

## **Wednesday, March 17, 2021**

The second regular meeting of March 2021 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; Solicitor Farley.

A moment of silence was held for former Pike County Commissioner Sally Thompson who passed away this past weekend.

***Greater Pike Community Foundation update on the Pike County Emergency Services Initiative Fund and NEPA Gives*** – Commissioner Osterberg – We’re going to move into our Agenda, but first we’re going to have a presentation by Greater Pike Community Foundation on the update of the Pike County Emergency Services Initiative Fund and other events that the Greater Pike Community Foundation is going to be doing here as we move forward into the Spring and into the Summer which is a really good announcement for our community and our non-profits and showing support to our community. It’s so important during this year after this past year and moving forward that we show lots of support for non-profits and other organizations. They suffered as much as many, if not more in some cases, due to the COVID Virus. We welcome Jenni Hamill from Greater Pike Community Foundation, we have Bill Lovejoy and added that Jason Ohliger, Esquire may also join in. We’re going to have an update about the Pike County Emergency Initiative Fund, which we have here from Tim Knapp. Tim from Pike County Emergency Services is not going to be here because Tim right now is running a vaccination clinic up at the Training Center for one thousand vaccines. Hopefully, with Wayne Memorial Hospital’s partnership, this will be something that occurs on a regular basis. We’re working hard here in the Commissioners’ office to see that the Department of Health and Wayne Memorial Hospital help us in Pike County get this vaccine out. We have an update about what is going on up there, which is really good news.

Commissioner Osterberg introduced Jenni Hamill, Director of the Greater Pike Community Foundation and she followed with a PowerPoint Presentation. Jenni thanked the Commissioners, not only for allowing her to join, but for all that they do for our community to make Pike great. She said the Greater Pike Community Foundation is located in the Community House in town. Jenni continued that she’s here this morning to tell you a little about what we, at Great Pike, do and to highlight a few things you may find of interest coming up.

Greater Pike Community Foundation is a 501 c3 Non-Profit Organization that was founded in 2012. I like to say informally we’re sort of like a bank of philanthropy. We help generous donors create funds for causes or charities that they care about, which are then invested with a long term prospective, similar to a savings account or retirement fund. The difference being that the proceeds or earnings gained from our funds are given back out to the community in the form of grants to local non-profit organizations. We have been making grants to donor funds since 2013. In 2020 alone we awarded 70 grants totaling more than \$226K.

A large chunk of grants last year, of course, were COVID related. I have to say that I felt very thankful to be a part of an organization that was able to both raise and distribute funds during this pandemic when they were so greatly needed. Our reward funds have run the gamut for things like food pantries, emergency housing needs, literacy programs, child care, animal welfare, arts and cultural events and many, many other outstanding projects. The main way we give out money is through grants. Our available grant opportunities encompass both recurring annual programs and special programs. The Barbara J. Buchanan Fund is a grant program that is available every Winter that just closed. The Richard L. Snyder Grant Fund which will open on May 1<sup>st</sup> for non-profits and that’s awarded later on in the Summer after applications are received. Our latest grant program is a Safe Haven Legacy Fund, new this year, and will be opening later on in the Summer so stay tuned on our website or join our mailing list. We hope to make an announcement of that grant in October in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. That grant is actually specifically targeted at an organization with a project that addresses long term housing solutions for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Apart from our recurring annual grants, you will see that Greater Pike also offers funds for particular purchases, such as to address a critical community need. Two examples are the Greater Pike COVID Relief Fund, which was established in the midst of the pandemic probably a year ago and is hugely successful and the Pike County Emergency Services Initiative Fund which we’re going to talk about more in a few minutes. Another thing that we offer, which I think is a very interesting program we put together last year, is called the Memorial Fund Program. When a loved one passes away, I can tell you first hand that it can be a very overwhelming time. There’s lots of immediate decisions to be made and one of those decisions is how to best honor the memory of your loved one in a meaningful way. Friends and family can choose to ask that donations be made in memory of the deceased’s favorite charity in lieu of flowers or they can set up a memorial fund through Greater Pike. These are easy to set up. They’re usually named after the person who passed away and the family can suggest that memorial contributions be made to Greater Pike, to this fund.

The nice thing about these funds is we will acknowledge every gift we get, with a letter to the donor and also send the person who set the fund up we’ll send them regular updates on the gifts, with addresses if they choose to contact those donors and the funds balance as it changes. Then down the road, a few months later,

the family can then decide where they would like to direct gifts, to which charity they would like to direct gifts in the memory of their loved one and Greater Pike will send a check directly to that charity. Sometimes, instead of using the fund mainly as a point of organization and donation collection, a family may decide to create a permanent fund with us in memory of a loved one. In that respect will grow and support a cause or causes in perpetuity. Examples of those memorial funds are the Kyle James Pasco Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Amanda Nicole Thoenig Memorial Scholarship Fund were both created within the past couple of year and both are now permanent funds within the Greater Pike Community Foundation and are offering scholarships in several school districts locally to rising seniors who are moving on to college next year.

