

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

The second regular meeting of February 2018 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, Caridi and Guccini; Chief Clerk Orben; Solicitor Farley.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda.

Commissioner Osterberg stated that two items were being added to the Agenda, one under Personnel promoting Michele Long and one under Salary Board setting Michele Long's pay.

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to approve the above-referenced items to the Agenda.

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

Someone in the audience asked if a letter that was sent to the Commissioners from Sally Schwartz could be added to the Agenda. Commissioner Osterberg replied that everyone has the opportunity to speak at the end of the meeting under Press and Public Comments. The letter can be addressed at that point.

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

Vote: Commissioners Osterberg, Caridi and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

A RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

Motion: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

Vote: Commissioners Osterberg, Caridi and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to approve the February 28, 2018 Agenda.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to approve the February 7, 2018 Commissioners' Meeting Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Caridi, to approve the February 7, 12, 15 and 22, 2017 Commissioners' Conference Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Caridi and Guccini voted 'aye' except for Commissioner Caridi who abstained from the February 7th meeting; Commissioner Osterberg who abstained from the February 5th and 12th, meeting. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to approve payment from **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of **\$503,054.11** subject to further review.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to approve payment from **ACT 13 FUNDS (Dingman Twp.-Trail Project)** in the amount of **\$25,000.00**. Commissioner Guccini explained that this money is from mini-grants that were awarded last year which are complete. There are more mini-grants available.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to approve payment from **PROJECT SERIES C 2012 (Reimb. Feb. 2018)** in the amount of **\$398,542.67**.

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

PERSONNEL:

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to acknowledge receipt of a letter from Sheriff Kerry Welsh advising that he has hired **CHRISTOPHER COLELLA**, as a full time Deputy Sheriff for the Sheriff's Office, for a 40 hour work week, effective February 26, 2018, with benefits after 90 days. This is a replacement position.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to approve the transfer of **LINDA MURPHY** from a Caseworker in Children & Youth to a Clerk in the Recorder of Deeds Office, for a 37 ½ hour work week, effective March 5, 2018, with continued benefits. This is a replacement position.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to promote **MICHELE LONG** from Administrative Manager to Executive Director of the Conservation District, as recommended by the Conservation Executive Committee, effective March 5, 2018. This is a replacement position.

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

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

Vote: Commissioners Osterberg, Caridi and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

A SALARY BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

Motion: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

Vote: Commissioners Osterberg, Caridi and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to appoint Robert Ruiz to the Carbon/Monroe/Pike Drug & Alcohol Commission to fill an unexpired term ending July 31, 2018.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to authorize the Chairman to execute Change Order No. GC25 between Mar-Paul Co. and the County of Pike for the installation of a fire rated ceiling system, for an additional \$2,706.36, relating to the Courthouse Expansion Project.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Inspection Agreement between Beach Lake Sprinkler and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Caridi, to authorize the Chairman to execute the PCCD Subgrant Award Notification for the Children's Advocacy Center in the amount of \$40,000, on behalf of the District Attorney's Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to execute the Provider Agreements between the County of Pike, on behalf of Children & Youth Services, and the following providers: Camp Speers/YMCA, CAC of Monroe County, Commonwealth Clinical Group, Justice Works Youthcare, NHS Pennsylvania, Pyramid Healthcare and The Village.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Senior Rental Assistance Voucher for \$1,318 to Delaware Run for March 2018.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Caridi and seconded by Commissioner Guccini, to execute the Agreement for Subcontracted Services between Serving Seniors, Inc. and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging for Ombudsman Services, subject to further review by the County Solicitor.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Caridi, to execute the Professional Services Agreement between Evaluator Services & Technology and the County of Pike, for assessment services.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

Robin LoDolce, Area Agency on Aging Director, spoke about the Ombudsman Program, which are services in the long term care facilities. There are approximately 300 people living in long term care facilities in Milford Senior Care, Belle Reve and Twin Cedars, and these people need representation. Due to the Federal Final Rule of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services the Aging Office is not able to provide that service anymore, so it needed to be subcontracted. Serving Seniors is a non-profit out of Lackawanna County and they are providing this services. However, the Aging Office is recruiting volunteers in Pike County for anyone who has the heart and empathy to work in a facility for

one or two hours a month. Commissioner Guccini added that the Ombudsmen are required by the Older Americans Act, which is federal legislation, and the Area Agency on Aging has been doing that in the past, but now the Agencies cannot provide this service because of possible conflicts.

