

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

The first regular meeting of April 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.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today’s agenda.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the April 7, 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 17, 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 17, 23, 24 and 31, 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 **\$1,313,148.86**, 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 **ACT 13 FUND** (McGoey-various bridge repairs) in the amount of **\$21,653.90**.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve exonerations as presented by Cynthia Gehris, Tax Claim Bureau Director, for the Charles Homer Estate.

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. 21-07, National Library Week 2021, Proclamation, April 4-10, 2021.

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

Rose Chiocci, Director of Pike County Public Library thanked the Commissioners for helping to celebrate National Library Week. She said they are open to the public and invited people to come in and to wear a mask. There are protocols in place, but we want to see people back in the building. We don’t have any in-person programs right now, but we have plenty of virtual resources and programs including story time, book clubs, crochet club and we just wrapped up an international cooking project with the DVA (Delaware Valley Action!). You can look for more things like that on our website. Our attendance and circulation is a little bit down, compared to pre-pandemic times, but our e-resource usage has skyrocketed, almost doubled. We are putting more money into that and we’ve partnered with four other counties in the North East District – Lackawanna, Wyoming, Wayne and Susquehanna Counties. We’ve basically pooled our e-resource money together and now our patrons have access to over 20K e-books, e-audio books and there’s more copies, so there’s a shorter wait. It’s fully accessible with your library card. We are partnered with Wayne County and you can use your library cards at both locations – that’s nine libraries total. Most importantly, we have a raffle going on. There are four chances to win two \$50 gift cards to five local businesses. Please, if you have any questions for me about the library and what we’ve been doing, I’d be happy to answer them.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 21-08, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, April 2021.

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

Michele Minor Wolf, Director of VIP (Victims’ Intervention Program), distributed special masks for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and gave information about the history of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The reason I started to look a little bit more into the history, is because some of our founding mothers in the movement have either retired after 40+ years of working in our field or have since passed away. I started looking back to see how this all started because they are passing on the torch to other individuals. Sexual Assault Awareness Month is only 20 years old, but the work goes back so much further than that. As long as there have been people who care about making the world a better place, there have been activists for social change. We’ve had individuals advocating in movements for social changes and equality back from the 1940’s, 50’s and 60’s before SAAM ever existed. It started with the civil rights era and, although the discussion of realities of sexual assault and domestic violence weren’t on the forefront back then, those women and some men really started the path for people in our field to advocate for the rights of victims of domestic and sexual violence. The first rape crisis center was established in San Francisco in 1971. The first Take Back the Night also happened in San Francisco, seven years later. The first centers in Pennsylvania were in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in 1972 and then VIP was established in 1988. Our first Take Back the Night was twenty nine years ago – 1992. Take Back the Nights have been existing far before the whole Sexual Assault Awareness Month took place. That’s because we realized one night wasn’t going to change anything. One rally on one evening of people telling their stories wasn’t going to change anything. We developed into a month, but it doesn’t end in April. It’s something we work very hard to increase and enhance the awareness of every day that we’re working and, obviously, even the days that we aren’t working. We have teal colored rocks that have our website on it and inspiring messages. This one says “Prevention is Possible”, we have ones that say “Empower”, “Believe”, “Dream” and things like that. They are placed all over – in the grass, in front of business that are okay with that and we ask if you find one you can either keep it or place it somewhere else for somebody else to find or you could put it back in that same spot for someone else to find. Yesterday was the Day of Action. We did two things. On social media we had inspiring

messages for survivors on Facebook and Instagram and coffee shops in the area are using these sleeves that we gave them for free. They say "I Ask for Consent". The Daily Grind, Sparkomatic and the Naked Bagel all have them. If you stop by and have a coffee, you can at least thank them for helping spread the awareness. There's going to be a contest in Pike County, mostly Hawley and Milford, but there are some on the outskirts, where you can paint or decorate their windows teal. It's called "Paint the Town Teal". We're going to vote on them at the end of the month and announce the winner and they'll get a prize. They can do it in any way they want to, it can be a storefront, it can be a bank, anybody that has any kind of window they can decorate. I know we have a lot of people who are participating in it. We are having a Take Back the Night, although that's going to be in Honesdale and held outside because of COVID. We're also having the Night of Hope and Resilience. This is going to be held at the Inn at Noble Lane. While it's located in Wayne, it's open to the public and anybody can come. You can watch it virtually on our Facebook page and website. Commissioner Guccini asked what is the date of the Take Back the Night? Michele responded the 21st (at 5:30 PM) and will be on the Courthouse stairs in Honesdale so we maintain a social distance and people can sit on the lawn with their chairs or on the concrete with their chairs and the speakers will be upon the steps. The Inn on Noble Lane where we're having the speaker is the night of the 22nd. If you're coming in person, we are asking that people register because of space, not required but recommended and you have to be there at 5:30 PM. If you're going to watch it virtually, that's at 6:00 PM.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 21-09, Child Abuse Prevention Month, April 2021.

