

WORK SESSION: TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2022, 10:00 A.M.

Location: Commissioners Meeting Room, Basement

**Public meetings are being held both in-person and by conference call. To participate in the meeting please dial 1-408-419-1715 or 1-408-915-6290 and enter meeting number 2468097683#*

Call to Order:

Commissioner Erb called the meeting to order.

Moment of Silent Reflection:

Commissioner Erb called for a moment of silent reflection.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

Commissioner Erb requested those participating in the meeting to please stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:

Members Present:

Commissioner Erb, Commissioner Burke, Commissioner Webster, Chief Clerk Hemminger and Solicitor Karn.

Others Present:

Jenn Sleppy and Sarah Chuff (Finance), Allison Senkevich and Melissa Harpster (Commissioners Office), Kay Stephens (Altoona Mirror), Keith Calhoun (Domestic Relations), Jim Hudack and Cathy Branas (CYF), Brian Wiser (Keller Engineers), Paul Shaffer (Public Works), Janet Wasserman and Cindy Wells (Hollidaysburg Residents), and Jim Pooler (Maintenance).

Upcoming Meetings:

Wednesday, January 5, 2022	9:00am	*Retirement Board Meeting (Commissioner's Meeting Room)
	10:30am	*Salary Board Meeting (Commissioner's Meeting Room)
Thursday, January 6, 2022 Mtg.	8:30am	*Parks and Rec Advisory Board (Commissioner's Meeting Room)
	10:00am	*Commissioners Business Session (Commissioner's Meeting Room)
Tuesday, January 11, 2022	10:00am	*Commissioners Work Session (Commissioners Meeting Room)

Executive Session Announcement:

Chief Clerk Nicole Hemminger announced on Monday, January 3, 2022 beginning at 10:00 a.m., she, the three-3 Commissioners, HR Director Katherine Swigart, and Assistant County Administrator Allison Senkevich met in Executive Session to discuss a pending law suit.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioners Meeting: 10/26, 10/28, 11/9, 11/16
Special Budget Meeting: 10/25, 11/8, 11/10, 11/15, 12/1, 12/2, 12/3

Commissioner Erb called for corrections or changes to the minutes of 10/26, 10/28, 11/9, 11/16 and Special Budget Meetings of 10/25, 11/8, 11/10, 11/15, 12/1, 12/2 and 12/3. **There were no corrections or changes noted.**

Motion by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to accept the minutes as prepared.

Public Comment:

Commissioner Erb called for public comment.

Kay Stephens commented that she would be interested in an update on the county's stance on the Second Amendment Sanctuary Referendum.

Commissioners Comments:

Commissioner Erb called for commissioners comments.

Commissioner Webster provided a brief comment on her commitment to service to the residents of Blair County in the New Year.

Commissioner Burke announced that drive thru COVID testing is available at the Convention Center from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. She stated that there is a possibility of the testing dates being extended to the middle of January, but not confirmed at this time.

Commissioner Erb provided the following statement regarding 2020 Reimbursement of Court Costs.

There is almost nothing more frustrating to local government than the unfunded mandates regularly forced on us by higher levels of government.

Once again, I am pointing out the frustration we experience as the Commonwealth continues to ignore its funding responsibilities for the County Courts.

Here is the latest chapter:

Last week on the very last days of 2021, County Treasurer Jim Carothers' office received a payment of \$227,299 from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts representing our 2020 Court Reimbursement.

A full year after the expenses had been incurred.

But the bigger problem is far worse than just delayed payments.

In the 1980's, 2 separate appellate court decisions ruled that the Commonwealth was responsible for funding 100% of the costs of operating and administering local courts.

A compromise of sorts was reached between the Commonwealth and the County Commissioners Association of PA (CCAP) to make court administrators and their deputies' state rather than county employees and for the state to pay counties \$50,000 annually per judge to cover their staffing costs and expenses.

The \$50,000 per judge has not changed in the over 30 years since that agreement while inflation and the actual costs have increased significantly.

In theory, Blair County should have received \$350,000 (5 judges at \$70,000) for 2020, but once again, AOPC has shorted us by \$122,771 or \$447 more than we were shorted in November of last year for 2019.

The excuse: insufficient funding was appropriated.

Since I took office 6 years ago, the Commonwealth has shortchanged us by a cumulative total of over \$727,000 using the formula from the 1980's.

The annual amount reimbursed keeps decreasing while the actual cost keeps rising.

The last time Blair County received the entire \$350,000 was for the year 2014, and then AOPC never sent it to us until January 2016.

But the real shortage for 2020 is much more than \$122,771.

The total cost of five judges' staffs for salaries, benefits, and other employer-paid expenses in 2020 was over \$582,000, making the actual shortfall of state funding \$355,000 for just 2020. That is 61% less than actual costs.