Beth Grasso and Anja Cressel, Pike County Master Gardeners, gave an informative presentation on the Spotted Lanternfly, which is an impending invasion of insects from the Counties to the Southwest coming to Pike County. These aggressive insects were found in 2014 in Berks County and have already spread to 13 counties, the closest one being Monroe County. They are native to China, India and Japan. They do not attack fruit or foliage, but do attack tree trunks and/or vines. It excretes a substance which smells and inflicts wounds to tree trunks and vines. Pennsylvania is the number one exporter of hardwood in the country, third in production of apples, fifth in production of grapes and peaches. Loggers, landscapers, providers of firewood, farmers, etc. can be affected, as well as homeowners losing ornamental and fruit trees. They are visible from the end of July to December as a cluster of hundreds. Commissioner Osterberg said they are extremely invasive and DCNR, Penn State Extension and the Department of Agriculture need to be notified if you see them. The adult insect feeds primarily on a non-native invasive tree which is called the Tree of Heaven. Photos and information were distributed of the insects and Tree of Heaven. A history of the insect and where they came from was discussed, and how to kill them if you do find them or their egg masses.

Rose Chiochi, Executive Director of the Pike County Public Library, thanked the Commissioners for their support and allocation. Ms. Chiochi presented statistics on the use of the library and the programs that are offered. They partnered with Delaware Valley and contracted with Tutor.com which offers free tutoring online for students and adults with a library card. The library also purchased 20 laptops for both branches. They are working on programs for special needs for children and adults. Commissioner Osterberg added that they are looking into a program for the spectrum group to run after school for the families who need support after school. They also partnered with the Sustainable Energy Fund, a non-profit organization, by updating both branches to make both buildings more sustainable. It is about a \$30,000 project. The library also runs the Tick Borne Disease Support Network group on weekends once a month. A new meditation group meets every Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. The library has a cookbook club, children's programs, etc. Unfortunately at this time they do not have computer classes due to lack of personnel and computers. Cindy DeFebo, Workforce Development Agency Director, replied to a question about computer classes by announcing that they have partnered with Lackawanna College in Hawley and every Wednesday they will be offering basic computer classes from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Every Tuesday and Wednesday the WDA and Library partner together to offer Job Help. Ms. Chiochi stated that the little library at Ann Street Park is doing very well, with two more going up in Matamoras by an Eagle Scout whose project is to put two up in Matamoras. Board Member Centa Quinn has donated two little libraries for Dingman Township. They are always looking for sponsors to purchase these little free libraries, which is a large hand made birdhouse for books for people to trade. The basic birdhouse is approximately \$300. Commissioner Guccini commented that Pennsylvania on a state level does not fund libraries, but to their credit, the legislature about 7 years ago stated that if certain class counties made a contribution to libraries, the state much match that dollar for dollar. The bad news is that they have never done that. The Pike County Library is missing out on about \$130,000 which would be life changing for this community. Commissioner Guccini started contacting people and the response he received from legislatures and someone from the State Library was that legislation required libraries to meet certain criteria, such as hours that they are open, etc. and even though the Pike County Library has done all that is requested they still do not receive funding. Commissioner Guccini asked that everyone contact their state legislatures and ask that libraries are funded as the legislation mandates.

Cindy DeFebo, Workforce Development Agency, advised that Pike County has partnered with the local churches and formed a Working Pike Committee who have put together a Job Fair on April 17 from 10-3 p.m. at the Best Western. Sponsors are the Pike County Dispatch, Lackawanna Community College, Hawley, and Bold Gold Media. Mike Sullivan, Executive Director of the Economic Development Authority, shared facts and figures of Job Fairs that were held in the past two years. There were 65 employers last year attending the Job Fair. The goals are to help the working poor and to have job seekers stay in the community instead of traveling to New York/New Jersey. This has been a very successful program for both potential employees and employers. Ms. DeFebo informed everyone that 4 days a week the WDA Workforce Professional is at the local library for 2 hours each day to help with online resumes, applications, creating resumes, cover letters, etc. Much of the time spent is on online applications. Rose Chiochi added that you can also submit resumes and cover letters to Tutor.com for review. Someone asked what the guidelines are for the Job Fair. Ms. DeFebo responded that it is on a first come first serve basis and they must be an employer, not colleges, educators, etc. There are no restrictions as far as part time or full time employers. Someone with a background in educational technology and offered to speak to job seekers about working from home remotely using technology. Ms. DeFebo invited the gentlemen to speak to job seekers in her office.

Robin LoDolce, Area Agency on Aging Director, announced that there will be a Health Care Palooza on April 11th from 2 to 6 pm at the Aging Office to inform home health aides, CMAs, LPNS, or anyone to

let them know that there are programs to pay for certifications in some cases or they can obtain their certifications in different ways. There is a need for homecare workers for their agencies, and there are people who are in the utmost remote part of the County and the agencies do not have aides that go there, and they don't cover certain areas, which affects senior citizens. They are really hoping that between the WDA Job Fair and this program there will be more people interested in homecare.

Ms. DeFebo added that they work with the Area Agency on Aging and home health aides and certified nurse aids and high priority occupations in Pike County, and the WDA is able to fund some of that training. Anyone that is eligible for training dollars, those are occupations that the WDA can help pay for, and put people to work almost immediately because there is such a need.

