

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING: THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2025, 10:00 A.M.

Location: Commissioners Meeting Room, Basement.

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Kessling called the meeting to order.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER:

Commissioner Kessling called for a moment of silent prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Kessling, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Burke and Chief Clerk Tiracave.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Lori Guyer (Commissioners), Lindsay Dempse (Finance), Elizabeth Nelson (Social Services), Nicholas Burket (Public Works – Facilities), Angela Wagner, A.C. Stickel (Controller), Becky Robinson (Purchasing), Joseph Cox (Juvenile Probation), Mark Taylor (EMA/911), Sherry Socie (Blair Planning), Kay Stephens (Altoona Mirror), Carol A. Dannenberg (Holidaysburg Community Watchdog), Mike Sinisi (Public)

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Sinisi, an engineer, stated that he attended the most recent Altoona City Council meeting to propose a new prison site in Altoona. He noted that this new site is off 17th Street, and he's known it for a long time. It is roughly 5 acres of wasteland/light industrial, and has existing infrastructure including water, sewer, gas and communications. He feels this site would be a tremendous cost savings compared to a new site. He then provided handouts for the Commissioners to review. There are four (4) parcels of land that would be taken that belong to Altoona Pipe and Steel and the Pector family. His hope is that the Commissioners see his vision and approach the City of Altoona. According to him, his proposed site is two times greater than the existing prison site and already has a footprint. He envisions the new site with buildings and a parking garage. Mr. Sinisi thanked the Commissioners for their time and once again hopes that this site makes sense to them and will be considered. He noted that it would increase jobs in the area if expanded and would benefit the City of Altoona through the EIT taxes.

A.C. Stickel, on behalf of the America 250 PA Commission informed attendees that they are working on epic plans to make the County's 250th birthday, on July 4, 2026, a celebration of education, preservation, innovation and celebration. Events are starting now, and he hopes to make the public aware. Some of the upcoming events are as follows:

- April 18, 2025 is the 250th anniversary of Paul Revere's historic ride. Mr. Stickel expressed his appreciation to Nick Burket for putting two lights in the courthouse clock tower to commemorate the anniversary and encouraged everyone to do the same.
- On April 26, 2025 at 4:00 p.m., Fort Roberdeau is holding a Liberty Tree dedication. The original Liberty Tree in Boston was a gathering place for colonial patriots. This is a graft of one of the original Liberty Trees from Boston and will reconnect us with the spirits of unity, courage and independence.
- Flag Day weekend is the real kick-off this year. On Friday, June 13, 2025, at a time and location to be determined, Blair County's Liberty Bell will be unveiled. The bell is sponsored by the Delgrosso family and was completed by local artist Leah McNull. At 7:00 p.m. the same evening, in Liberty Hall at the U.S. Hotel, there will be a keynote speaker, former Governor Mark Schweiker. Governor Schweiker is a great speaker on the history of both Pennsylvania and America. Cost is \$76 per person or \$776 per table. There will also be fireworks from Chimney Rocks later that evening.
- On Saturday, June 14, 2025, Colin Sheffer, from America 250 PA will speak at the annual Gospel Hill Flag Day Celebration at Heritage Plaza.
- On Sunday, June 15, 2025, Fort Roberdeau will be celebrating the 250th birthday of the United States Army.

Kay Stephens commented that when the conversation moves to the Commissioners' comments, she would like to hear more information about the site that Mr. Sinisi identified earlier and if it was one of the 234 sites looked at.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT:

In response to Kay Stephen's request, Commissioner Kessling noted that it was actually 324 sites.

Commissioner Webster responded "No" to Ms. Stephens' question, then noted the engineers have provided parameters. They are the experts and the Commissioners are following their advice.

Commissioner Kessling noted that he was disappointed that Mr. Simisi left the meeting, as he wanted to address the comments. He did state that the Commissioners have a very good relationship with the City of Altoona. They are in constant communication on many, many topics. He feels that when the site Mr. Simisi proposed is looked at, he believes that environmental mitigation issues as well as hazmat issues will be identified. This proposed site also limits the ability to expand, which is the problem with the current prison. It is essentially landlocked. The current Prison needs to be expanded because it is simply out of space, and the preference is to move outward, not upward.

Commissioner Kessling noted that he is proud to say that this Board is looking at the future. It is not about building a prison in a week. They're looking at what the capacity will be in 10, 20, or even 30 years from now and trying to plan. He appreciates all of the calls and emails about potential sites. Most sites have already been looked at, but he believes in listening to his constituents. He noted that if they are presented with a site they are unaware of, or if someone were to offer land that meets the County's needs now and in the future, he and the other Commissioners are certainly open to hearing about it. They will continue to evaluate any and all sites to determine the best fit, including those sites already reviewed.

