DAUPHIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP MEETING

NOVEMBER 12, 2014
10:00 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk; Marie E. Rebuck, Controller; Janis Creason, Treasurer; Fred Lighty, Esq., Solicitor’s Office; J. Scott Burford, Deputy Chief Clerk; August Memmi, Director of Community & Economic Development; Randy Baratucci, Director of Purchasing; Gerald Feaser, Jr., Director of Registration & Elections; Randie Yeager, Director of Human Services; George Connor, Community & Economic Development; Dave Schreiber, Human Resources; Kay Lengle, Human Resources; Jennifer Simpson, Court Administration; Ruby Doub, Commissioners’ Office; Melody Osborn, Commissioners’ Office; Julie Mackey, Commissioners’ Office and Richie-Ann Martz, Assistant Chief Clerk

GUESTS PRESENT

James Roxbury, Barb Miller, Kathy Possinger, Tom Connolly and Jen Wintermyer

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Haste, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:07 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

Mr. Saylor reported that there were no Executive Sessions held between meetings.

ELECTION BOARD

A complete set of Election Board Meeting Minutes are on file in the Commissioners’ Office.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Connolly of Swatara Township was present at today’s meeting. He indicated that he spoke at a Commissioners’ Meeting in October and shortly after that he received a letter from Commissioner Pries regarding the Police Regionalization Forum. He didn’t know if he got the letter because of him speaking at the Commissioners’ Meeting on this subject or if he got it because of him being an elected official. In either case, he thanked the Commissioners for allowing the study to move forward and notifying him that it was taking place. Swatara recently has made plans to take over the policing of Paxtang Borough, which is outside a county-wide merger, but it will be beneficial to both communities.

Mr. Pries indicated that he views that as a pebble dropping in a pond and starting a little ripple that hopefully someday will become a wave around the County. He thanked Mr. Connolly, his fellow Commissioners and the police departments for taking the lead on this merger. The cost savings will be great. Those letters did go out to all elected officials, as well as the police chiefs and managers.

Mr. Connolly, as a newly elected Commissioner of Swatara Township, indicated that he has had the opportunity to contact and question Mr. Feaser on different subjects and Mr. Feaser has been extremely helpful in every aspect that has to do with elections. Swatara Township is looking at redistricting. The only thing that he knows about that redistricting is what he has read in the paper. A group was formed prior to him taking office. The concerns that were addressed are extremely important, because this past
Election day, he was at the polling place (Township Building) and repeatedly people came up that did not know where to vote. A lot of it does have to do with they only vote in the Presidential election. He helped direct them. There are nine polling places. Swatara Township has had no redistricting or polling place changes for this particular Election. The Township did change two polling locations previously. There needs to be some type of attempt to notify the public. The public does have the responsibility if they don’t vote every time and there has been a change over the gap of years that is on them. It is a huge undertaking. There does need to be a lot of education and notification to voters if there is a change. He has no doubt that if Mr. Feaser is responsible for the notification that it will be done professionally.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS/GUESTS

A. Kathy Possinger, Executive Director, Tri-County Community Action

1. Presentation on the Tri-County Community Action Programs

Ms. Possinger thanked the Commissioners for allowing her to make a presentation, not for an ask, but for an opportunity to give the Board some feedback on the Community Action Agency serving Dauphin County, Perry and Cumberland Counties.

Ms. Possinger is the Executive Director of the Tri-County Community Action. Tri-County was one of 1,100 community action agencies in the nation celebrating 50 years of a waged war on poverty that President Lyndon Johnson announced in 1964. As a result of that community action, many other organizations, including Head Start and Job Core and Ameri Core were formed in an effort to help communities move out of poverty. Community Action has been serving since 1966 in that capacity here in Dauphin County.

