DAUPHIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP MEETING

DECEMBER 11, 2013
10:00 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Haste, Chairman
Mike Pries, Vice Chairman
George P. Hartwick, III, Secretary

STAFF PRESENT

Laura Cullison, Esq., Chief Clerk; Marie E. Rebuck, Controller; Janis Creason, Treasurer; Fred Lighty, Esq., Human Services Director’s Office; Randy Baratucci, Director of Purchasing; August Memmi, Director of Community & Economic Development; George Connor, Community & Economic Development; Leila Brown, Solicitor’s Office; Amy Harinath, Press Secretary; Kay Lengle, Human Resources; Dave Schreiber, Human Resources; Faye Fisher, Director of Human Resources; Mike Hubler, Conservation District Director; Lisa Lauver, Conservation District; Eric Naguski, Conservation District; Becky Witmer, Conservation District; Mike Clark, Conservation District; Randie Yeager, Acting Director of Human Services; Gary Serhan, Deputy Controller; Steve Libhart, Director of EMA; Keith Kepler, Director of Solid Waste; Catharine Kilgore, District Attorney’s Office; Gerald Feaser, Jr., Director of Registration & Elections; Merle Foust, Human Services Director’s Office; J. Scott Burford, Deputy Chief Clerk; Julie Mackey, Commissioners’ Office; Melody Osborn, Commissioners’ Office; Ruby Doub, Commissioners’ Office and Richie-Ann Martz, Assistant Chief Clerk

GUESTS PRESENT

Bill Cluck and Fox 43

MINUTES
CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Haste, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Everyone observed a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There are two sets of meeting minutes that will be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS HELD BETWEEN MEETINGS

Ms. Evans reported that there was one Executive Session held this morning regarding Personnel Matters.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Cluck asked that everyone remember Wanda Williams in the loss of her granddaughter.

He also thanked the Commissioners for their support with the City transaction. December 23 is a big day.

The Commissioners and Mr. Cluck discussed the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act and how this will affect homeowners. Mr. Cluck indicated that a unanimous consent is needed in order to consider this Act. Senator Toomey objected. He asked if the Commissioners could contact the Senator and ask him not to object to the unanimous consent and to let it come to a vote. This would be an economic disaster to the City. He is surprised that the Governor has not responded. Pennsylvania has a large amount of miles that are along rivers and streams.

Mr. Haste indicated that he has talked with Congressman Barletta about this issue. Commissioner Haste’s NACo Committee will be placing this on the agenda so it becomes a NACo priority. It will be a priority at the national level.

Mr. Cluck indicated that nothing has been in the newspaper about this and that he is trying to get a commitment from the Governor. Thank you for your efforts.
Mr. Hartwick stated that this is a matter beyond the City. They are looking for language to allow Congress to delay until a more comprehensive solution is reached. If this legislation is passed people will not be able to afford their homes and they will not be able to sell their homes due to the excess cost for flood insurance. This will have a major impact in Dauphin County. There are many properties that are in the floodplain. This will be a top priority with CCAP and NACo.

Mr. Cluck thanked the Commissioners for their support and assistance in getting a letter to the Senator regarding the impact that this will have in Dauphin County.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS/GUESTS

A. Dauphin County Commissioners
   1. Proclamation – Mike Hubler

Mr. Haste stated that Mr. Hubler and he had something in common that he didn’t know about. They both raised chickens.

Mr. Hubler has served Dauphin County and its residents for a number of years. When you talk to his colleagues around the State and see the struggles that they have in other counties, Mike is quiet, but when people need to take action Mike is the one that they go to. Mike will be missed by many, but he wishes him the best in his retirement.