The Walt Edwards Ashenfelter Memorial Fund is also a relatively new fund. It was established by Walt's widow Kathy in memory of her husband who was a local musician and ardent supporter of the Milford Music Festival. Kathy's goal is to create a public fund to support local musicians in our area. I believe that the Commissioners or someone else might have a few more words to say about that coming up. There is an upcoming benefit concert to help make his memorial fund become a reality.

In addition to traditional granting, we pride ourselves on working together with the community. To combine traditional support to our local non-profit organizations by encouraging not only our individual donors that I was just talking about, but also local businesses and local government. The first thing I want to share with you is something I'm really excited about, there's an event coming up on June 4<sup>th</sup> called NEPA Gives. For those of you who are my age or older, you may remember the old-fashioned Muscular Dystrophy Labor Day Telethon with Jerry Lewis. I don't know about you, but I remember watching that on television every time it happened, every year. By the end, Jerry Lewis was almost falling over he was so tired. NEPA Gives is sort of like that, it's a 24 hour on-line day of giving and we are co-hosting it this year with the Scranton-Area Foundation and several other community foundations. NEPA Gives will help every single non-profit in the NEPA region that joins. It's a safe and socially distanced way to help replace lost revenue from in-person fundraisers and dinners and ticket sales. Last year's event helped raise over \$500K for over 160 charitable organizations. This will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that Greater Pike is co-hosting this day with our regional partners as well as local sponsors and we are hoping that we can enlist your help in spreading the word to encourage local charities go to the website and sign up. As an additional incentive this year, many of incentives in the form of prizes are being offered that non-profit organizations can win by participating and being successful at fundraising for their event. This is something new this year, I hope everybody pays attention to and speaks to charities that need your involvement. Last year we didn't have local prizes for NEPA Gives for Pike County and this year we do. This is very exciting (examples were shown). At the top of my list is the Pike County Commissioners Good Neighbor prize and that will be a \$500 prize award for the Pike County organization that receives the greatest number of donations from Pike County. There's also a \$500 Legal Eagle prize that's being sponsored by the ZO law firm. This prize will be awarded to the Pike County organization who has the highest number of unique donations between 12AM and 6AM on the day of the event. McAteer and Will Estates is another one, a \$1K prize for a Pike County organization that provides housing assistance in our area and the way to win that prize will be on the website shortly. We also have the Chant Realty Down Home Prize, the Greater Pike Community Foundation Four Good Prize and the Miller's Prize from the Historic Upper Mill. In addition to cash prizes there will be local gift prizes, the Neversink Media Company is offering two \$500 radio advertising packages. Details what the parameters are for winning that will be posted on our website within the next month.

The bottom line is you can't help your non-profit organization and non-profit organizations can't help themselves unless they register and participate in this event. If you go to the website [www.NEPAGives.org](http://www.NEPAGives.org) it'll take you to the page, click the button in the middle and it'll take you through the process to register your organization and you'll be given your own fundraising page and the ability to market and promote it in many different ways. There's tool kits there on how to do it, there's graphics, there's language, it's super simple. You can't win, unless you register. Every little bit counts.

One other initiative that I'd like to highlight is a very special fund that came together through the collaboration of a local concerned citizen, a community minded law firm and our very own Pike County Commissioners. That's the Pike County Emergency Services Initiative Fund (PCESI). Sometimes a community need comes to our attention that is so pressing that we agree to help immediately. Such was the case when a local attorney, Jason Ohliger, met with me a while back about the crisis our community was experiencing in maintaining and recruiting trained emergency service personnel and the need for increased ambulance and emergency services. This was pre-COVID. It became even more important after last year. What eventually transpired was a new, greater Pike fund called the Pike County Emergency Services Initiative Fund and the PCESI has been successfully funding training needs for emergency medical staff since last year. I believe there are a few other people here to take over from me and talk a little about the success of this program. Thank you for having me and if you would like to reach out to me after this meeting, my contact information is: Greater Pike Community Foundation, PO Box 992, Milford, PA 18837 (570) 832-4686, [jennihamill@greaterpike.org](mailto:jennihamill@greaterpike.org), [www.greaterpike.org](http://www.greaterpike.org).