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

District Attorney Raymond Tonkin thanked the Commissioners for the Proclamation and for their continued support and partnership of the Dickson House Children's Advocacy Center in Milford. It's a great place to have children come in to and where hope and healing can both begin. District Attorney Tonkin introduced the Commissioners to the newest member of the Children's Advocacy Center and District Attorney's office, Elena Gorski. She is taking the role of Special Victim Advocate in greeting families and children when they come into the Center. District Attorney introduced, Sarah Wilson, Director of CAC Services and Senior Deputy District Attorney.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Sarah Wilson thanked everyone for all of their support for the CAC in Pike County with community partners Children & Youth, VIP and all of law enforcement. We really do wonderful things for children and the more awareness we can bring to the CAC and what we offer here in Pike County, the better. Outside of 103 West High Street we have 153 pinwheels. Those 153 pinwheels represent the children who came through the CAC in 2020 – it's a large number for little Pike County. We expect to see more in 2021. Those pinwheels honor those children, but also represent the playfulness, the good spirit of children that we wish for every child here in our community and worldwide. We invite everybody over after this Commissioners' meeting to see those pinwheels as we dedicate those to the children and, of course, the public is welcome to stop by Dickson House and see those. On Friday, from 10AM-1:30PM we are going to have a meet and greet with our local Pike County celebrity, Violet. She is AKC Labrador who is in training to be the Dickson House comfort and support canine for the children who come through. We have also launched our social media, so you can find us: <https://www.facebook.com/Dickson-House-Childrens-Advocacy-Center-104630635056709> and on Instagram at @DicksonHouseCAC. Thank you again for your support.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No.21-10, National Service Recognition Day, April 7, 2021.

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

Dawn Houghtaling, Program Coordinator of Diakon Community Services, thanked the Commissioners for supporting National Recognition Day and said service is the hallmark of American character and central in meeting many of our Nation's challenges. The Corporation for National and Community Service is the Federal agency that oversees Americorp and Americorp seniors' programs which includes the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. RSVP is sponsored by Diakon Community Services and seeks to engage volunteers for 55 and older with enriching opportunities that also help to meet the critical needs for the older community. Our focus in Pike County is on helping seniors to live independently and age in place for as long as possible with as much dignity as possible. We recruit volunteers to deliver meals to homebound seniors, help at senior centers, assist at all of the food pantries, field calls for the Pike County Hands of Hope, counsel seniors on Medicare with the Apprise program and many other similar assignments. Here in Pike County, we're still somewhat new, but we're working in partnership with the Pike County Area Agency on Aging and many other wonderful organizations to create awareness throughout the community. Every day that these volunteers head out with one good will – to improve the lives of others and strengthen their community. Unknowingly, they strongly increase the impact of the organization they serve through their dedicated service. We're currently seeking volunteers for meal delivery and in our senior center kitchens in Bushkill, Blooming Grove and Lackawaxen. If you would like to learn more about the RSVP Program, please contact me: (570) 390-4540 or houghtalingd@diakon.org.

Robin Skibber, Director of Area Agency on Aging thanked Dawn and also thanked the Commissioners for giving us time to thank our volunteers and recognize the services that they provide. This particular year was trying and without the volunteers that never wavered from the time the pandemic hit, we wouldn't have been able to increase our meals by 46% that we did within four weeks. Thanks to RSVP, we are looking forward to recruiting some more volunteers and gain some more momentum with our senior programs with Health & Wellness. Part of the Proclamation mentioned goes to stretch the dollars and support our agency. Every year we gain between \$100K-\$150K worth of volunteering in time and hours – that speaks volumes. As much they are a part of our agency and our family, we have not been able to do our recognition event which is a tremendous success every year. We are hoping this year we are going back to normal and doing some of those events to tell our volunteers how we feel about them. I just want to say a quote from Mahatma Gandhi "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others". Our volunteers live and breathe that every day – so thank you very much for letting us provide some recognition for our volunteers. Commissioner Osterberg added that the County Commissioners recognize all what you do to help Pike County. We know, as we all know, for the last year this has been extremely difficult for many organizations. What we've seen is though is a community come together. Whether it be the library, the CAC, VIP or what Robin does in the Aging Office,

all of these groups being sure that the services continued for the residents of Pike County. Not only just continue, in many cases improved. It's really commendable thinking about all of the struggles that you had to add on top of just trying to provide the services that you normally. On behalf of me and, I'm sure the County Commissioners, we just want to recognize you all and know that the residents and everyone appreciates everything that you do.