Ms. Possinger shared with the Commissioners some information about what they have been able to accomplish in the last year with the County’s support. She provided a packet to each of the Commissioners. There are 35,000 people living in poverty in Dauphin County. Of that, 12,000 are children. Those numbers need to be reduced. Community Action addresses the root causes of poverty in the community and helps people and communities to identify their barriers and help them to move towards self-sufficiency. Some of the accomplishments – nearly 9,000 families enrolled in energy assistance programs that are operated through PPL, 250 preschoolers were able to be ready for kindergarten through the Family Center Program, which is a program of Dauphin County, they expanded their reach within the County to offer services not just in the lower end, but very purposefully in the upper end of the County, all aspects of Dauphin County, which includes staff providing direct services in Elizabethville, Millersburg, Halifax, Royalton, Middletown, every end of the County footprint. The parenting and fatherhood programs have reached into Elizabethville, Susquehanna Township School District and Harrisburg School District working with men and women and families to help build engagement. Commissioner Hartwick had the opportunity to be part of one of the Fatherhood graduations. They are proud of the accomplishments
of more than 84 men in that program over the last year. Community Action’s Across Ages Mentoring Program and through the partnership over the summer with Dauphin County Diversity Festival, they were able to be part of a network of mentoring organizations learning and talking with each other while they were also in a recruiting stage. One of the core components of Tri-County’s success as an organization has been through its many partnerships. Through that they have been able to enroll 97 families and individuals into a long-term case management program, based in Harrisburg and Royalton. They are able to provide five years worth of assistance and five years of dedicated goal planning, assistance and partnership with Dauphin County, working with the Getting Ahead initiative. The staff works with them as a jumping off point for those that have participated in the program and developed a goal plan. They will help to implement that plan. 131 families were enrolled in in-home parenting programs. Of those they were able to assure that families had engagement with their children.

George Connor is a member of the Tri-County’s Board of Directors for a very long time. He has been an active participant in the organization in community development activities and housing counseling. George will be stepping off the Board later this year due to term limits. They are thankful for the partnership that they had with him. She also thanked Randie Yeager for her partnership as well. When significant cuts were made in the Fatherhood Program, it was through the leadership of the Commissioners and the Human Services Department that they were able to sustain the programming, making creative choices in order to be able to continue to provide the quality of service for families in Dauphin County. Dauphin County’s $480,000, through Tri-County’s programming last year, has been a tremendous opportunity for getting a foot in the door for them to help so many Dauphin County residents. Next year Tri-County will be engaging on looking at the needs assessment. She provided information on Dauphin County’s data related to poverty statistics, information that go into their thought processes in prioritizing their needs next year. Transportation, housing and employment are barriers. She asked if the Board has any questions.

Mr. Hartwick stated that the County couldn’t have a better partner, a more creditable agency and one that provides not only the level of services and specific types of services that are needed, but also are accountable for both the financial transaction and regulatory responsibilities that the County is required to report to both the Federal and State government. There have never been any issues under Ms. Possinger’s leadership related to that creditability and the ability to make sure that the County can also measure outcomes and directly providing that level of support to the people that really need help the most. It is probably one of the more creditable community action commissions throughout the State of Pennsylvania. That has happened because the Commission has recruited the right talent, have folks who are representative of the community serving the community that have a heart for this work beyond a paycheck. It has not always existed that way. There are some unique engaging opportunities as the partnership moves forward. Discussion was held regarding the identification of key challenges and barriers and holes that exist and do it in a planning way that is going to provide some of the flexibility that the County has been allowed to have within the block
grant process to be able to make commitments to addressing some of these really challenged areas in a way that is allowable for us to do as the County has more and more flexible funding issues like transportation, housing, employment and education can all be part of a holistic plan from the time you very first engage with whatever system or agency. There is a no wrong door approach. The County is really attempting to try to get to that point from a community perspective. The County is going to be engaging in some planning with the block grant. They would like to do it in conjunction with the United Way, partners and providers and really talk about focusing those resources in the most impactful way to provide real meaningful dents in the areas mentioned that are consistent throughout all systems that continue to be a barrier. The County didn't have the flexibility in the past. Hopefully with that planning and partners like Tri-County, the County will be able to start to see a much more improved holistic system that serves the needs of the people that really need help, not just folks who think they know what is going on from the government’s perspective.

Ms. Possinger thanked the Commissioners and indicated that they look forward to that opportunity.

Mr. Haste thanked Ms. Possinger for what she and the Board do. It was an interesting program the other evening. A lot of what is in the handout was highlighted and those that made each one of those areas shined were recognized.

