure people are educated with this. Maybe Krista could even put together more of them. Robin Skibber agreed and said excellent. David (Shallcross) said anything he could do to assist we should feel free to call upon him. He is more than happy to assist in getting a program made out to us.

- Robert Ruiz, Human Services Director – Funding Available to Support Local Families and Businesses during COVID-19 Crisis. Commissioner Osterberg said that the public should be aware that there still is Housing Funding out there for rental assistance and utility assistance because many people since March and October \$130 Billion in sales have been lost in the restaurant business. Many of these individuals that are losing these jobs depend on tips and now there is nothing there. I know we have Channel 13 here to make sure that we get this information out there. I know yesterday PMVB (Pocono

Mountain Visitors' Bureau) put out a press release about a fund from different organizations to help give some stipends to restaurant workers because they are suffering right now. Between now and Christmas when people want to celebrate with their families, they are looking for some assistance. Robert Ruiz thanked the Commissioners for having him on today and said that we do have rental assistance available and utility assistance available. The best way to understand these programs is to give my office a call and we'll walk you through whatever funding is available. Right now we have a little bit more than half a million dollars left in the bucket. These funds are for individuals who are in a crisis of either staying in their homes or about to lose their regular assistance or assistance that they had before for utilities. Give us a call, the phone number for my office is (570) 296-3434 or you can call Stephanie Everson (570) 832-3196. Also, on www.pikeforward.com, we have these small business loan programs still available for individuals or business owners who might qualify who are in a financial hardship. There are some qualifications that go with that program, again give my office a call and we'll be more than happy to walk you through that. The bottom line is, the best thing to do is give my office a call, give me or Stephanie a call and we can walk you through the best options that we might have. Commissioner Osterberg asked Robb and Robin (Skibber) to tell everybody what their titles are for the offices that they're representing. Robb announced that he is the Director of Human Services and Transportation for Pike County. Commissioner Osterberg announced that Robin Skibber is the Director of the Aging Office and Senior Services out of Blooming Grove. He added that we have a press release going out with more of this information that Robb has just spoke of. We think it is important that we get this out there and keep the public educated and the communication going. Commissioner Guccini added that Matt had already mentioned the funds for restaurant workers is being administered by the Pocono Mountain United Way and the Vacation Bureau contributed \$50K if I'm not mistaken and the other United Ways – Pike County, which I'm on the Board, Carbon, Lackawanna and Wayne Counties are also participating, but the administering is done by the Pocono Mountains United Way. For anybody in Pike County who wants to get the word out to make a contribution or you're a working who needs to apply, you can do that through: www.poconounited.org. Even though they'll administer the funds if you're a Pike County worker, the money will come back to the local Pike County worker. It's \$250 mini-grants until the money is used up. It's just another program that we can use and I encourage everybody to get the word out to your favorite bank or company if they could make a contribution and also to the workers to make sure they know about it and they can apply. Commissioner Schmalzle added that he would like to urge everyone to support their local businesses, especially the hospitality businesses that have been so hard hit. It is easy to go about every single one of them and purchase a gift certificate instead of going outside of the County and travelling, which you really can't do. We urge people from within the County to spend their money in the County at our local businesses and support them during this challenging time for them. No industry has been hit harder than the hospitality industry and that is the pulse and the lifeline of many workers here in Pike County. We urge you to support them.

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT:

Jill Gamboni said she put David Shallcross in touch with both AAA's (Area Agency on Aging) for both Pike and Wayne Counties. If anybody saw a program that interests them, they can contact Mike Peifer's office and I can put them in touch with them – (570) 226-5959 or mpeifer@pahousegop.com Commissioner Osterberg concluded that on the 29th we are having a meeting to approve the Budget and a Reorganization meeting on January 4th followed by a regular meeting. The next regular meeting will be January 20th.

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 4, 2021 AT 9:00 A.M. WITH THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING OF 2021 IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AT 9:30 A.M.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021, AT 9:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.