

WORK SESSION: TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 10:00 A.M.

Location: Commissioners Meeting Room, Basement.

**Public meetings are being held both in-person and by Zoom. To participate in the meeting please dial 1-301-715-8592 or 1-646-876-9923 and enter meeting number 966 3545 3323# and enter the meeting passcode 423423*

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 that those participating in the meeting 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 Assistant Solicitor Muriceak.

Members Absent:

Solicitor Karn

Others Present:

Helen Schmidt (Public), Mindy Hostler (Children, Youth, and Families), Jay Whitesel (Prison), Derek Flaig (Social Services), James Pooler (Maintenance), Angela Wagner (Controller), Mark Taylor (EMA/911), Rebecca Robinson and Brandon Meck (Finance), Kay Stephens (Altoona Mirror), Judy Rosser and Reid Dutchess (Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships).

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Wednesday, August 30, 2023		
Thursday, August 31, 2023	8:30 a.m.	Blair Planning Commission Mtg. (Altoona Water Authority)
	10:00 a.m.	*Commissioners Business Session (Commissioners Meeting Room)
	2:00 p.m.	Human Services Annual Plan Public Mtg. (Logan Township Municipal Bldg.)
Friday, September 1, 2023		
Monday, September 4, 2023		Labor Day Holiday Courthouse Closed
Tuesday, September 5, 2023	10:00 a.m.	*Commissioners Work Session (Commissioners Meeting Room)

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – 08/15/23 and 08/17/23

Commissioner Erb called for corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of 08/15/23 and 08/17/23.

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 comments. **There were no comments noted.**

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Commissioner Erb called for commissioner comments.

Commissioner Webster mentioned that the insurance requirements to continue the County’s partnership with Alliance of Therapy Dogs is complete for future use of the therapy dogs.

Commissioner Burke mentioned reports that confirmed the presence of West Nile virus in the Blair County area and mentioned the importance of not having standing water as it attracts mosquitos.

Commissioner Erb read the following comments regarding property taxes:

“Last week, Pennsylvania’s Independent Fiscal Office released a research brief that estimated the 2021 property tax burden by county.

The IFO defined the property tax burden as the ratio of property taxes paid to total income. The burden measure represents a county-wide average and reflects all property taxes paid by homeowners, renters, landlords, and business owners.

Property taxes included current-year and delinquent school district, county, and municipal taxes.

Counties were ranked from the highest ratio to the lowest with the average ratio statewide measuring 2.57%.

Monroe County’s burden was the highest at 4.73% and Snyder County’s was the lowest at 1.51%.

Of the 66 counties, Blair County came in 61st with a tax burden ratio of 1.77%

That means that Blair’s overall property tax burden was the 6th lowest in the commonwealth.

That speaks well for the school districts, the municipalities and the county who are clearly working hard to keep property taxes here significantly lower than most of Pennsylvania.”

PROCLAMATIONS: Proclaiming September 2023 as Recovery Month--

Commissioner Erb recited the following Proclamation:

Proclamation to Proclaim September 2023 as Recovery Month
Recovery is for Everyone,
Every Person, Every Family, Every Community

WHEREAS, behavioral health is an essential part of one’s personal welfare and overall wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, prevention education of substance use disorders work, treatment is effective, and people with these disorders can attain healthy lifestyles and achieve rewarding lives in recovery. By seeking help those seeking recovery can embark on a new journey toward enhanced health and overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, encouraging relatives and friends of individuals with substance use disorders to implement preventative measures, recognize signs of the problem, and guide those in need to the appropriate treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, according to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 2022 approximately over 5,000 Pennsylvanians, and specifically in Blair County, 70 Residents deaths were a result of an overdose. These individuals are relatives and friends within our community. We must continue to reach out to the communities and encourage those untreated to seek help; **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**; and

WHEREAS, in helping more people achieve and sustain long-term recovery, the County of Blair, Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships, and Rise for Recovery Blair County, invite all residents of Blair County to participate in **National Recovery Month**; and

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, the Board of Blair County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2023 as **National Recovery Month**, and encourage the citizens of Blair County to observe this month by lighting a purple lightbulb on their porch or in their window in support of this year’s **Recovery Month**.

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

Director of Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships, Judy Rosser and Reid Dutchess, Recovery Specialist from Rise for Recovery both spoke about their experiences and upcoming events for Recovery Month in September.