Mr. Haste read the following Proclamation:

Office of County Commissioners
Dauphin County, Pennsylvania

Proclamation

We, the Dauphin County Board of Commissioners, are honored to applaud Mike Hubler for nearly three decades of exceptional service to Dauphin County and to recognize, with both joy and sadness, his well-earned retirement after a long and distinguished career;

Whereas, since 1984, when Mike joined the Dauphin County Conservation District’s Board of Directors, he has served with poise and professionalism, garnering much respect from his colleagues;

Whereas, in 1989, he was hired by the Conservation District as a Resource Conservationist, responsible for the technical review of erosion and sediment pollution control plans and inspection of construction projects, and later became District Manager in 2010;

Whereas, this Penn State University graduate is also an active member of St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church in Berrysburg, avid Sudoku player and outdoor enthusiast;

Whereas, in addition to his career 28 years of service to the Conservation District, Mike is a devoted husband to his wife, Carol, and father to his children, Shelley and Scott;

Therefore, we join the 268,000 residents of Dauphin County in honoring Mike Hubler for his exemplary service to the community at large and to this very grateful County of Dauphin; we congratulate him most warmly on his richly
deserved retirement, and we wish him much happiness and success as he moves on to the next phase in his life; and in grateful recognition thereof, we do hereby proudly proclaim December 5, 2013 as “Mike Hubler Day” in Dauphin County.

(Applause was given.)

Mr. Hubler stated that Sudoku is something that exercises my mind, which is something you do when you reach my age. It has been his privilege to work for the Commissioners of Dauphin County. He appreciated having the support of the Commissioners behind the District, along with an effective Board of Directors and a very professional staff that knows their job and does their job.

(Applause was given and pictures were taken.)

B. Faye Fisher, Human Resources and Randie Yeager, Human Services

1. Merit Hire Process

Ms. Fisher stated that Randie and she will provide a brief summary of the transition from the State Civil Service to a County Merit Hire System and the recommendations to move forward.

The new system will cover approximately 259 employees in the Departments of Human Services, Drug and Alcohol, Area Agency on Aging, Children & Youth and MH/ID. Several years ago, a determination was made that participation in the state civil service system is optional; not a requirement. Since this finding several counties have made the transition. In addition, several other counties are also preparing to transition.

In order for our county to transition and create our own merit system, there are 6 components that the plan is required to address. They are:

- Selecting and advancing employees based on their relative ability, knowledge and skills.
- Paying equitable and adequate compensation.
- Training employees to assure high quality performance.
- Retaining employees on the basis of the adequacy of their performance.
- Assuring fair treatment of applicants and employees in all aspects of personnel administration.
- Freedom from political influence in the workplace.

Other than county participation being optional, there are many benefits to transitioning. Randie will address those benefits.

Ms. Yeager stated that the County will be able to do its own recruiting. Positions will be posted County-wide. Applicants can apply directly to the County for vacant positions. As a result, the applicant pool will increase to include a wider selection of qualified applicants. The County decides on the filters and preferences for each position’s
candidate pool. The rule of 3 will no longer apply. Veterans and aging preference will remain, but only if all things are equal. Dauphin County applicants will also be given preference are all things are equal. The County can design assessments and can administer assessments. All testing will be done in Dauphin County. There will be a shorter turnaround time when recruiting and filling vacancies. Employment offers will be based on merit. The amount of paperwork will be reduced by half. The County will create an independent 3-member appeal panel made up of professionals outside the County. This new system will result in longevity of employees, cost effectiveness, high productivity, increased morale and reduced turnover rate.

Ms. Fisher indicated that several months ago, the Commissioners had expressed an interest in making this transition. An internal committee was formed to include staff from Human Services and Human Resources. Other counties that have already transitioned were surveyed. Information was also obtained from CCAP. The committee met with human services directors several times to gain input on what currently works, what does not, and things that are important to them that they would like to see under the new system. This past July, the County notified the Departments of Health, Drug & Alcohol, Aging, Civil Service and Public Welfare of its intention to transition. In August, notification was made to the employees that would be affected by this change. There were very few questions as a result of this communication. Several labor management discussions were held. Many policies and procedures were developed and are in the process of being finalized. The Committee is trying to identify an assessment company that can be recommended to this board and identifying the types of assessments that can be used under the new system. In August, a draft plan was submitted to DPW. Since that time a meeting was held with DPW and additional binders of information were submitted to prove that the County meets the requirements. DPW is the lead agency that will review and approve the merit plan. Once approval is given the plan must then be shared with the other state agencies.

