

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Caridi, Osterberg and Wagner; Chief Clerk Orben; Solicitor Farley.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda.

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

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

A RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

Motion: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to approve the April 15, 2015 Agenda.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to approve the April 1, 2015 Commissioners' Meeting Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the April 1, 6, 7 and 9, 2015 Conference Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Caridi and Osterberg voted 'aye'. Commissioner Wagner abstained due to his absence for the above conferences. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to approve payment from **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of \$317,922.46, subject to further review.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to approve payment from **LIQUID FUELS FUND (Dingman-road material)** in the amount of \$241.89.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve payment from **PC EMPLOYEES' HEALTH INS. FUND**, in the amount of \$120,576.75.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to reject the bids received for the CDBG Matamoras Firehouse Residing Project.

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

Chief Clerk Orben explained that the bids received for the project were substantially over budget for what the engineers anticipated from the specs that were provided by the engineers. They will revise the specs and readvertise the project.

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to readvertise for bids for the CDBG Matamoras Firehouse Residing Project.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to open bids received for the sale of the following vehicles: 2004 Subaru WRX Impreza, VIN #JF1GD67554H518206, 158,494 miles, AS IS, minimum bid of \$1,250; and 2007 Ford Mustang, VIN #1ZVFT80N375336733, 96,917 miles, AS IS, minimum bid of \$4,000.

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

Solicitor Farley opened the following bids: Antonio Biafora – 20001 dollars (as written on bid) for the Subaru; and Jersey One Autos – Subaru - \$631 and Mustang - \$2,262. Clarification is needed from Mr. Biafora on his bid, therefore, the bids were tabled until May 6, 2015.

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to table the bids received for the sale of the following vehicles: 2004 Subaru WRX Impreza, VIN #JF1GD67554H518206, 158,494 miles, AS IS, minimum bid of \$1,250; and 2007 Ford Mustang, VIN #1ZVFT80N375336733, 96,917 miles, AS IS, minimum bid of \$4,000 until May 6, 2015.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to adopt Resolution No. 15-08, National Library Week Proclamation, April 12-18, 2015, which was read by Commissioner Osterberg.

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

Rose Chiochi, Executive Director of the Pike County Public Library, thanked the Commissioners for their support. There are many children's activities scheduled for this week, including some games that offer prizes of gift certificates for the book sale room. Commissioner Caridi thanked the Ms. Chiochi and the members of the library for their service to the community. Commissioner Osterberg said that the library is always looking for donations, and does not have a defibulator at this time. He has reached out to an organization in Monroe County that provides that equipment

and he is hoping to acquire one through them, but there will always be needs for funds to offset these costs. There is also training involved with the use of that device also.

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to adopt Resolution No. 15-09, National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 19-25, 2015, which was read by Commissioner Wagner.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to adopt Resolution No. 15-10, R.E.E.C.H.E. Week of the Young Child, April 12-18, 2015, which was read by Commissioner Caridi.

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

Louann Genovas accepted the Resolution and mentioned that this is the 15th year that R.E.E.C.H.E. has had celebrations during Week of the Young Child, and they have now expanded to the Month of the Young Child. Ms. Genovas thanked Commissioner Wagner who has supported the program since the onset and always made time to attend the R.E.E.C.H.E. dinner, be at the parade, greet the children and was even out on the dance floor one year in a wheelchair. She and some of the children who attended the meeting presented Commissioner Wagner with a few gifts in appreciation of his support.

MOTION: by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Christopher Calo to the Hotel Tax Board to fill the unexpired term of Craig Cox ending December 31, 2015.

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

Commissioner Osterberg identified Chris Calo as being from the Bushkill Conference Center and fills in the Board with someone from the southern end of the County.

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to execute the 2015 Pike County Emergency Operations Plan.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to execute the Agreement between Palmetto Posting, Inc. and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Tax Claim Bureau Office for the posting of delinquent tax notices.