Consent Agenda:

Resolution 178– 2025:

a. Ratification of the following seven-7 Warrant Lists:

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
3/10/2025	250228PC	\$26,111.52
4/08/2025	250331PC	\$37,618.43
4/10/2025	250410HR	\$8,330.98
4/10/2025	250410RF	\$441.00
4/07/2025	250407FS	\$916.05
4/15/2025	250415WW	\$982,620.99
4/15/2025	250415SS	\$235,231.45

b. **District Attorney's Office:** Requesting approval of an Affiliation Agreement between the County of Blair and New England Law for the purpose of student internships.

c. **Employments:** Anders, Alexis, FT, Probation Officer Aide, Adult Parole and Probation, \$11.58/hr., effective 4/14/2025. Conner, Debra, Temporary Department Assistant, Elections, \$11.00/hr., effective 4/14/2025. Haberstroh, Robert, FT, Deputy – Treasurer, Treasurer, \$1,848.69 biweekly, effective 4/14/2025. Miller, Trisha, FT, Parole and Probation Officer, Adult Parole and Probation, \$16.30/hr., effective 4/14/2025.

d. **Resignations:** West, James, FT, Corrections Officer, Prison, \$21.53/hr., effective 4/11/2025. Hughes, Caymen, FT, Deputy, Sheriff, \$15.52/hr., effective 4/11/2025. Kubovcsak, Jordyn, FT, Parole and Probation Officer, Adult Parole and Probation, \$16.30/hr., effective 4/11/2025.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 178-2025

Social Services:

Betsy Nelson requested approval to authorize Commissioner David Kessling, as the Chief Elected Official, to sign the Tier 2 Site Specific Environmental Review Record (ERR) for the Blair County Existing Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program for the unit listed below:

Program Type	Case Number	Unit Location:
CDBG OBO Frankstown Twp. Hollidaysburg, PA	#24-2932	1078 W. Loop Rd,

Resolution 179-2025: Authorizing Commissioner David Kessling, as the Chief Elected Official, to sign the Tier 2 Site Specific Environmental Review Record (ERR) for the Blair County Existing Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program for the unit listed below:

Program Type	Case Number	Unit Location:
CDBG OBO Frankstown Twp. Hollidaysburg, PA	#24-2932	1078 W. Loop Rd,

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 179-2025.

Public Works / Facilities:

Nick Burket requested approval of Change Order #1 (Resolution # 127-2025) between the County of Blair and Burke & Company LLC for the additional cost of five (5) replacement heat pump units for the courthouse in the amount of \$464.00. The total project cost is \$20,972.00.

Resolution 180-2025: Approving Change Order #1 (Resolution # 127-2025) between the County of Blair and Burke & Company LLC for the additional cost of five (5) replacement heat pump units for the courthouse in the amount of \$464.00. The total project cost is \$20,972.00.

Commissioner Burke noted her abstention due to a conflict of interest.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 180-2025 with the abstention noted above.

Public Safety / 911E:

Mark Taylor requested approval of a Professional Services Contract between the County of Blair, Department of Emergency Services / 911E, and Mission Critical Partners, LLC for professional consulting services as set forth in Exhibit A of said contract, assisting the Southern Alleghenies 911 Cooperative (SAC) with planning, procurement, and implementation support with the awarded Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) grant in the total fixed fee sum (including expenses) of \$83,210.60 to be invoiced monthly for services rendered.

Resolution 181-2025: Approving the Professional Services Contract between the County of Blair, Department of Emergency Services / 911E, and Mission Critical Partners, LLC for professional consulting services as set forth in Exhibit A of said contract, assisting the Southern Alleghenies 911 Cooperative (SAC) with planning, procurement, and implementation support with the awarded Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) grant in the total fixed fee sum (including expenses) of \$83,210.60 to be invoiced monthly for services rendered.

Commissioner Kessling asked if this is covered by a grant.

Mark Taylor replied that it is covered by a grant.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, approved to adopt Resolution 181-2025.

Juvenile Probation:

Joseph Cox requested approval to accept the FY 24/25 Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC) Juvenile Probation Service Grant in the total amount of \$146,839.00.

Commissioner Kessling noted that he is glad to see such a considerable sum of money and questioned what the grant money is used for.

Mr. Cox replied that the money is used as a percentage of pay for the Probation Officers. It gets split up between those in the office in an amount based upon the corresponding to the number of juveniles handled.

Resolution 182-2025: Accepting the FY 24-24 Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC) Juvenile Probation Service Grant in the total amount of \$146,839.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 182-2025.

Commissioners:

Commissioner Kessling requested approval to enter into an Engagement Letter between the County of Blair and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General to examine Blair County's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund (Forms MS-991), Act 44 Tax Fund (Reports of Act 44 Tax Fund), Act 89 Tax Fund (Reports of Act 89 Tax Fund), and County Fee for Local Use Fund (Reports of County Fee for Local Use Funds) for the period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2024.

Resolution 183-2025: Approving the Commissioners to enter into an Engagement Letter between the County of Blair and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General to examine Blair County's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund (Forms MS-991), Act 44 Tax Fund (Reports of Act 44 Tax Fund), Act 89 Tax Fund (Reports of Act 89 Tax Fund), and County Fee for Local Use Fund (Reports of County Fee for Local Use Funds) for the period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2024.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 183-2025.

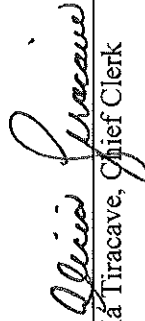
OLD BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURN:

The next Board of Commissioners' meeting will be held on Thursday, April 24, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Public Meeting Room.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adjourn today's meeting.


Alicia Tiracave, Chief Clerk