Wayne Witkowski of the Dispatch asked about the possible job growth in this area in addressing the unemployment problem. Mike Sullivan stated that 57% of the working population leaves Pike County for employment. He believes that will turn around. The Job Fair will have a technology employer looking for 50 employees to work right in Milford; another technology based company anticipates hiring 20 people; a nursing home may provide 100 to 120 jobs, etc. This Job Fair will host more employers wanting to hire more people. The situation has changed over the past three years. The first year the employees were looking for jobs, last year employers were looking for very specific types of employees, and this year there will be more employers looking for employees to fill a lot of jobs.

Michele Long, Conservation District and Peter Wulfhorst, Extension Office, talked about Discovering your Drinking Water Workshop to be held on March 26th at 7 pm at the Conservation District Office at the Conservation Office. Ms. Long stated that 98% of the drinking water in Pike County comes from groundwater and it is important that we keep the groundwater clean. The Conservation District received \$2,000 from the PA Association of Conservation District Mini-grant Program to provide test kits for residents who attend this program. The first 10 residents who attend the program and given a test kit to take home and test their drinking water. It is a great opportunity to promote the water resources and talk about the importance of protecting groundwater. Peter Wulfhorst stated that this is the third workshop held to help people better understand what they need to do to protect their drinking water. Pennsylvania is one of only two states that has no private well regulations. The Extension Office has developed many resources through water educators. There is a lab that comes to the Extension Office every Wednesday to test water. The test kits that the grant is funding is for bacteria, PH, nitrates and total of all solids. Bacteria is the most common contaminant. Even if you are not the first 10 to receive the test kits, there are other test kits available. The important issue is to learn how to protect your drinking water.

Krista Gromalski, Outreach Coordinator, and Michele Long, Administrative Manager, of the Pike County Conservation District presented the 2017 Conservation District Annual Report of Activities. The report basically highlights programs, grants, accomplishments which were achieved in carrying out the District's mission of conserving local natural resources and supporting sustainable land use. The Conservation District works with landowners, builders and engineers to ensure that best management practices are implemented on earth moving projects as well as projects near streams, lakes, rivers and wetlands to protect clean water for drinking. They also administer a Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program which provides funding to local townships and boroughs to reduce the amount of polluted water running off into creeks, ponds and lakes, and also keeps down maintenance costs for the local municipalities and communities. The District does many outreach and programming such as a workshop for local contractors on March 21st at the Training Center for builders and contractors to learn about the services the District provides and also to work with the District as early as possible when doing projects. The annual report is available online at www.pikeconservation.org.

Penn State Extension –February 28 – March 7, 2018 Events. One highlight is Pike County Master Gardeners are offering a workshop on hardscapes at the Pike County Library at 11:00 a.m. for \$10. The Everybody Walk PA program will be starting again in April to the end of May to encourage people to be more active and walk. Commissioner Caridi mentioned that they have never been approached about a raised garden in between the two buildings, but if the Master Gardeners would like to put together a plan for that, the Commissioners are open to discuss that idea. The Commissioners commended their work at the Blooming Grove Barracks for Bryan Dickson.

Commissioner Osterberg distributed a brochure developed by Penn State for the Strengthening Families Program which relates to the opioid epidemic. The program, which was put forth by the Commissioners through Penn State, is expanding throughout the school districts. It is important to get families to take part in the program. It is extremely successful and families have asked that the program is expanded.

Jill Gamboni announced that a Reality Tour Drug Prevention Program will be held on May 3 and May 31st at the Milford Bible Church from 6 to 9 pm.

The Economic Development Office will be relocating within the next month to the Community House, along with the Pike County Chamber of Commerce, Pike Autism Services, United Way and the Greater Pike Foundation.

PRESS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

A member of the audience, Nancy S., called the Commissioners' attention to a letter written by Sally Schwartz, who was unable to attend the meeting. She spoke about the shock of everyone in the nation by the events a couple of weeks ago in Florida, the latest in way too many mass shootings. They are very concerned about events that are happening locally, namely, an event the week before at the Best Western sponsored by or affiliated with a group that is openly homophobic and racist and anti-Semitic. These are issues that also affect school safety and the safety and well being of everyone in the County. She asked for the reaction of the Commissioners, as County officials, as to this group and event and this hate coming into the community.