Commissioner Osterberg gave an update about the Pike County Emergency Services Initiative Fund and read a note from Tim Knapp. Emergency Medical Technician class started in the Fall of 2020 and finished up the beginning of January, 2021. It was a tough road due to the current pandemic, but they pushed through and finished with 16 students. Six of the students have gone on to complete their National Registry and are

currently recognized as EMTs by the State of Pennsylvania. The other 10 are currently studying hard and hope to be finished up with testing by May. The remaining 4 students will be jumping in the current class and finishing up their studies. We are currently finishing up an Emergency Medical Responder class, one level lower than the EMTs. At the completion we will have 14 more medical responders in the County. This is another class that worked hard to complete due to the current pandemic. We have also completed numerous CPR, First Aid and Blood Borne Pathogen classes, totaling 62 students, and we expect those numbers to go up this year. I want to thank everyone who made this fund possible. Without this in place, this would be hard to accomplish. We currently have a waiting list for our Fall EMT class. This shows the dedication of the responders in Pike County in a time when we need it most – Tim Knapp

Commissioner Osterberg said this is the hard work of everybody up there at the Training Center, but it's also the dedication of our community and two of the people on here – Bill (Lovejoy) and Jason (Ohliger) and I will let you speak to this. It's important that when the Greater Pike Community Foundation has this event coming up that people in this community recognize the importance of this fund and that they support it. These volunteers that we have are being helped through scholarships to be able to provide services to all of us in our community. That's why we're here today, to make sure that we promote this and make sure people understand the importance of our EMTs and where we're going. This was just in the Dispatch again. This is still an issue in our County when it comes to providing much needed ambulance services in our County by volunteers and even having a paid staff. Somehow all of us need to figure out how this is going to be a viable service in our County.

**Bill Lovejoy** – Long story short, I had been injured and needed to get to the hospital and was fortunate that my grandchildren were with me on Christmas Day when I broke my ankle. They got me in an SUV and took me down to Morristown – I broke my fibia and tibia. After that event, my daughter was telling me that I shouldn't be living in such a remote place like Pike County since there isn't an urgent care, there is no hospital there or no ambulance service that we can really rely on. When I was mending I called the Mayor (Sean Strub) and told him that I wanted to start an initiative to make sure that we had enough EMTs because I had read some newspaper accounts and talked to some people about it. In Shohola there's no ambulance and they didn't have any EMTs where I live. Sean (Strub) recommended that I talk to Matt (Commissioner Osterberg). I talked to Matt and he said we know all about it and gave me a whole bunch of material. I told him that we need a vehicle and I was amazed at the professional people that we've had – Krista (Gromalski) and Jenni (Hamill) of the Greater Pike Community Foundation, Matt suggested I speak with her and we got together. She told me that she could do a pass through and Matt got a couple of people like Bernie Swartwood (Pike County Director of 911 Communications) and we talked through this issue and said let's merge with Jason (Ohliger) and let's start training EMTs. I was in business for forty years with General Motors and I realized you need a process. You need dedicated, professional people, and you need businesses to be able to pass out funds. You need a training center and Bernie (Swartwood) came up with it. If people who want to become EMTs have to spend their own money and have to go out to independent trainers that he could develop at the Pike County Training Center where the 911 Center is. It was really easy to set up the fund at the Greater Pike County Community Foundation and then get some people to contribute to that through NEPA Gives. It's the infrastructure and the general idea that Jason (Ohliger) and his law firm had to start this concept. I love Pike County. The only thing missing, as far as I'm concerned, is to make sure that we get good health services. As people just said, the COVID thing really hit home. You're making a lot of progress. We are pleased to do that and we'll continue to support it.

**Jason Ohliger** – By way of some even more detailed back story, I did have this conversation with Jenni before Bill's incident that Jenni alluded to. Identifying the issue in the community and the conversation that we had is how do we make this work? If we're going to do this, how do we do justice to the problem by having a fund created that is substantial. We're having these conversations and then Bill has his incident. I can't even remember who came to me with it, but we have a donor here. Everything merged together at that point. It really is an amazing thing because it is a true public/private partnership/arrangement that we have here. Without Bill's donation, the original identification of the problem by us, the Commissioners having access to the Training Center and being the real vehicle for moving these funds and, of course, the Greater Pike Community Foundation, managing these funds. Without any single one of these components, this would not work the way it is working. One of the important things people in the community should realize, is that we have now reached the point where it is working. When we were starting this last year, starting to fund-raise, we knew the need. We were confident that if we had funds to move in that direction that they would be used productively, but we didn't have any track record at that point. With the NEPA Gives event, we had a \$10K matching funds promise for donations on that day. That day actually raised \$8K for the EMSI and our firm contributed about \$3,500 or maybe a little more to the matching funds. Then I read afterwards that the Pike County Training Center had a training class where it was completely funded by the EMSI to the tune of about \$10,400. I thought that was incredible because it was very short after the NEPA Gives event that we are then moving funds directly into subsidizing this training which is the whole idea. The original problem that we identified was that volunteerism is low and part of the reason is volunteerism requires not just the time commitment, but a substantial financial commitment on the part of individuals and fire companies to fund this training. You shouldn't have to do that. You should be able to volunteer your time to the community, you shouldn't have to pay hundreds of dollars approaching \$1K for the training to enable you to do that. I'd like to think at this point we have a track record and we're moving forward. I hope that people recognize that and give even more to the EMSI this year on NEPA Gives Day. We are going to offer the \$10K matching fund

promise again this year on the NEPA Gives Day and we hope the donations from the public are even higher and our contribution is even higher.