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

Cindy Gehris, Tax Claim Bureau, explained that this company who, with the Tax Claim Bureau's files of people who are delinquent in their taxes for two years, along with the GIS, will incorporate the information and post the property properly using the GIS system longitude and latitude. They will be putting a poster on to the tree notifying the person that has delinquency that their property is subject to tax sale. The property owner has up until the day of the sale to pay their taxes to get it removed. A machine will tell them if they posted it on the correct property because there have some errors with the type of posting that has been done in the past. In a case where the property is sold and there is a tax sale exception filed, this will then become part of the court document which will show that the Tax Claim Bureau did post the property, which is part of the requirement of the Real Estate Tax Sale Law. Solicitor Farley stated that dilemma is that the requirements state that the property must be posted, especially if service has not been sent to the homes and it has been sent back, so technically that may be the only notice that they've received other than through the newspapers. There have been times that there have been six vacant lots in a row and the correct one is not actually posted. When the exception is filed, the County isn't hurt, but when the economy was doing very well, maybe someone bought the lot for \$5,000 but only taxes are owed of \$1,000. If it is not posted correctly, the bid is not valid and we won't receive the taxes of \$1,000. Although the lots are carrying the same value right now, the County still wants to make sure that, for the sake of the tax payer, that the proper lot is posted so they have fair and adequate notice so they can attempt to pay the taxes if they so desire. All the requirements of the tax sale are properly satisfied, and one key element, is the posting. Commissioner Wagner said that the biggest problem is, especially in communities where there are vacant lots, the wrong lot is posted. This is an outfit that has contracts with counties and municipalities all over the eastern part of the County. If a tax sale is contested, they can come to court, and with advanced technology they can show that they actually posted the proper lot, with photos included. No one can go back to court and contest that their lot wasn't posted when this company finishes their work. Cynthia Gehris said that there are between 1,400 to 1,600 properties slated for sale. The money for this project will be incurred by the delinquent taxpayer and not the County, in accordance with the law. Commissioner Osterberg agreed that due to the rural situation this will be much more effective and efficient as far as posting the correct properties because it does get difficult in communities where there is nothing but woods to actually know which lot you are looking at. This group should be able to identify those lots more accurately than previously. In speaking with other directors throughout the state who use this firm, they are very pleased with them and very little errors occur. If a property is posted improperly and you did not owe delinquent taxes you would be very upset with the Tax Claim Bureau, and then someone has to go back out and try to rectify the situation.

MOTION: by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute the Agreement between Top Notch Carpentry and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging for a home modification project.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to execute the Agreement between Scott Eyler Construction and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging for a home modification project.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Osterberg and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, to authorize the Chairman to execute two Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Liens.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

Sally Corrigan, Conservation District Director, and Will Erdman, Resource Conservationist, presented the Conservation District 2014 Annual Report and 2015 Plan. Ms. Corrigan explained that the Conservation District is the County entity that is responsible largely for natural resource conservation within the boundaries of Pike County. Their main focus is soil and water resources. Keeping soil in place and out of the waterways is of utmost importance. Part of their responsibilities are education and outreach at the school level, municipal level and local residents. They provide technical assistance throughout the county on subjects such as bank stabilization, lakes and streams, tick borne diseases, etc. Ms. Corrigan also announced that Hawley Earth Week will take place next weekend in Bingham Park and they are working with them to make this a big celebration with a species parade and other activities. The 2014 Annual Report is provided to the State Conservation Commission and gives an overview of activities over the past year, such as monthly level monitoring of 24 groundwater wells to determine water table levels, groundwater assessment surveys with USGS, published a study completed in 2012 and 2013 of surveys of 20 wells throughout the county, surface water monitoring, stream and major watershed monitoring, and other studies. Currently they are working on their strategic plans to determine the needs of the local residents in the way of natural resource conservation. The goals and action plan for the next five years are also being worked on. Ms. Corrigan introduced Will Erdman, Resource Conservationist, who provides technical assistance, works with the erosion and sediment control program and inspection on construction sites. He will be involved in the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.