Ms. Possinger thanked the Board for their sponsorship of the dinner and Commissioner Haste for being there. They recognized two clients, one through the Housing Counseling Program that went through a lease purchase initiative with the Tri-County Housing and were able to demonstrate her road to success. They also recognized a Family Center parent, who still struggles on a regular basis of getting through her barriers, but the critical component is her engagement with her children, helping to prepare her kids for lifelong learning. That is the key component of the Family Center initiative—the ability, as a parent, be your child's first teacher.

**HUMAN RESOURCES – KAY LENGLE**

Ms. Lengle indicated that she will be meeting with the Salary Classification Committee this afternoon, but in advance of that she did provide a new Salary Board listing, which shows the transactions that are expected to be discussed. There may be one more. She asked if there were any questions. (There was none.)

Ms. Lengle stated that she is requesting a vote on Items #19 and #20, two New Hires. She added #40, which is related to the Salary Board Reclassification, as well as the addition of Items #42 and #43. She asked if there were any questions. (There was none.)

*It was moved by Mr. Hartwick and seconded by Mr. Pries that the Board approve New Hires #19 and #20 of the new Personnel Packet.*
Question: Mr. Haste – Aye; Mr. Pries – Aye and Mr. Hartwick – Aye; motion carried.

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

PURCHASE ORDERS – RANDY BARATUCCI

Mr. Baratucci stated that the Commissioners should have received their Packet on Monday. There are a few budget items to clean up, which will be done. He asked if the Board has any questions. (There was none.)

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

A. Appointment of Lawrence M. Cooney to the Gaming Advisory Board. (**A Vote is Requested 11/12/14**)

It was moved by Mr. Pries and seconded by Mr. Hartwick that the Board approve the appointment of Lawrence M. Cooney to the Gaming Advisory Board.

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

SOLICITOR’S REPORT – FRED LIGHTY, ESQ.

Mr. Lighty stated that the Solicitor’s Report is in the Board’s packet. All of the items will be ready for next week. He asked if there were any questions. (There was none.)

CHIEF CLERK’S REPORT – CHAD SAYLOR

Mr. Saylor stated that he has nothing to report unless there are questions of him. (There was none.)

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

Mr. Haste reported that on Monday, the Commissioners had the pleasure of showing off the first Land Bank project. He thanked Commissioner Hartwick and the folks in the community. They have been active in making sure that Dauphin County was the first county to have a Land Bank Program. The County was also blessed in that they were
able to partner that with a program out at the Prison where inmates are taught a life skill under the leadership of HBI. There was a property that was blighted in Susquehanna Township. The Land Bank was able to work with the Township and School District to get the property. They were able to use the HBI program out at the Prison to rehab the property. The property looks very nice and it is back on the market. This is a win/win in many ways. They were able to take a property in a community that was blighted, bring it back up to the standards of that community and hopefully keep a problem from growing and at the same time teach a skill to inmates so when they have paid their debt to society and go back out into the real world they have a skill that will be able to keep them from going back to what caused them the problem and in some cases hopefully a skill that will help them provide for their family. There is another project that will be moving forward. The representatives from the Township were excited to be partners with the County in the program.

Mr. Pries indicated that an elderly neighbor went up to the workers on more than one occasion asking them to come to her house afterwards. It was a win/win on multiple fronts for the neighborhood, the value of the homes in that neighborhood, the Township and School District and for the County as a whole. It is a good thing. He thanked Commissioner Hartwick for his leadership.

Mr. Hartwick mentioned that a lot of ground was broken, but there is still a lot to work through as it relates to continued sustainable funding for the Land Bank initiative. He thanked Ms. Possinger for her position on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The Board is taking a look at every area to continue sustainable funding for the future of the Land Bank project. He thanked Susquehanna Township. They have been the most progressive municipality, both from the School Board perspective and from the Township perspective that has figured out ways to do things rather than point fingers and say what is wrong with those issues. It has been a great partnership and one that is going to be beneficial to both the individuals the County serves and the residents of Susquehanna Township in making those investments that will increase property values, tax rates and ultimately provide significant skill sets. This is a true model of success and it couldn’t happen without the partnership.

Mr. Pries stated that tomorrow will be the Second Police Regionalization Committee Meeting. That is being held at 9:00 a.m. He thanked everybody who is serving on that Committee. PERF will be there and some other departments, including the Swatara Township Police Chief who is going to talk about the recent merger of Swatara and Paxtang.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.
ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Saylor
Chief Clerk

Transcribed by: Richie-Ann Martz