Commissioner Osterberg stated that he believes that the event was planned months ago with a speaker on the Second Amendment. Many organizations sponsored the event. One of them happens to be a local church organizations with maybe some beliefs that he does not adhere to. He does not belong to that church, but at the same token respecting their right to voice their opinion. Whether they are hate groups or not, he said, is a matter of opinion. He has read everything he has seen on the internet about it. He sees organizations that are listed on some of those groups as hate organizations, some including the Catholic Church at times, depending on who you are listening to. As far as what is going on today, again that is a church organization. As far as the safety of our schools, that is not something for the County Commissioners can address, but for the school districts to address. Commissioner Osterberg did say that they are working with the schools to try to alleviate risky behavior, which is why he brings up Strengthening Families. As you have heard today, the Commissioners have a role in this County to deal with many things, such as jobs, safety, well being and health of the community. When it comes to that event, there is not much the Commissioners could do about it. Renee Hoover stated that she was a little surprised by his comments if he has visited the web site of the church. She asked for Commissioner Guccini's point of view and his concerns about the event. Commissioner Osterberg said he has been on their site and he does not adhere to worshipping guns. She said that he made the statement alluding to the fact that perhaps they did not adhere to anything that was hateful, and clearly when you go to their website it clearly is a hate group and they were clear sponsors of this event, and there was a raffle at that event. She said apparently an AK 47 was going to be raffled off and then because of the shooting in Florida, so the sponsors are stating, they decided not to raffle off the AK 47 but instead they raffled off a \$700 gift certificate to Kahr Arms, which is roughly equivalent to the cost of an AK 47. This is what she heard and is not stating it as fact. She said that they are at the meeting to hear directly from the Commissioners. They would like the Commissioners to take a leadership role to set the tone for the County that they don't want this type of activity in the County. They don't condone it, and to come out and publicly state that you are against it. They are appalled by the events and that the Best Western held the event, and they are concerned about who some of the attendees were at the event. She said she would not carry it any further than that, at least not publicly. She asked for Commissioner Guccini to speak about this.

Commissioner Guccini said he was happy to address it, but being the new guy it has been his practice to go last, and not putting any pressure on Commissioner Caridi to say something or not say something. There is no protocol, it is just his practice to go last.

Commissioner Caridi commented that none of the Commissioners belong to that church, and as far as it being a hate group, it was not a hate event that night. When he first found out about the event, it was to hear Larry Pratt, who is the President of Gun Owners of America, a nationally recognized organization. His discussion was the history, development and evolution of the Second Amendment in our Constitution. There was no discussion about religion, church, hate, none of that. It was simply about the legislative process with the Second Amendment and the pressures that are out there today. Actually, they addressed how we can have more security to protect our society from the abusive people that should not have guns. That was all that was discussed that night from the speaker standpoint. Commissioner Caridi said that as far as the support, there was a raffle and that was everyone's individual choice as to whether or not they wanted to participate in the raffle for a \$700 gift certificate for whatever you wanted to use the \$700 for at Kahr Arms. It did not mean that you had to go buy a fire arm. They sell many things in that warehouse retail establishment. You can buy anything from backpacks to glasses to anything you want with the gift certificate. Ms. Hoover asked if he did not think there was any hypocrisy in the speech when Mr. Pratt was talking about safety issues and one of the sponsors is clearly a church that supports hate against many members of the community. They are very anti-LGBTQ. Commissioner Caridi said that she was not there so she can't comment on what was said if she was not there. She said she wasn't sure if she was there or not. Commissioner Caridi said he was there and there was nothing like that said, discussed or inferred. She told Commissioner Caridi that he just said that he talked about concerns for safety. Absolutely, that's everybody's concern, said Commissioner Caridi. She said so you're being sponsored by a group, a church, that is nothing about safety and in addition, can we move a little bit beyond the Best Western event and let's talk about this church. Commissioner Caridi said he can't speak about the church if he does not participate or knows anything about it.

Solicitor Farley addressed Ms. Hoover by saying that, as Solicitor he wanted to say one thing. You have to recognize in the Constitution, whether you like it or not, there is a separation of church and state. He is not saying he supports the church, but at the same time, as government officials, they have to be

careful that they don't decide to pick one church over another. They can't pick any church, so remember that as you are asking questions. In fairness to the Commissioners, they can't give an opinion per se about a church. They may not agree with it, but there is that separation and they have to honor that. She said perhaps they could give an opinion about hate groups and not identify with a specific church. Commissioner Caridi said he would not get into that discussion, but he is not that way at all. Solicitor Farley stated that there is not one gentleman here that he has ever represented that supports hate groups. That's not a fair question but he will defer to the Commissioners. Commissioner Caridi said that he does not support any hate towards anybody and will not address it any more.

Commissioner Guccini commented that due to his discussions with people and by following the news, he knew that this was going to come up, and it is usually his practice to make notes and hit certain bases. In giving this a lot of thought, he did not do that, but decided to speak from his gut and brain, so if he misses something, he apologizes. He continued, that he always believed long before this job, that there is a basic lack of understanding of our citizenry in general of what it is government does and does not do, at every level, federal, state and local. It has always been a concern of his that people do not understand the basics of what government is allowed to do and not allowed to do, and should do and should not do, then everybody gets the wrong idea. The reason he wants to start with that is that to that extent, what you have heard here before is correct. There is nothing legally or as County Commissioners they can or should do about what is going on. If you limit their authority and power to that limited discussion, he said it is an important point to make. Some people may like that response or not, but it is one of the areas of government that he feels very strongly about. In terms of the broader issue of gun violence, restrictions on certain kinds of weapons, etc., Commissioner Guccini said that they talked about this, not at great length, when he found out about this, but they did have discussion. He continued that while the Commissioners disagree on some things, they also agree on a fair number of things. He has been very concerned for about 15 or 20 years that the fringes have taken over the discussion, and the reason we are where we are today is because of the death of moderation. There are some legitimate ways to address this issue that have nothing to do with political party, personal philosophy about gun ownership/gun use. There are some legitimate ways to look at restricting certain types of weapons, restricting certain kinds of people from getting certain kinds of weapons, and in the Commissioners' discussions, there is some fairly substantial agreement on that. He threw that out there and he does not want to get into the weeds on this because that is what as Commissioners they are supposed to be doing. Once they start throwing people into categories, everyone stops talking to one another.