That is a large amount for County taxpayers to have to pick up, and they should not have to pay for it.

It is time for Pennsylvania to step up, do what the state appellate courts have told it to do, and actually reimburse counties for their court costs.

Because it is the county taxpayers and more specifically the county property owners who end up bearing the burden which the Commonwealth is shirking.

Proclamation - Blair County School Choice Week - the County of Blair and Board of Commissioners recognizes January 23-29, 2022 as Blair County School Choice Week.

Commissioner Burke read the following Proclamation:

**PROCLAMATION
BLAIR COUNTY SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK**

WHEREAS all children in Blair County should have access to the highest-quality education possible; and,

WHEREAS Blair County recognizes the important role that an effective education plays in preparing all students in Blair County to be successful adults; and,

WHEREAS quality education is critically important to the economic vitality of Blair County; and,

WHEREAS Blair County is home to a multitude of high quality public and nonpublic schools from which parents can choose for their children, in addition to families who educate their children in the home; and

WHEREAS Educational variety not only helps to diversify our economy, but also enhances the vibrancy of our community; and,

WHEREAS Blair County has many high-quality teaching professionals in all types of school settings who are committed to educating our children; and,

WHEREAS School Choice Week is celebrated across the country by millions of students, parents, educators, schools and organizations to raise awareness of the need for effective educational options;

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, The Blair County Board of Commissioners, do hereby recognize January 23-29, 2022 as Blair County School Choice Week, and I call this observance to the attention of all of our citizens.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Nicole M. Hemminger, County Administrator

Bruce R. Erb, Chairman

Laura O. Burke, Vice-Chairman

Amy E. Webster, Secretary

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt the Proclamation.

Consent Agenda:

Resolution #1-2022:

- a. Ratification of the following three-3 Warrant Lists:

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
12/23/2021	211223MW	\$53,318.53
12/23/2021	211223SS	\$165,841.54
12/23/2021	211223HR	\$12,133.88

- b. Ratification of Total Payroll for the Check Dated 12/30/2021 in the total amount of \$816,828.69.
- c. **Farmland Preservation Board:** Requesting approval for the reappointment of Donald Delozier and Cindy Bigelow for the period of 1/1/2022 through 1/1/2025; the appointment of John Black to Chairman; requesting Commissioner Erb as liaison to the Farmland Preservation Board from 1/1/22 through 12/31/22.
- d. **Children, Youth, and Family Advisory Board:** Requesting approval to extend the appointments of Denise Adams, Craig Clark, Stephanie Wolfe from 12/31/21 to 12/31/23, and Kelly Popich from 1/1/2022 through 12/31/2023.
- e. **District Attorney:** Requesting the appointment of Justin Shickman Esq. as the designated Right to Know Officer for the District Attorney's office effective 1/04/22.
- f. **Employment:** Lee C. Slusser, FT, Maintenance Technician, Building Maintenance, \$16.43/hr., effective 01/03/22, Cory F. Yedlosky, FT, Lieutenant, Prison, effective 01/03/22, Jan E. Andrews, Per Diem, Member, Board of Assessment Appeals, \$150/full day \$75/half day, effective 01/01/22, Stephen R. Gerhart, Per Diem, Member, Board of Assessment Appeals, \$150/full day \$75/half day, effective 01/01/22, Terrence E. Tomassetti, Per Diem, Member, Board of Assessment Appeals, \$150/full day \$75/half day, effective 01/01/22.
- g. **Resignations:** Crystall M. Miller, FT, Advocate, District Attorney, \$12.36/hr., effective 12/30/21, Hope M. Riggelman, FT, Case Manager, District Attorney, \$15.38/hr., effective 12/30/21, Patrick R. Brown, FT, Deputy, Sheriff, \$15.38/hr., effective 01/02/22.
- h. **Board of Assessment Appeals:** Requesting approval for Stephen Gerhart to be appointed Chairman.

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution #1-2022.

Staff Reports & Special Business:

Children, Youth, and Family:

Jim Hudack requested approval to renew the contract between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth, and Families and CAI for providing professional consultancy services for the period of 1/1/2022 through 12/31/2022.

Program Consultancy Services	340 hours @ \$100/hour
Fiscal Consultancy Services	540 hours @ \$88.13/hour
*Travel costs will be reimbursed consistent with Blair County travel policies.	

Mr. Hudack stated that the renewal of the contract would provide on-going assistance with strategic planning, Needs Based Budget preparation and submission and the transition to a new CYF leadership team for the period of 1/1/2022 through 12/31/2022.

Mr. Hudack stated that the expense associated with the contract renewal was included in the current Needs Based Budget as well as the 2022 county budget.

Discussion followed.