In order to keep the process moving, the County will need to provide 90-day termination notices to terminate the 3 contracts that we have with state agencies. The Committee is asking that the Board of Commissioners move forward in providing the termination notices to these state agencies. This does not need to be voted on today. It can be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

Mr. Hartwick thanked everyone who has assisted in this project and working with the State to see what needs to be accomplished in order to implement the new system. An announcement was made last year on the transition. The County will be in a better position with the hiring process. Preferences will be provided, but only if the applicants are equal.

Mr. Haste asked what the expected date will be.

Ms. Fisher indicated April.
Mr. Pries thanked everyone for putting this together. This new system will expand our pool of applicants. Congratulations!

C. Catharine Kilgore, District Attorney’s Office

1. VWAP Grant

Ms. Kilgore stated that the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency decided to separate out the DUI Impact Panels from other Substance Abuse Education Demand Reduction Funding. As a result we need to reapply for these funds. The previous application was approved back in June. The total is $92,891 over a two year period. The projected income is $23,523. The panels are highly successful.

   It was moved by Mr. Pries and seconded by Mr. Hartwick that the Board approve the submission of the PCCD Grant – Victim Impact Panels.

   Question: Mr. Haste – Aye; Mr. Pries – Aye and Mr. Hartwick – Aye; motion carried.

D. August Memmi and George Connor, Community & Economic Development

1. CDBG - Disaster Relief Funds

Mr. Memmi indicated that they will provide an update on the CDBG – Disaster Relief Funds.

Mr. Connor stated that the CDBG-DR Action Plan was created to help communities recovering from presidentially declared natural disasters in 2011. This program provided through HUD’s CDBG grant program will support long-term disaster recovery efforts in areas with the greatest extent of unmet need. These funds are intended to confront unmet housing, business and infrastructure needs beyond those addressed by other forms of public and private assistance. Dauphin County received $6,415,833 from HUD to administer the CDBG-DR grant program. The Commonwealth of PA will receive $27,142,501 which at least 80% will be directed to five counties (Bradford, Dauphin, Columbia, Wyoming and/or Luzerne). For 2013 the County will receive $7,632,000.

The Commissioners discussed ways in which these funds can be used to help with ways to avoid some of the flooding issues. Some municipalities can put in piping. The 100 year storms hit twice in Derry Township. We need to come up with the best use of these funds. A question was raised as to the reason why some of the applications were not approved.

Mr. Connor indicated that it was because HUD attached this to the CDBG Program and a lot of the applications did not qualify because they were not within the low to moderate income. 50% of the funding has to be spent in the low to moderate level.
The Commissioners indicated that it would be nice to see some planning in flood mitigation. They suggested that Mr. Connor work with Mr. Howe on sending out a flyer to those residents that are affected.

Mr. Connor indicated that 11 applications for housing rehab were submitted and only four qualified.

The Commissioners indicated that some of the residents are still waiting for funding and where are these people currently staying.

Mr. Connor indicated that there is gap insurance, which is for the part that was not covered.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Lengle asked if there were any questions on the Salary Board Packet and/or the Personnel Packet. (There was none.)

The Salary Board Packet and the Personnel Packet will be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

PURCHASE ORDERS

Mr. Baratucci reported that he has been requested to add two requisitions to the Purchase Order Packet. One is for Children & Youth and the other is for Probation Services. The Children & Youth requisition is for the independent living program. There are a few budget adjustments that will be corrected prior to next week.

The Purchase Order Packet will be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

TRAINING PACKET

The Training Packet will be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Hartwick offered condolences to Wanda Williams and family on the loss of her granddaughter due to acts of violence. It took the life of an individual that had a bright future ahead of her. The services are tomorrow.