Commissioner Caridi added that along with the death of moderation, there is the death of civility, that we don't respect each other enough to listen to each other's view points without getting overly animated.

That is a concern for Commissioner Guccini. Through conversation with Commissioner Osterberg, he recalled that there was a ban in 1994 on certain kinds of weapons that had a 10 year sunset provision, and once that expired we have not been able to do anything about it because nobody talks to one another. That also involves, in Commissioner Guccini's opinion the fact that money has polluted everything we do. He does not think there would be nearly as much of an opioid problem if large drug companies did not contribute to both political parties heavily, so money is a problem. He continued by saying if these were normal times, that would probably be the end of my discussion, but we all know that these are not normal times. Our children are being murdered; those who haven't been murdered who have survived these events, have witnessed things that nobody should witness, have witnessed things that probably the only other people who have witnessed something similar are people in combat, and that should not be. There are certain things about what is going on that is troubling to Commissioner Guccini, who has a personal stake in this in that he lives very close to the church in question, which he pointed out is in Wayne County. When you live in that part of the County, it is a community, just as living in Milford is a community, and because of that the community encompasses Wayne County, including Hawley and Newfoundland. The geopolitical lines don't matter to them; it's part of the community. When he was a child, there were three doctors, a couple of barbers and all sorts of things in Newfoundland, so he has fond memories of going there. The point is, that because he lives close and because of those memories, these things are troubling to him. He believes that this group, from looking at their own website, obviously is, in terms of their homophobia, in terms of how they deal with that, he thinks they are probably problematic. There is a line there somewhere, his own church will not do gay marriages and those kinds of things, and this is personal for him because his youngest daughter is gay, and she knows his involvement with the church. He is very involved with his church. He was an altar boy and now a lectern Eucharist administer and he personally struggles with that. Apparently he's the only one because his daughter tells him to just go to church. The point he is trying to make is that there are other religious entities that have certain religious beliefs but they are not necessarily carried out into the civic community. That's what troubles him with this group. It's one thing to have those religious beliefs, and to have them, whether he agrees with them or disagrees with them, he would be the first one to support the ability to keep and retain those religious beliefs, but when you cross the line when you carry them out into the civic community and say that you really have to be concerned about the government inculcating those beliefs into society, and about the school district inculcating those beliefs into society. In order to do that you better arm yourself for when that day comes, he finds that troubling, he finds that beyond the pale of what is a normal religious belief. The Mormon Church, up until the earlier mid 1970s, would not accept African American members. That is troubling to him. They do now, but they have the right to do that, they have the right to do that now. But he wouldn't want to take that belief out into the civic society outside of those religious beliefs. Those are the things that are troubling to him. As a matter of common decency, he does not understand why this event

occurring right now has to occur on a school day a half a mile from a school and put the school district in that position of having to make what is obviously a very difficult decision. His gut feeling is that nothing will happen there, but obviously, the school had to err on the side of caution. There is an issue that somehow the school is teaching our children about homosexuality. Commissioner Guccini said that he graduated from the school district and knows the people who run it. There is no attempts to inculcate anybody to any belief, one way or the other. If we were dealing with a non-Christian religion, there would probably be a greater outcry in the community of what is going on here, but because we are dealing with a Christian religion, it's a little bit more accepted. Commissioner Guccini just thinks it is a sort of a bastardization of Christianity. Those are his personal beliefs which he should have or should not have stated, but he was not going to not address it, but he does not want to make it about something that people want to pit him against his colleagues or against other people of different political parties because then we just don't accomplish anything. Commissioner Guccini was asked to speak at a vigil tonight and his understanding of the organizers is that it is a vigil and not a political event and he hopes that people that speak keep it that way. These are very troubling times and he is concerned about what is going on but he is not going to mal-address some of that tonight in a non-political way. He does have concerns about what is going on, a basic concern about mixing religion and guns, that is a fundamental concern that he has, but there are common issues we can agree on.

