

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2022

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.

ROLL CALL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Keith led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Commissioner Keith also asked for a moment of silence for the war in Ukraine.

APPROVE MINUTES...FEBRUARY 23, 2022

A motion was made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Gorman, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of February 23, 2022.

COVID UPDATE

Thomas Stutzman gave a COVID update. It will be two years on March 16, 2020 when the Commissioners issued a county declaration of disaster as the COVID Pandemic was growing in the Commonwealth. The statistic is continuing to improve over the last couple weeks and CDC is showing Indiana County is at a low levels. Over the last 7 days, Indiana County is showed a 5.05% covid positivity rate, covid testing increased by 19.08%, IRMC reported 3 covid positive patients and none in ICU and 4 covid related deaths. Home tests kits are still available at the PA Department Health Indiana Office. Discussion is continuing with the Pennsylvania Department of Health Initiative for Rural PA and PA Office of Rural Health to expand the healthcare community's ability to extend public access to covid vaccinations and testing in rural areas. As of March 5th, 273 seasonal flu cases have been documented since the beginning of 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ron Riley made public comment regarding COVID and vaccinations of the younger population. Ola Kaniasty made public comment asking the Commissioners to place a Ukraine Flag in the hands of the Jimmy Stewart Statue in support of the Ukraine citizens. Anne Simmons made public comment regarding support of Ukraine as well.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

There were no Executive Sessions.

RESOLUTION...UKRAINE FOR SUPPORT AND PEACE

After a resolution was read, a motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and unanimously carried to stand with all who are experiencing very difficult situations because of the illegal action, and join other local governments across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America in condemning Russia's aggression. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ukraine, its citizens, and Ukraine-Americans and all those caught up in this act of war they do not want.

Father Ihor Protsak, pastor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Dixonville was present and said “We are in need of your prayers. The situation over there is not good at all. They are standing for their freedom, they are standing for the dignity of our sovereign country.”

PROCLAMATION...CAROL SCHURMAN

After a proclamation was read, a motion was made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Mr. Keith and carried unanimously to congratulate the achievements of Caro Schurman who was named a laureate to the 2021 National 4-H Hall of Fame.

PROCLAMATION...EQUAL PAY DAY

After a proclamation was read, a motion was made by Mr. Keith, seconded by Ms. Gorman and carried unanimously to proclaim Tuesday, March 15, 2022 as Equal Pay Day to recognize the full value of women’s skills and significant contributions to the labor force and to their families’ economic security, and further encouraged all workplaces to conduct an internal pay evaluation to ensure women are being paid fairly and equitably.

PRIVATE PROVIDER CONTRACT...CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETY OF MERCER COUNTY / CYS

At the request of Vicki Weaver, Children & Youth Services, a motion was made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Gorman and carried unanimously to approve an agreement with Children’s Aid Society of Mercer County, Mercer, PA for FY 21-22 to provide services to Children & Youth Services and Juvenile Probation on an as needed basis. They provide non-placement services.

AGREEMENT...GIBSON-THOMAS ENGINEERING / 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 a contract with Gibson-Thomas Engineering in the amount of \$25,000.00 for the Blairsville Riverfront Trail Resurfacing Project. This project is funded with a grant approved by the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission. The project construction amount is \$292,000.00 to resurface 1.7miles of the trail with a new asphalt surface and to add some additional drainage pipe.

GRANT APPLICATION...BUTTERMILK FALLS PHASE 3 / PARKS AND TRAILS

At the request of Ed Patterson, Parks and Trails, a motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve the submission of a grant application in the amount of \$798,061.00 to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for the Buttermilk Falls Phase 3 Project. This project would involve construction of a new entrance road, additional parking, visitor contact station, and installation of interpretive signage.

BID(S)...PINE RIDGE PARK SEAL COATING PROJECT (030822) / PARKS AND TRAILS

At the request of Ed Patterson, Parks and Trails, a motion was made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Mr. Keith and carried unanimously to approve a low bid received from Quaker Sales, Inc., Johnstown, PA in the amount of \$40,438.22 for seal coating and paving work to the roads at Pine Ridge Park and Pine Lodge. One other bid was received in the amount of \$44,399.80.

**CREATIVE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE - INDIANA ARTS COUNCIL OF PA
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING / PLANNING**

At the request of Molly Sarver, Office of Planning & Development, a motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Indiana Arts Council of PA for the Creative Spaces Collective program. This MOU will allow payments made by Indiana Arts Council on behalf of the Creative Spaces collective during the 2021-2022 cycle to be used as match and reimbursable items towards the PCA Creative Communities Initiative Grant Reimbursement Request.