He thanked Steve Howe, Joe Curcillo and Amy Harinath for trying to pulling together the data for County-wide impact of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act.

Mr. Hartwick read the following regarding the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act:
“The issues we face in the loss of the historical protection from flooding we have enjoyed for generations are by and large traceable to historic and current Federal Policy now with the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act (Public Law 112-141, aka BW12), will affect municipalities nationwide in multiple areas such as real estate markets, banks and mortgage companies, elderly citizens living on a fixed income and policyholders who built their communities with the best available information.

Through the passage of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 that was recently signed into law, the National Flood Insurance Program was revised such that the public’s reliance on the program to provide affordable flood insurance protection for prior investments in their homes and businesses were essentially dissolved which means these structures will receive a 25% increase in the flood insurance premium for the next four (4) years (in some cases a 20% increase over five (5) years) and this passage substantially and immediately devalued the investments made in all properties receiving subsidized insurance premium rates through the drastic increase in the cost of flood insurance and all other properties in the area.

Since 1968 the historical purpose of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was to provide affordable flood insurance in exchange for using FEMA generated and specified Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS) for floodplain management by a participating community.

Previously these structures were rated Pre-FIRMs or the FIRMS in effect when the structure was constructed, and now, even though the structures were not substantially damaged (was over 50% of their fair market value now Biggert-Waters states 30% of fair market value), their owners will struggle to pay premiums to keep flood insurance on these structures.

The Flood Disaster Act of 1973 required the purchase of flood insurance on and after March 2, 1974 as a condition of receiving any form of federal or federal-related financial assistance, (banks, mortgage companies, savings and loans) for acquisition or construction purposes with respect to insurance buildings.

Under the NFIP regulations, Section 59.3, “this flood program still requires upon the effective date of the FIRM the charging of risk premium rates for all new constructions and substantial improvements.”

The County of Dauphin is a County of the third class representing 269,665 of Pennsylvania’s constituents.

Within Dauphin County, there are 13,205 parcels of land intersecting either 1% or 0.2% Annual Flood Hazard Zone constituting 11.89% of the total parcels of land within the County.

There are residential or commercial structures on 10,544 of those parcels with an average building value of $365,651.
The taxpayers of Dauphin County and business owners in this County have made lifelong plans and investments based on the existence of affordable flood insurance as proposed by FEMA in the past 45 years; further, in many cases, these properties are the owner’s largest investment.

Harrisburg specific information – approximately 1/5th of the City’s real estate is in the 100-year floodplain, including much of the City’s most valuable residential real estate located in Midtown, Uptown and Shipoke, as well as much of it valuable commercial real estate located along Front Street. This represents an estimated total of 2,500 properties. With an estimated average value of $150,000 per property, the City has approximately $375 million in flood-insured real estate.

Dauphin County Commissioners support efforts to amend the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 due to the impact that will severely affect homeowner’s ability to remain in their homes and businesses to remain viable because of immediate and substantial increases in flood insurance costs.”

The Commissioners indicated that they would send correspondence to Senator Toomey regarding this issue.

Mr. Pries congratulated Mike Hubler on his retirement and best wishes to the staff. He knows that they will do an excellent job.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Mr. Lighty reported that it is anticipated that all items on the Solicitor’s Report will be ready for a vote next week.

CHIEF CLERK’S REPORT – LAURA CULLISON, ESQ.

- Ms. Cullison reported that Volunteers are needed for Dauphin County’s 5th Annual Holiday Community Celebration, spearheaded by Dauphin County Human Services, on Monday, Dec. 16th from 4:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. in the banquet hall of the Farm Show Complex, 2300 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg. This annual event provides gifts, hot meals, entertainment and resources to children and families in need. Volunteers are asked to sign up by contacting Francis Lavender at 717-571-1344 or flavender3226@comcast.net. Approximately 2,700 individuals in need will be served at this annual event.

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

There was none.
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Mr. Pries and seconded by Mr. Hartwick that the Board adjourn.

Transcribed by: Richie-Ann Martz