Commissioner Burke recited the following Proclamation -- Proclaiming September 2023 as Hunger Action Month:

Proclamation
2023 Hunger Action Month

WHEREAS, hunger and poverty are issues of vital concern in Blair County where 11.1% of residents experience food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, Blair County is committed to taking steps to combat hunger in every part of our community and to provide additional resources to those in need; and

WHEREAS, Blair County is committed to working with Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and its partner agencies in educating people about the role and importance of food banks and food pantries in addressing hunger and raising awareness of the need to devote more resources and attention to hunger issues; and

WHEREAS, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and its partner agencies distributed over two million pounds of food in Blair County through their network of food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other community organizations; and

WHEREAS, the month of September has been designated “Hunger Action Month” in order to bring attention to food insecurity in our communities and to enlist the public in the fight to end hunger by taking action – including volunteer shifts, social media shares, and donations – to ensure nobody has to make an impossible choice between food and other necessities like medicine, utilities or childcare; and

WHEREAS, food banks across the country, including Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, will host numerous events throughout the month of September to bring awareness and help end hunger in their local community; and

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, the Blair County Board of Commissioners do hereby recognize September 2023, as **HUNGER ACTION MONTH** in Blair County and call this observance to the attention of our citizens.

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

CONSENT AGENDA:
Resolution 415-2023:

- a. Payment of the following four-4 Warrant Lists:

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
08/29/2023	230829CY	\$428,413.77
08/29/2023	230829SS	\$ 96,001.72
08/29/2023	230829WW	\$167,019.66
08/29/2023	230815WW	\$787,316.34

Which include payment of the following invoices:

- Blair Community Action Agency, in the total amount of \$14,702.72.

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

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
08/24/2023	230824HR	\$10,247.01
08/22/2023	230822WW	\$1,015,714.52
08/21/2023	230821FS	\$3,175.06

- c. Ratification of Total Payroll for the Check Dated August 25, 2023, in the total amount of \$903,862.98.

- d. **Valley View Park Amphitheater Project:** Requesting approval for payment of Contractor’s Application for Payment #2, received from John Claar Excavating, Inc., in the total amount of \$75,550.68.

- e. **2023 Budget Transfer:** To cover the amount of an invoice received from Craig Fencing.

From	\$	To
01103BM-44840 Building Maintenance	\$1,250.00	44122-44840 Public Safety/911

- f. **Bridge #70/County Road 101 over South Poplar Run Replacement Project:**
Requesting approval of ECMS submission, Estimate 001, in the total amount of \$141,645.57, Estimate 002, in the total amount of \$70,382.24, Estimate 003, in the total amount of \$46,372.25, and Estimate 004, in the total amount of \$76,794.01, all received from Francis J. Palo, Inc. Expenses are 100% reimbursable through the Road Map Fund.
- g. **Employment:** Kerry J. Capelli, FT, Case Manager, Domestic Relations, \$15.52/hr., effective 08/28/23; and Jestelynn A. Heaton, FT, Correctional Case Manager, Prison, \$11.58/hr., effective 08/28/23.
- h. **Resignations:** Nicole C. Halerz, PT, Telecommunicator, Public Safety/911, \$16.54/hr., effective 08/30/23; and Olivia N. Bosar, FT, Clerk Typist II/Court Aide, CYF, #11.13/hr., effective 09/01/23.
- i. **Retirements:** Rosi M. Weitzel, FT, Clerk Typist II/Court Aide, CYF, \$11.55/hr., effective 08/22/23.
- j. **Status Change:** Alex T. Brehm, From FT, Maintenance Technician, Building Maintenance, \$18.48/hr., To, FT, Maintenance Technician/Carpenter, Building Maintenance, \$18.48/hr., effective 08/14/23; Nevaeh A. Brubaker, From FT, Custody Processor, Custody, \$11.75/hr., To, FT, Custody Manager, Custody, \$16.29/hr., effective 08/21/23; Nicholas D. Shope, From, FT 37.5 hrs. per week, Parole and Probation Officer, APO, \$11.75/hr., To, FT 35 hrs. Per week, Supervisor, APO, \$45,004.96/yr., effective 08/28/23; and Kristy N. Rodriguez, From FT 35 hrs. Per week, Receptionist/Clerk, Prothonotary, \$11.03/hr., To, FT 37.5 hrs. Per week, Parole and Probation Officer, APO, \$16.30/hr., effective 09/04/23.

Commissioner Erb noted his abstention on the payment of invoice to Blair Community Action Agency due to a conflict of interest.

Motion by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 415-2023 with the abstention as noted.

STAFF REPORTS & SPECIAL BUSINESS

Blair Senior Services:

Derek Flaig requested approval for the submission of the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) Fiscal Year 22/23 Fourth Quarter Report for the period of April 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023.