Commissioners:

Commissioner Erb requested approval of the acceptance of a Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant Contract, C000081908 from PA Department of Community & Economic Development in the total amount of \$750,000.00 for County Road 101.

Discussion followed.

Resolution #2-2022: A resolution approving the acceptance of a Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant Contract, C000081908 from PA Department of Community & Economic Development in the total amount of \$750,000.00 for County Road 101.

Motion by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution #2-2022.

Keller Engineers:

- a. Brian Wisner requested a four-4 month time extension to Engineering Agreement L00368 Part 2, Blair County Bridge #67, to provide construction survey no more than 30 days prior to the start of construction. Part 2 of the Contract currently expires on February 5, 2022 and the revised expiration date will be June 5, 2022.

Mr. Wisner stated that a four-4 month time extension from February 5, 2022 until June 5, 2022 for Part 2 of the Blair County Bridge #67 replacement project over Old Town Run, located in Frankstown Township is necessary to coincide with the construction schedule, specifically to allow for construction survey to be completed no more than 30 days prior to construction.

Mr. Wisner stated that the project is scheduled to be let next week.

Discussion followed.

- b. Brian Wisner requested a four-4 month time extension to Engineering Agreement L00343 Part 2, Blair County Bridge #82, to provide construction survey no more than 30 days prior to the start of construction. Part 2 of the Contract currently expires on February 1, 2022 and the revised expiration date will be June 1, 2022.

Mr. Wisner stated that a four-4 month time extension from February 1, 2022 until June 1, 2022 for Part 2 (final design) of the Blair County Bridge #82 superstructure replacement project over the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River located in Blair Township is necessary to coincide with the construction schedule, specifically for construction survey to be completed no more than 30 days prior to construction.

Mr. Wisner stated that the project has already been let.

Discussion followed.

Old Business:

Public Works – Highway:

Chief Clerk Hemminger requested approval of an agreement between the County of Blair and Keller Engineers, Inc., for Engineer Designation Services for 2022 at the following hourly rates:

President	\$165.00
Vice President	\$150.00
Senior Professional Engineer	\$140.00
Professional Engineer	\$125.00
Landscape Architect	\$110.00
Professional Surveyor	\$140.00
Surveyor	\$85.00
Survey Assistant	\$68.00
Environmental Specialist	\$120.00
Senior Designer	\$110.00
Designer	\$87.00
Senior Technician	\$87.50
Technician	\$64.00
Senior Resident Project Representative	\$92.50
Resident Project Representative	\$82.50
Administrative Support	\$50.00
Mileage (IRS Allowable)	Presently .58 mile
Report Copies (8 ½" x 11")	.15/page (black & white) \$1.00/page (color)
Report Copies (11" x 17")	.50/page (black & white) \$2.50/page (color)
Prints (22" x 34")	\$2.75/sheet (black & white) \$8.75/sheet (color)
*Hourly rates include wages, required taxes, insurance, overhead and profit. This form of pricing is used primarily for cost plus fees. Our work for you will be negotiated for a lump sum amount in most cases.	

Mrs. Hemminger provided a brief summary of the proposal submitted and of the hourly rate schedule. She stated that Keller's provide many services to the county at no retainer fee.

Discussion followed.

Resolution #3-2022: A resolution approving an agreement between the County of Blair and Keller Engineers, Inc., for Engineer Designation Services for 2022 at the following hourly rates:

President	\$165.00
Vice President	\$150.00
Senior Professional Engineer	\$140.00
Professional Engineer	\$125.00
Landscape Architect	\$110.00
Professional Surveyor	\$140.00
Surveyor	\$85.00
Survey Assistant	\$68.00
Environmental Specialist	\$120.00
Senior Designer	\$110.00
Designer	\$87.00
Senior Technician	\$87.50
Technician	\$64.00
Senior Resident Project Representative	\$92.50
Resident Project Representative	\$82.50
Administrative Support	\$50.00
Mileage (IRS Allowable)	Presently .58 mile
Report Copies (8 1/2" x 11")	.15/page (black & white) \$1.00/page (color)
Report Copies (11" x 17")	.50/page (black & white) \$2.50/page (color)
Prints (22" x 34")	\$2.75/sheet (black & white) \$8.75/sheet (color)
*Hourly rates include wages, required taxes, insurance, overhead and profit. This form of pricing is used primarily for cost plus fees. Our work for you will be negotiated for a lump sum amount in most cases.	

Motion by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution #3-2022.

Tax Claim:

Commissioner Erb requested approval and implementation of NSF Return Check Policy.

Discussion followed.

Resolution #4-2022: A resolution approving the implementation of NSF Return Check Policy.

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution #4-2022.

Adjourn:

Meeting Adjourned,

Nicole M. Hemminger, Chief Clerk