

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 22, 2020

Commissioner R. Michael Keith called the regular meeting of the Indiana County Commissioners to order at 10:30 a.m. in the Commissioners Hearing Room. It is noted that because the courthouse is closed during the Corona Virus Pandemic, the meeting was open to the public via Zoom.com

ROLL CALL

Chairman R. Michael Keith, present
Commissioner Robin A. Gorman, present via zoom
Commissioner Sherene Hess, present via zoom

Also, in attendance were Solicitor Matthew T. Budash, Chief Clerk Robin Maryai.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Keith led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVE MINUTES...APRIL 8, 2020

A motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of April 8, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

There were no Executive Sessions.

PROCLAMATION...CONSERVATION DISTRICT WEEK

After a proclamation was ready by Ms. Hess, a motion was made, seconded by Ms. Gorman and carried unanimously to proclaim May 3 – 9, 2020 as Conservation District week commemorating the great work accomplished by the Indiana County Conservation District in addition to PA's other 65 Conservation Districts.

BIDS (040920)...HOODLEBUG TRAIL RESURFACING PROJECT / PARKS AND TRAILS

At the request of Ed Patterson, Parks and Trails, a motion was made by Mr. Keith, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve the low bid received from Ligonier Construction Company in the amount of \$217,000.00 for the resurfacing of the Hoodlebug Trail. The project bidding was administered through the PennDOT Electronic Contract Management System and were opened on April 9, 2020. The project is funded through PennDOT Transportation Alternative Set Aside Program and Gibson Thomas Engineering is providing engineering services for the project at a cost of \$23,295 which serves as the county's project match requirement. It is noted one other bid was received in the amount of \$242,000.00.

BOARD APPOINTMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to appoint Jeffrey Boden, Indiana, PA to the Indiana County Housing Authority; term to expire January, 2021.

INDIANA COUNTY CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN – UPDATE / EMERGENCY DECLARATION AND CARES ACT AUTHORIZATION / PLANNING

At the request of LuAnn Zak, Office of Planning & Development, a motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve the updated Citizen Participation Plan for Indiana County. The Plan covers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Emergency Solutions Program (ESG) and the HOME Program that are all funded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The Plan has been updated to include provisions for Emergency Declarations approved by local, state or federal government. The proposed Plan specifically addresses the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) Authorization funding. The revisions of the Plan, if approved, will enable Indiana County to utilize expedited procedures to prepare, propose, modify, or amend its statement of activities to FY 2019 and FY 2020 grants and the new CARES Act funding. The revision will waive the requirement that in person public hearings for all grants made available under this law be conducted. In place of the in person public hearings “virtual public hearings” will be conducted. Citizens will be notified of the virtual public hearings with no less than a five-calendar day notice. This Plan, once adopted, will be effective immediately.

GRANT APPLICATION – ARC POWER INITIATIVE 2020 – BROADBAND / PLANNING

At the request of Byron Stauffer, Office of Planning & Development, a motion was made by Mr. Keith, seconded by Ms. Gorman and carried unanimously to approve a resolution to submit a Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative application seeking a \$1,500,000 grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for partial funding to develop and implement a broadband deployment strategy to determine the delivery methodology and related costs of extending high-speed internet services to rural and underserved areas of Indiana County. Authorization allows Commissioner Baker and the Executive Director of the Office of Planning & Development to submit the ARC POWER Initiative 2020 application and for any two Commissioners to execute documents is also requested.

Mr. Stauffer explained that we increasingly live in a knowledge-driven economy, making access to high-speed internet essential to our daily lives and economy. Lack of quality internet access means that businesses and farmers are not able to market themselves and conduct business online, our children miss out on learning opportunities and residents cannot connect to healthcare facilities or cannot share information with specialists using telehealth modes. As defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Broadband or high-speed internet allows users to access the Internet at significantly higher and faster speeds than those available through “dial-up” services. Broadband is delivered in any number of ways, including Fiber Optic Cable; Digital Subscriber Line (DSL); Cable Modem; Wireless, Fixed, or Mobile; and Satellite. New technologies, including 5G, are emerging.

The ARC POWER Initiative 2020 program requires a \$1 for \$1 match. The resolution stipulates that the Indiana County Board of Commissioners commits to providing the necessary matching funds in the amount of up to \$1,500,000 for the project, through the administration of State, local, and private funding sources secured for implementation of the broadband deployment project.

ELECTION REMINDERS

Chief Clerk, Robin Maryai made the following announcements.

- General Primary Election has been moved to June 2, 2020.
- last day to register to vote for the Primary Election is May 18, 2020
- last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot is May 26, 2020

She also announced that poll workers are needed in various precincts...if anyone is interested in serving or would like more information, please email chiefclerk@indianacountypa.gov.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Keith announced that the county received notification of the Coronavirus Emergency Funding Program available through the Department of Justice in the amount of \$58,008.00 to assist with costs associated with COVID-19 expenses. A motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve authorization of the grant application.

Commissioner announced that at the end of the first quarter the budget is on schedule with the exception of Emergency Management which is the single resource to bring what is needed for the county and what needs to be distributed throughout the county. He said the county is looking at restructuring the county's debt to take advantage of future dollars.

Commissioner Hess wanted to let the citizens know the board is working through this pandemic for the safety and the health of the citizens in the forefront but also are planning for when the stay at home order is lifted and to prepare for the opening of the county. Ms. Hess also announced that today is the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day and acknowledged everyone who do a great deal to protect our natural environment and human health.

Commissioner Gorman said we have all learned that everything is different now and she thanked citizens, agencies and businesses for being what is asked to keep people safe. She also thanked Representative Struzzi for inviting the commissioners to be apart of his town hall telephone meeting on Friday, April 24th at 4:10 p.m.

Chief Clerk Robin Maryai announced the county's maintenance office is making "sneeze guards" for the polling places and safety kits with masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc. are being supplied by the Department of State for the June 2nd election.

Byron Stauffer wanted to remind small businesses that resources are available through the CARE's Act and to contact his office for more information. He also reminded the citizens of the importance to responding to the census and if they have not done so they can respond at www.my2020census.gov or by calling 844-330-2020.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING...MAY 13, 2020 AT 10:30 A.M.

The next regular scheduled Commissioners' Public meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 10:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the Board at this time, a motion was made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Gorman to adjourn the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Sherene Hess, Secretary

R. Michael Keith, Chairman