**RESOLUTION FOR DELEGATION OF SIGNING AUTHORITY AND RELATED
FORMS - FOR THE HOME CONTRACT C000082627 / PLANNING**

At the request of Christina Coleman, Office of Planning & Development, a motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve a Resolution authorizing signing authority and designating LuAnn Zak, Assistant Director of the Indiana County Office of Planning & Development to sign and submit financial invoices for the HOME C000082627 contract for the duration of the contract activity period and the associated forms that accompany the request. The accompanying forms include the FFATA (Federal Funding Accountability & Transparency Act), the Lobbying Certification Form, and the Delegation of Signing Authority that delegates LuAnn Zak, Assistant Director of the Indiana County Office of Planning & Development. These forms are required by DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development) prior to the release of the contract and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HOME Program funds.

PCOMP SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION

At the request of Robin Maryai, Chief Clerk, a motion was made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Gorman and carried unanimously to approve the PComp Safety Improvement Program Grant Application in the amount of \$16,587.00 be submitted to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP). This application will provide funding to upgrade the fire alarm system in the courthouse.

PCORP LOSS PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION

At the request of Robin Maryai, Chief Clerk, a motion was made by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Gorman and carried unanimously to approve the PCorp Loss Prevention Grant Application in the amount of \$20,000.00 be submitted to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP). This application will provide funding to upgrade the fire alarm system in the courthouse.

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF INDIANA COUNTY ANNUAL PLAN

At the request of Robin Maryai, Chief Clerk, and on behalf of the Indiana County Housing Authority, a motion was made by Mr. Keith, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to approve the Housing Authority of Indiana County Annual Plan. The Plan is a comprehensive guide to their public housing agency policies, programs, operations, and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals. There are two parts to the Housing Authority Plan: the 5-Year Plan, which is submitted to HUD (Housing and Urban Development) once every 5th fiscal year, and the Annual Plan, which is submitted to HUD every year.

BOARD APPOINTMENT...INDIANA COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY

A motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess and carried unanimously to appoint Don Huey, Indiana, PA to the Indiana County Airport Authority; term to expire January, 2027.

A motion was made by Ms. Gorman, seconded by Mr. Keith and carried unanimously to appoint Ron Anderson, Indiana, PA Ex-officio Member to the Indiana County Airport Authority.

ANNOUNCEMENT...CIRCULATION OF PETITIONS FOR LOCAL COMMITTEE

Chief Clerk, Robin Maryai explained that because of the challenges of the redistricting maps, on February 10th the Supreme Court issued an order temporarily suspending the Primary Election calendar. Per the Court's order, the nomination petition filing period, which was scheduled to begin Tuesday, February 15th, was suspended. Then on February 23rd the PA Supreme Court adopted the Congressional redistricting and set the circulating and filing dates for US Congress and statewide offices only to between February 25th and March 15th.

There was an application filed on February 23rd by the Acting Secretary of the Commonwealth on behalf of the County Election Directors with the Supreme Court seeking clarification for the filing period of State Committee and Local Committee. On March 2nd the Supreme court issued clarification that the period for circulating and filing nomination petitions for Local Committees shall be aligned for all purposes with the period for circulating and filing nomination petitions by candidates for Congressional and statewide offices. The Local Committees shall commence immediately and nomination petitions for Local Committees shall be filed on or before March 15, 2022.

The Supreme Court also clarified that the period for circulating and filing nomination petitions for State Committees shall be aligned for all purposes with the period for circulating and filing nomination petitions for seats in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, which will be set by further order of the Supreme Court subsequent to its adjudication of the appellate challenges to the Final Plan of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission.

SET PETITION DATES FOR LOCAL REFERENDUMS

Chief Clerk, Robin Maryai, asked the board to set the period for circulating and filing Local Referendums be between February 25th and March 15, 2022.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Hess commented that CCAP issued an Amicus Brief highlighting the need for an expedited resolution to the appeals and asked the Supreme Court as it considers changes to the election calendar to maintain a single primary election date for all contests and set a calendar that give counties reasonable time to complete their election tasks. CCAP is working hard as one of their priorities to help engender confidence in the election system. Commissioner Gorman commented that the board recently attended the ribbon cutting of New Village Institute (NVI) on March 5th. NVI is the newest and largest U.S. campus dedicated to training auto and diesel technicians. The grand opening of Riziki Café at the Jimmy Stewart Airport was March 7th where they will be serving breakfast and lunch.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING...MARCH 23, 2022 AT 10:30 A.M.

The next regular scheduled Commissioners' Public meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 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. Gorman, seconded by Ms. Hess to adjourn the meeting at 11:39 a.m.

Sherene Hess, Secretary

R. Michael Keith, Chairman