Will Erdman gave a brief history of the Dirt and Gravel Road Program. The main goal of the program is to allocate funds to reduce sediment pollution and improve the quality of streams. If you improve the quality of the roads, then the sediment from the roads will not be entering the stream and rivers. The program allocates funding through the State Conservation Commission to Conservation Districts based on the amount of public unpaved roads and identifies work sites which have the potential for pollution to waterways. After this year's projects, it is expected that the Conservation District will surpass \$1 million in funds that have been allocated for the program since it began. The program received increase in funding in 2014 from \$5 million to \$35 million annually, of which 20% is dedicated to DCNR Dirt and Gravel Road system. The remaining \$28 million goes to the State Conservation Commission which is distributed to the local Conservation Districts and then to the municipalities. A new aspect of the program created by the 2014 transportation law includes \$8 million for low volume paved roads. In fiscal year 2014/15 the funding for Pike County included a total of \$165,463, of which \$125,463 was for dirt and gravel road maintenance and \$40,000 for low volume roads. He went on to describe some of the projects that were worked on, and future projects. Commissioner Caridi noted that Pike County streams and waterways are exceptional value or high quality waterways and these programs maintain the quality and purity of the water systems as well as protect them in the future in the event that there is any drilling, there is a base line of water quality established. He also noted that the municipalities most likely would not have the money for these projects if this program was not in effect and there were no trained technicians to work with the municipalities.

Warden Lowe and Assistant Warden McLaughlin of the Correctional Facility, Erin Gilpatrick from Catholic Social Services and Rich Shay, Treatment Specialist, at the Correctional Facility, were in attendance to present an update on the Drug & Alcohol Treatment Program. Warden Lowe expressed the need for drug and alcohol treatment at the Correctional Facility to get offenders back out to lead productive lives. The new program starts in the Correctional Facility and continues upon the offender's release. Ms. Gilpatrick gave an overview of the treatment program, and stated that since the beginning of the program in January there have been inmates who have been released and pending to begin their treatment on an out-patient basis. In the past three months, there have been 36 unique individuals that have participated in the program, 22 male, 14 female. There is some transition as there are some individuals who were involved in the out patient program prior to sentencing and are going to be seen at the PCCF and once they are released will continue the program. The plan is to streamline the treatment so that the treatment does not stop when they go to the jail or when they are released.

Rich Shay stated that there is an epidemic of opiate addiction in the country and it is continuing to grow. It is very difficult to treat because many of the people who have these addiction problems also have many other problems and issues. He is trying to help the inmates to determine what their illness is, relieve some of the stigma and to be able to move forward in their lives in a dignified way. A lot of them are very capable, bright, smart people that have a very bad disease, some of it being generational. Many of these are very young people and he is hoping that they will be the ones that will be able to break the cycle.

Commissioner Osterberg stressed that this needs to be treated as a disease. The program in the Correctional Facility is going to be carried out of the Correctional Facility and ordered by the Judge. We are here to help the inmates get recovered but treatments need to be continued all the way through to full recovery. Programs also available are the Reality Tour and Parents for Prevention. The next Reality Tour is on April 23 with 50 individuals registered. Parents for Prevention meet on Thursday night at 5:15 p.m. at the Newton Wellness Center. Commissioner Osterberg said that there needs to be some type of a specialty Court in the County. Since the last meeting, Commissioner Osterberg has met with Judge Chelak and the Judge said that the Judges are working on this. This will take the Judicial side of the government to implement this. The Commissioners are fully on board to do this but the Judges need to come up with the plan and how much money it is going to cost, and the Commissioners will figure out where to get the money. This issue cannot be left alone.

Rich Shay gave an example of a young man who was diagnosed with depression and had alcohol problems who tried to commit suicide, jumped out of a window, but didn't die. He was severely disabled and it costs millions of dollars for his medical care. The costs of his medical care are tenfold compared to what it costs for intervention.

Commissioner Wagner said that there are many people who think that this is not a disease, it is voluntary, so why spend the money on treatment. It is a disease and you have to get treatment to overcome the problem. The Court has to be involved, because the Judges are the ones who need to make the decision to have a drug court. The Commissioners can assist but it is ultimately the Judges' decision.

ADJOURNMENT: THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2015, AT 9:00 A.M., AT THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.