Mr. Flaig mentioned the need for this services has gone down post-Covid, but the cost of fuel has continued to increase. He also mentioned they are currently waiting on this year’s allocation to be distributed.

Discussion followed.

Blair Drug and Alcohol:

Judy Rosser requested approval for authorization for Chief Clerk Nicole M. Hemminger to sign on behalf of the County of Blair the Electronic Access Agreement for the Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool entered into with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and to act as the Delegated Administrator to submit through the e-grant system.

Ms. Rosser confirmed that the grant application has already been submitted and is currently being reviewed. Once the grant is awarded, Ms. Rosser will bring the grant award to a future Commissioner’s meeting. This request is simply allowing Chief Clerk Hemminger to sign electronically through the e-grant system as the Delegated Administrator.

Discussion followed.

Blair County IT:

Nicole Hemminger requested approval for signatures on the FY 2022 State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) Agreement allowing federal funds to be used for Commonwealth provided intrusion detection services as well as cofense security awareness services at no cost to the county.

Chief Clerk Hemminger clarified that this item is strictly a requirement for the grant that the State received from the Federal Government. The County is not receiving funds nor are we spending any funds for the grant. This is simply an approval from the Commissioners for cybersecurity.

Discussion followed.

Department of Emergency Services:

Mark Taylor requested approval of a quote received from All About Challenge Coins for the purchase of theme challenge coins for the 2023 Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) SARA Summit, in the total amount of \$778.00, to be paid with LEPC Hazardous Material Funds.

Mr. Taylor reminded that the cost for this comes from sponsorships for the SARA Summit and is at no cost to the County. He also reminded the public the date of the SARA Summit is September 28th. There are over 146 people are registered at this time, including many County stakeholders.

Commissioner Webster expressed her concern for the LEPC Funds and wanted to know how the coins are appropriate uses of those funds.

Mr. Taylor mentioned that the people at LEPC like to see take-home. He clarified these funds come from sponsorships from Sheetz, UPMC and other organizations.

Discussion followed.

Children, Youth and Families:

Mindy Hostler requested approval for submission of the proposed FY 23/24 Implementation Plan and the FY 24/25 Blair County Children, Youth and Families’ Needs-Based Plan and Budget Narrative to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as outlined below:

FY Plan and Budget	Amount	County Share
FY 23/24 Implementation Plan	\$13,200,665.00	\$2,640,133.00
FY 24/25 Needs Based Plan and Budget	\$14,815,130.00	\$2,963,026.00

Ms. Hostler mentioned the narrative is due to State by Friday, September 1st. Dollars used are due September 14th and the above numbers will be updated prior to that time to reflect more accurate information.

Commissioner Burke mentioned the Public Meetings to discuss the narrative are also on Friday at 1pm.

Discussion followed.

Prison:

Jay Whitesel requested approval of a Comprehensive Health Services Agreement between the County of Blair, and PrimeCare Medical, Inc., to provide mental health, dental, medical and related health care services to the inmate/patient population at the Blair County Prison in addition to the services of an additional full-time Licensed Clinical Social Worker added by amendment to the 2022 contract for the period of three-3 years, concluding on July 31, 2026. County may elect up to two-2 additional one-1 year option periods, concluding on July 31, 2027 and July 31, 2028 respectively, at the rates based on an inmate population of 350 starting August 1, 2023. Annual rate \$2,197,285.92; monthly rate \$183,107.16; per diem \$2.00; reverse per diem \$1.00 shall be applied when the facilities population falls below 350 inmates.

Commissioner Erb mentioned this was a 46% increase from the budget in 2023. He also mentioned a conversation with Senator Casey and Senator Joyce that all counties are experiencing this significant increase because when a person is incarcerated, they lose their medical assistance, which then becomes a responsibility of the County taxpayers to pay fo

Discussion followed.

Sheriff's Office:

Requesting approval for the of the following two-2 outstanding invoices for services/purchases provided to the Blair County Sheriff's Office made outside of the county's purchasing policy:

Vendor	Invoice Number	Invoice Date	Purchase	Outstanding Amount Due
Bettwy Systems	14307	02/08/2023	Replace faulty camera monitor in the holding cell office	\$279.00
Bettwy Systems	14382	03/07/2023	Purchase of a new security camera monitor	\$357.00

Chief Clerk Hemminger requested this item be moved to the Board of Commissioner's meeting on Thursday, 8/31 due to lack of representation from the Sheriff's office.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURN:

Meeting Adjourned,

Nicole M. Hemminger, Chief Clerk