Commissioner Osterberg agreed that he believes there are common issues we can agree on. He called Senator Toomey's office when this occurred as he was in Florida in the next county from where the shooting took place, because four years ago he and Senator Manchin put together a bill to strengthen background checks, which did not go anyplace. He asked if the Senators were going to reintroduce the bill which Commissioner Osterberg hopes that they will, because we have turned this into a D and R thing and it really isn't because no one knows if those children are Ds or Rs or what they are. We need to come to some common sense and he is hoping that our legislatures in Washington will come to some conclusions and do the right thing. He has no idea why they put a 10 year expiration on the federal ban in 1994. Some of them tried to take it back up but it didn't go anywhere and why is a question to ask them on both sides because there was definitely an opportunity to do this. When you look at Manchin and Toomey working across the aisle tried to do in 2012, they tried the same thing and it didn't go anyplace. He believes that in Washington, they want to continue fighting, which is his cynical side of things in Washington. He does not believe in hate. He belongs to a church that he has no doubt supports everything, may be does not support certain aspects of homosexual life, but that is not his belief. He does not believe in hate and wishes that this church did not do what they did. Commissioner Osterberg believes that they are doing this on a Wednesday is because they want to shock everyone, which is what we've turned into and it's unfortunate. Blessing guns, he thinks, is crazy, but it's their right to do that. We just want to make sure we get our voices out there because they don't want anyone to think that we sit in these offices all day long every week and we discuss all of these issues. Just so you know, these things are on our agenda every month, many of these topics because we are here to make this a better county and do the things that we can do and some of them are the drug addiction issues, etc. There were 17 overdose deaths in Pike County last year. He is just as horrified about that as the 17 lives in Florida, and he tries to do something about it every single week. He speaks about this every week and hopes that people take notice of that. There is a Drug Task Force that meets once a month as a community to try and save our young people. That is just as horrific as those 17 youths that died down there. Sixty five thousand people a year die in this nation from drug overdose. We should all be up at arms over that. If that was a war, we would be on the streets, but we all seem to be okay but again Washington takes the money and doesn't do a darn thing about that. They allow these pharmaceuticals to do as they want. That's not affecting just our youth, it's affecting everyone in this room, and they are all dying from it.

Reggie Chong-Lee said the reason they are here is because it is a public safety issue and the danger to our community on these groups in our midst promote ownership and worship of guns, especially assault weapons, so when you say this is a church, it is not just a church. They actually made a nearby school move all the students, that's how much of a public safety threat they are. They are not just a church. Commissioner Osterberg said there is nothing that he can do about it. He can't go there and stop them. Solicitor Farley said that there is nothing the Commissioners can do. But he agrees the school decided to move. Commissioner Osterberg said that he doesn't support it. Mr. Chong-Lee stated he was only bringing this threat to the attention of the Commissioners so that the next time they sponsor a dinner maybe the Commissioners would consider not going. Commissioner Osterberg said he did not go and wanted to make that clear, and whether people want to attend it or not, he believed that they were attending under the whole Second Amendment discussion. There are people who are going to support the Second Amendment, we are not going to get away from that. We need to find out what it is that we agree on with this and get the right legislation there, whether it be better background checks or more formalized background checks. You need to talk to Toomey, Casey, Marino and demand that they do this. Commissioner Osterberg said he talked to Toomey, and he hopes that everyone calls there and bring up his bill and say this had support from both sides of the aisle, why it lost is because there are certain factions in this country that didn't believe in certain sections of it. That's why it lost. Commissioner Guccini addressed Mr. Chong-Lee saying that he essentially agrees with him. There is something else going on here besides someone having religious beliefs that we don't agree with. That's a legitimate concern. We have to address that individually and to the extent that it may become an issue in terms of something we do as a body, we would have to address that too. That's how he views it. What they are doing, and what they are trying to propose is not something he can support and he agrees it is a public safety issue along with other things. Commissioner Caridi commented that he recognizes it

as a public issue and he is a gun owner. There is no question about it and he exercises his Second Amendment rights in his home and property and he shoots shotguns every weekend, shoots clay birds, and has a small group of men that get together and shoot clay birds. He recognizes it as a public safety issue as well. It concerns him, which is why he was on the phone with the County Sheriff several times about County facilities and whatever we could do. Today, there are Deputies helping out Wallenpaupack. He was on the phone repeatedly with the Lieutenant at the Barracks in Blooming Grove, who he knows for many years since he was a young man, and they spoke about all the issues. Commissioner Caridi gave him the names and contact information of the people associated with the event so that he could work with them, and they in turn worked with the Barracks Commander in Wayne County to provide police protection to keep everybody calm and peaceful. The school made the decision on their own, as far as the relocation of the students and he is not going to countermand that or criticize that. They erred for the safety and protection of the children, who are their responsibility. The Commissioners have no control over that, but they did engage law enforcement and Commissioner Caridi spoke on behalf of the Commissioners, because they would have agreed to make sure everyone was protected.

A gentleman from the audience appreciated the Commissioners making these comments because it is very helpful, but he continued, with all due respect in terms of the Best Western event, there was a statement that the Church was not involved, and in fact the minister of the cult gave an opening speech and a prayer, and if you look around the room, and they have footage of this, you have everyone at that table where you were sitting going like this (?) just to set it straight. Commissioner Caridi replied that he gave an invocation, but there was no hate in the invocation. The gentleman continued about the raffle. He assumed Commissioner Caridi didn't buy one because it was illegal because the hotel told them in advance that they did not have permission to do the raffle. He was quite surprised that they went through with the raffle that was not permitted by Pennsylvania law. He said he was just putting the facts on the table. Commissioner Caridi stated that there is not an event in the County that they don't raffle something off or sell tickets or chances, and who would know that. He would not have any knowledge of whether or not it was a legitimate raffle. He said half of their pay checks go towards ads, and raffles and tickets and baskets and everything else.