Commissioner Guccini stated it's pretty easy in this job, or just watching the news at night, to become cynical. I am guilty of that myself from time to time, maybe more often than I should. But this is truly a community here. People have always stepped up. As I was looking at the Agenda yesterday, all of this stuff has touched me. My youngest daughter is a high school/middle school librarian in Washington State and my daughter-in-law has just been appointed to run the children's program at the Hawley library and she's done a bunch of work on that. I've been a child abuse prosecutor and Guardian Ad Litem and a whole bunch of other depressing stuff that goes along with what we're talking about here. I happen to be on the Board of RSVP, but more importantly than that, my middle daughter did teach for America for two years in New Orleans. I want to tell you it was the toughest thing she's ever done. Pretty remarkable that program, I think that program is still going on. All of those kinds of things are personal to me and we really do appreciate everything you do – thank you.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to adopt Resolution No. 21-11, Authorizing the Transportation Office Official to Assign Roles within the PA DOT Grants Program.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Resolution Authorizing the Submittal and Modification of PA DotGrant Objects.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to appoint Lori Vant Slot to fill a vacant position on the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council for a 3 year term ending 12/31/2023.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to to advertise for bids for the Kimbles Road Bridge Repair Project.

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

Commissioner Osterberg said we will stop here for a minute and said for as long as I have been Commissioner we've been dealing with bridges and always a struggle to try and figure out how we're going to pay for these, how we're going to get them done and trying not to just continually to put band aids on them. The progress that we made and the motion we made 5 or 6 years ago when Steve (Guccini) and Mr. Caridi was here and put in place the \$5 Registration Fee. Most people don't want to be paying more tax and they look upon it as just another burden on them, in this case thought the money has really proven to be what is pushing us further ahead on these bridge replacements. The bridges that we have in the County, 17 bridges, to replace and do them correctly amounts to an enormous amount of money. When I say enormous, the one number I think I remember hearing was \$20M. We're are we ever going to find that kind of money without increasing taxes? What this \$5 Registration Fee did was it developed a fund that we were then able to take that money to build a bigger fund through using bond monies and this is the first that we believe is going to be 5 bridge repairs of major significance in this County. It is going to total with some Federal funds in the range of about \$7M. While it is not the full \$20M or whatever that number is, it's a start. I think it's important that the residents know that we are using the money where we told you we were collecting it for. It just took a little time to build the fund and to come up with a plan. These things don't happen quickly. There's a lot of engineering that goes into it, there's a lot of agreements with Penn DOT, but this is the first of the 5 bridges that we have on the slate right now. Kimbles is a major project up there. I spoke to Palmyra Township to tell them this was on the agenda because they need to know that this is going to impact their residents there and we'll communicate more with them as we move forward with road closures and detours. It's something that will occur in a single season.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute a Letter of Support for the Poconos Multisports Festival at the Wallenpaupack High School on June 11-13, 2021.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Program Authorization Form for the County Intermediate Punishment Treatment Program for FY 2021-22, on behalf of the Probation Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the PCCD Subgrant Award Notification for \$50,642 for the 2020-21 Adult Probation Grant-in-Aid application.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to to authorize the Chairman to execute the Inspection Agreement between Beach Lake Sprinkler and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Correctional Facility.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Cooperative Block Agreement Amendment for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025 between the PA Department of Aging 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 - Robert Ruiz, Human Services – PowerPoint Presentation – Robb Ruiz said the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) was just launched 4 weeks ago. It is an