The Commissioners thanked Jason. Commissioner Osterberg said that's very generous of you and that's why we're here – to show that there's support for this initiative, both from private and public sectors. That's what it's going to take for us to help fix this and get this crisis moving forward in a positive direction. As you said, the track record shows that. It's organizations like Greater Pike Community Foundation that helps us also to be a vehicle to move these funds and in many other ways too because they support many other non-profits. We're here talking about that, but I also don't want to discount the fact that there's other organizations out in our community doing really good things. Our food pantries and all, and the day this NEPA Gives occurs, we hope people are generous to all organizations and recognize the needs in our community. If we're going to get through this COVID, it's going to take all of us as we said from the very beginning. Supporting our local restaurants, but also our non-profits. I know she spoke about the small funds, like the Walt Edward Fund, which was just started. It's an important part of our community to sponsor the arts and see that people are involved in our community, in making it a stronger community by having music festivals and different events like that. All of it ties together for a great Pike County. We appreciate everything you and Bill (Lovejoy) are doing and all the others that are involved in this. We've been discussing with the Townships about this whole EMS crisis. Partnerships between municipalities is how we can be sure that we have strong emergency services. We're glad everyone was able to attend today.

Commissioner Schmalzle also thanked Jason and Bill. He said he recently attended an EMS strategy session with all of the Township Supervisors and I was so pleased and gratified to be able to speak about this. When you have a dream of something and making a difference and immediately see the positive impact that it's having on our community, it is really special. I'm not sure they understood exactly what was happening, but they do understand that new EMTs are coming into the County and being trained and staying here. Thank you for your efforts. It is immediately paying off so keep up the good work.

*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 March 17, 2021 Agenda.

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

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the March 3, 2021 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 March 8 and 10, 2021 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 the **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of **\$391,432.40**, 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 the **PIKE COUNTY EMPLOYEES' HEALTH INSURANCE FUND** in the amount of **\$212,567.18**.

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

**PERSONNEL:**

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to promote **MICHAEL UPTON** from Caseworker I to Caseworker II for Children & Youth Services, retroactive to March 1, 2021.

**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, to award the bid for the Pike County Training Center Burn Building Lining Replacement Project to Harty Construction, Inc. for the base bid amount of \$146,003.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to table the bid which was received for the Pike County Jail Complex Well #3 Drilling and Development Project for thirty days due to the high cost and single bid that was received on this project.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to award the bid for the Winona Falls Road over Saw Creek Bridge Parapet Deflection Joint Repairs Project to Pioneer Construction Company for the base bid amount of \$55,450.

**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. 21-05, Pike County Designating the Month of April 2021 as “Pennsylvania 811 Safe Digging Month”.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 21-06, C.A.S.U.A.L. Day, March 25, 2021.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the U.S. Department of Homeland Security FFY 2020 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Agreement, on behalf of the Emergency Management Agency.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter FY 20-21 Act 148 Certification Statement on behalf of Children & Youth Services.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Professional Services Agreement between Belle Reve Senior Living and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

**Pike County Emergency Rental Assistance Program** – Commissioner Osterberg said this has to do with some funding that the County was awarded due to the COVID Virus, which is the Pike County Emergency Rental Assistance Program. We’re asking people that are in need of rental assistance and also there’s other programs out there for utility payments. Please contact the Human Services office at (570) 296-3434 or go to our website [www.pikepa.org](http://www.pikepa.org) and you will see information on there about this. This is funding that is out there and we’ll have more to report at the next meeting from Mr. Ruiz as these programs develop and more programs are coming forward that will benefit businesses also. This one that we’re announcing here has to do with the Rental Assistance Program for County residents.

***Questions and comments were opened to the Public and the Press:***

Communications Director Krista Gromalski said she had received one that came in from Michael Zimmerman relating to the Walt Edward Fund. He wanted to let everyone know that last night Milford Borough Council approved the Walt Edward Memorial Concert in the Ann Street Park on Sunday, July 11, 2021 from 2PM – 4PM. Commissioner Osterberg added that Michael Zimmerman was going to try to be here to be part of the Greater Pike Community Foundation’s presentation because that is one of the new funds that was done. Again, it’s a really good thing that the community is coming together under all of these funds to help support everyone.

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adjourn the Commissioners’ Meeting.

**VOTE:** Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT: THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021, AT 9:00 A.M., AT THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.**