Cordell Bowman thanked the Commissioners for speaking the way they did today about the concern for public safety because everyone in the room is on the same page about that. Unfortunately, there are groups out there who don't support public safety. He is writing to people who send out national magazines who say how police are a failure, you can't depend on our government to protect us, we need to have guns in our homes, we need to have militia, because our government is failing us. These are the people he is concerned about. It is alarming that these group are growing. They have been in Ferguson with their militia and arms. This group is very similar and maybe even connected. Our communities protect ourselves from people who don't believe in our government. Commissioner Caridi said the polarization has become ridiculous, both on the left and on the right and it has become so dysfunctional that the people we elect and pay a large salary to can't get anything done. There is no common ground. He spoke about civility. They speak down to each other. Communication is listening as well as speaking and it is a sad state of affairs for our country. Commissioner Guccini addressed this concern that we walk a fine line between doing our best to uphold certain guarantees we have, not only the Second Amendment, but the right against unreasonable searches and seizures and to exercise religion and to exercise speech. Those rights are not absolute. Sometimes one group or another wants to say there are, but what he considers our most cherished right to speak our mind, as someone famously said free speech doesn't give you the right to yell fire in a crowded theater. Everything has limits and it's that line about this group and about others that is troubling. Is there some point where you cross the line of religious expression, expression in general, to either openly or subliminally advocating violence and advocating that the government is coming to get you. Commissioner Caridi expressed his opinion that it is when paranoia become reality in their lives.

Renee Hoover expressed here appreciation hearing the Commissioners' comments. Ms. Hoover suggested that the next time Commissioner Osterberg is able to get through to Senator Toomey, as he seems to be the only one who can get through because the rest of his constituency's phone calls are not received.....Commissioner Osterberg asked if Frank Mazza doesn't return her calls.....and he explained that he should not say that he spoke directly to Senator Toomey, he spoke to his office, even the Commissioners don't get through, but he does speak to the office. Commissioner Osterberg said it depends on how you give the message. We need to call and give them solutions, and he gives them solutions by telling them to reestablish this bill, which if you have not read, you should read, because it was bi-partisan. He calls with a solution. He does not call and yell at him or call Casey and yell at him because they are not going to listen. They don't want to hear people yelling. They want to hear solutions. Commissioner Caridi said they can't be responsible for elected officials, they have to take responsibility on their own. She said they were told to reach out to Toomey, but he does not take calls. Commissioner Caridi said, if nothing else, the Commissioners have differentiated themselves respecting you and listening. They have not tried to shut the meeting down or shorten it in any way or shorten anyone's conversation. They have spoken from their hearts and their minds, so that communication is here as your elected officials. What they do at different levels is their responsibility.

One woman acknowledged that she was so glad that she came to this meeting because of all she has learned. She said the only thing missing for her is what is in her backyard and that is the gun store. Obviously she needs more information, she understands the Sanctuary Church leaders moved from New

York to Pike County because the regulations were looser, so their gun store sits in Pike County so when she sees in the press coverage the Commissioners in front of the gun shop, the images that you are behind these people and she appreciates that they are supposed to create 400 jobs, how is that decision made? Even though they were kicked out of New York State, we invited them to Blooming Grove to open a gun factory that sells Tommy Guns and AK 47s. Commissioner Caridi responded that he learned from his research that the Sanctuary Church was here way before the land was purchased to put the warehouse up. That land was up for sale for years. When he was Blooming Grove Township Supervisor when the County came before them in the early 90s to make a business park which never materialized. It was a burden to the County because it was taken off the tax rolls back then. Through efforts of people locally and Economic Development Director, the land was up for sale, and the County has no control as long it is a legitimate business under state and federal guidelines, as to who purchases that and their type of business. There is nothing illegal there because they are under strict regulations from the federal government. That is not his bailiwick to do that, but at the same time the County tried to put that land back on the tax rolls and they were the only ones that came in as a cash buyer to buy it. Solicitor Farley also commented that there was actually a million dollar debt on that property that the County was stuck paying and for years we could not find a buyer. The park, in hindsight, was probably not the best option, but it was there. This business reduced the debt to zero for the County, gave it industry and potential jobs. He didn't say that everyone liked the business but it was a potential business that removed the debt from the County, took that albatross out from the County, and made it into a profitable business. The County paid almost a million and a million dollars in the septic system that the County never even used. The decision to put a business there was a positive for the County. The Church and this business, as they are brothers, decided to merge a little bit in their behavior, but that is part of the reason. Solicitor Farley stressed that the County never ever knew about the Sanctuary Church and this situation until recently. The goal was just to bring a business into the County with the potential of jobs and relieve a business park that was going nowhere. The woman asked that if there is anything the Commissioners can do now that they are mixing a bit, to monitor, assess, etc. Commissioner Caridi said there is no mixing other than philosophically, not a legal legitimate business mixing. That's a township issue actually, not even a County issue, as it would be under the township zoning regulations. Solicitor Farley said that was part of the problem because of the way the state is set up, the County Commissioners only have so much they can do. He said to please recognize the separation of church and state and what the Commissioners can do, but also they have townships and that building is in Blooming Grove for the construction and building, but the Church is in Wayne County. The County can not trump the Township's rules and regs on both sides. That's the way the Commonwealth is set up. Solicitor Farley does not want people to think the Commissioners are not doing anything. They really can't, they can have their personal beliefs, but it's different what they can do as individuals as to what they can do as Commissioners.