initiative from the Stimulus Package passed by the Federal Government that came to the States, that comes to the Counties. Eligibility is open to a lot of residents. The major eligibility is income and it has to be below the 80% Area Median Income (AMI) and also has to have some sort of significant impact directly or indirectly related to COVID-19. We look at past rent, utilities and eviction notices and able to self-certify. Required documents for applicants: photo ID, copy of signed current rent or lease agreement, evidence of unemployment benefits, if applicable, written statement from landlord of past due rent payment or notice to evict, if applicable, copies of past due utility bills if utility assistance is being request and income documentation for all household members 18 and older. There are requirements from landlords: agreement form signed and provide W-9, payments will be made by paper check and the landlord can apply on behalf of tenant but needs all of the tenant's information; if landlord refuses to participate, funds can go directly to tenant for payment of rent; and landlords are also precluded from seeking eviction outside of the months where assistance is provided. Everything is on line and if you have a smart phone you can scan the QR Code or you can go to: pikpa.org or pikeforward.com. The application is online and tenants can upload their leases, their information and utility expenses, invoices. We made it mobile friendly where you use your cell phone and just snap pictures and upload. Our landlords also have some resources there. They have to fill out the W-9 Affidavit and then the agreement which is also online. They can track their applications on line and each tenant is given an unique identification number that they can call in with in case they have any questions. We have already received about 70 applications, each one is incredibly detailed. It is labor intensive and we are working on them as quickly as we can. We are a small group working very hard. Commissioner Guccini asked if this covers delinquent mortgage payments? Robb answered no this does not cover mortgage payments yet. I expect to be back up here in a few months to talk about that project. Commissioner Osterberg asked if some of our "PHARE" money do that? Robb said yes, we do have payment for mortgages, not under this funding, under a different funding bucket as well for "PHARE". We just don't have a plethora of it, but we do expect that soon.

- Pike County CHIRP - Robert Ruiz, Human Services – PowerPoint Presentation – Robb Ruiz said the CHIRP program is for businesses right now. It's for businesses for profit located in Pike County, not publicly traded and it's for businesses that are accommodations for food services and drinking. The tangible net worth has to be less than \$15M and they have to have fewer than 300 full-time equal opportunity employees. They also have to show that they were significantly impacted by COVID-19 by having 25% less revenue. It is a very detailed application, and it is up to \$50K in grants. Also, they had to have been in operation in February, 2020. We don't have too much money on that, but we do have enough to cover some of the applicants that have applied. We are reaching out to some of the local businesses and doing a mailer this week. If you need more information, please call our office (570) 296-3434 and the application is available online www.pikeforward.com. Commissioner Osterberg said if there were any members of the press who had specific questions, they should reach out to Robert Ruiz (contact information provided above).
- Spotted Lanternfly Information - Stephen Alessi, Penn State Cooperative Extension – Stephen Alessi greeted the Commissioners and thanked them for inviting him today to share updates regarding the Spotted Lanternfly. He also thanked Michele Long of the Conservation District of Pike County. We have been working with them for a couple of months now about Spotted Lanternflies. Krista (Gromalski) has me set up to share my screen. Mr. Alessi proceeded with a PowerPoint Presentation. The Spotted Lanternfly is an invasive species that has come from Asia. He then showed slides of the Spotted Lanternfly with wings open and wings closed. It is a pretty bug, but has some destructive properties which makes it very concerning as an invasive pest. It was discovered in Berks County in 2014, it may have arrived in Pennsylvania as early as 2012 but not discovered until 2014. The Spotted Lanternfly feeds on about 70 plus plant varieties and they are pretty valuable commodities to Pennsylvania, especially related to agriculture and the nursery industries and landscaping as well. There's also big concerns of vineyards and orchards. Grapes are preferred hosts as well as apples, maple, birch, and sycamore.
- COVID-19 Vaccine Update – Commissioner Osterberg said he wanted to recognize the importance of Wayne Memorial Hospital and everything they've been doing for Pike County. As we found out during this, not having an hospital did lead to some other struggles we had, but I can't say enough for what they've done and stepped up to do everything they can to make sure everybody in this County has the ability to find a vaccine. Just yesterday, we were talking about homebound residents in Pike County, which has been a struggle for the Aging Office. Yesterday I had Tim Knapp (PEMA) reach out to Wayne Memorial Hospital and they didn't give it a second thought that they will provide that and will help vaccinate individuals that, in particular seniors, that are homebound. I know that's in the process right now of occurring. At the same time, when we tell them we will help them offset some of these costs, that's never an issue. I think after this is all done we realize that our stronger partner in medical is Wayne County Hospital. The other hospital that services us is quite far away – Stroudsburg. When this is all done we'll have to have a special award day for Wayne Hospital and recognize everything that they have done. A sheet was provided with the next vaccinations on it, which will be given at the 911 Center. Commissioner Schmalzle added that this has devolved in a number of different ways and we didn't have vaccines for a long time and now we have vaccines. The next phase is making people believe that getting a vaccine will help our community. Through that effort, the PMVB is going to step with a campaign that you are going to see on television, billboards, social media and in writing and so on and so forth, but I don't think that Bill Gates is putting chips in the vaccine, I don't think it's going to alter our genes and I don't think it's going to make you sterile. If it's a government type of corruption, that would mean that every government in the entire world is corrupt as well, because the entire world is fighting to do this. Our message is going to be – when it's your time, get the vaccine to help our community and help our businesses get back to normal.

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

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 21, 2021, AT 9:00 A.M., AT THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.