Someone asked if there is anything legally that prevents the Commissioners as a group representing us and being concerned about our safety, issuing some statement that says that they decry any hate activity or hate groups, not identifying who that is, but any of those activities in this County. Solicitor Farley said he would ask them not to because that would create what they just said, they are going to become divergent and some are going to think we are picking on the church, some are going to say we are supporting the church. His suggestion at this point would be not to, but they make the ultimate decision. Commissioner Osterberg said he expressed his position and would decry not only in Pike County, but the entire world. The Commissioner do not support any hate groups. The woman asked for them to say that in public. Commissioner Osterberg said they are in public and hopefully the press will write that. Commissioner Caridi said that a couple of times and doesn't know how many times he has to say that. She wanted it said for people who are not at the meeting. The Commissioners said the press will report their statements.

Someone asked Solicitor Farley if there is any question of tax evasion going on. Solicitor Farley said no. As far as tax evasion, the County gets taxes, the Township gets taxes, etc. Federal taxes are not their responsibility, if that is what she is alluding to. His answer is that he hopes not.

Renee Hoover, said as a realtor, she understands how difficult it was to sell the property and the situation with Kahr Arms going in there. What they are talking about is bad optics and these pictures that are out there with elected officials supporting one side of the Second Amendment issue in a business like Kahr Arms, or attending the event, speaks to bad optics, and they are asking for a little more thought and concern, rather that maybe the Commissioners would present themselves as public elected officials representing all of us rather than your personal beliefs first when attending events like that. Commissioner Caridi said he did not attend as a County Commissioner, he attended as Rich Caridi, private citizen. She said but he is an elected official, and many have a personal relationship with him, and are personally irked by seeing that. He does not dismiss freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom on assembly and the oath he took for office as they all took everytime they have been elected and himself when he joined the Marine Corp was an oath to support, obey and defend the Constitution of the United States, and as long as the activities fall within that guideline, he will stay true to his pledge and oath. Commissioner Guccini sometimes finds himself at events in an official capacity where he wonders whether something will come up spur of the moment and he has to make a decision. There is a Senior Expo every year at Dingman Township with hundreds of people and last year before the Presidential election, he was asked to take a picture with elected officials and some attendees of the event, and one of them standing next to him had a big Trump hat and button, and from a personal standpoint he questioned whether he wanted to be in the picture, and yet it

was event for seniors. Sometimes they are faced with personal decisions, which could be right or wrong. There are certain things he will not go to, and if they had time to think about it, sometimes things come up and they make a split second decision and they do it incorrectly.

Someone asked if the County has done any kind of audit as to how many jobs Kahr Arms has produced because they have learned that there are six jobs, not hundreds. He wondered how the County is getting their money worth if that is the result and asked about an abatement. Solicitor Farley said they didn't give them any money. Commissioner Osterberg was not sure if they took part in the LERTA program, which is available to any business, new or putting an addition to their business, which allows them a 5 year abatement, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100% for 5 years. LP Cylinders and other businesses took part in that program. He is not sure if they took part in that. It is not an employee based program and the number that was originally talked about was 94, according to Mike Sullivan. As far as them creating the number of jobs they talked about they have CNC machines (Computer Numerical Control) which are all set up there. Commissioner Osterberg is not a gun owner and does not deny anyone else to be a gun owner. He has been in that store. They do not just sell assault weapons. If you go in there, you will find out that they sell hunting rifles, and hunting is a large activity in this County. They sell shotguns, clothes, food, a whole array of Korean food. They are a business that does not just sell weapons. As far as their employment, he is not sure how many they employ but there is nothing the Commissioners can do if they say there are only 12. Commissioner Caridi said they have CNC machines that are in the millions of dollars that take up 30,000 square feet of space and they didn't make that investment not to have people working and turning out product. It is an evolutionary thing and are waiting to get established. There are probably one to two dozen of these giant machines and they are very expensive, and they are not doing that to just throw their money away and have them sit idle. Cindy DeFebo stated that many of their employers are not willing to give out the number of people they employ. If you call Price Chopper they won't tell you how many people they employ. It is for security reasons they are not willing to share that information.

The Commissioners thanked everyone for their participation and respect even though they disagree.

ADJOURNMENT: THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018, AT 9:00 A.M., AT THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.