

BUSINESS SESSION: THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024, 1:00 P.M.

Location: Commissioners Meeting Room, Basement.

**Public meetings are being held both in-person and by Zoom. To participate in the meeting please dial-1-309-205-3325 or-1-646-876-9923, enter meeting number 975 2311 2159, and enter the meeting passcode 339014.*

Call to Order:

Commissioner Webster called the meeting to order.

Moment of Silent Reflection:

Commissioner Webster called for a moment of silent reflection.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

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

Roll Call:

Members Present:

Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Burke, and Chief Clerk Hemminger.

Members Absent:

Commissioner Kessling.

Others Present:

A.C. Stückel (Controller), Rebecca Robinson (Purchasing), Trina Illig (Social Services), Kay Stephens (Altoona Mirror), Allison Senkevich and Lori Guyer (Commissioners), Sherry Socie (Blair Planning Commission), Judy Rosser (Blair Drug and Alcohol), Amy Marter-Shanafelt and Lori Craïne (Blair Health Choices), Amber Bott, Jamie Pyo, Marianne Sinisi, Natasha Brubaker, Jordan Sesame Wild, Joshua Krider, and Ekna Hue (Public).

Executive Session Announcement:

Chief Clerk Hemminger confirmed there was no Executive Session since the last meeting on Tuesday, March 26th.

Public Comment:

Commissioner Webster called for public comment as it pertains to items on the Business Session agenda, not Opioid Settlement which will be received at the end of the meeting.

Chief Clerk Hemminger read a comment submitted via email from Traci Naugle, President of the Blair County Bar Association, which asks the Commissioner to reconsider their decision to contract with the firm, Gabriel Fera, PC, for providing solicitor services to the County.

Proclamation - April as "Fair Housing Month"

Commissioner Burke read the following Proclamation:

PROCLAMATION DECLARING APRIL AS "FAIR HOUSING MONTH"

WHEREAS, April 11, 2024, marks the 56th Anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) (the "Fair Housing Act"); and,

WHEREAS, the Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, sex, or disability, and directs that the administration of housing programs be done in a manner that affirmatively furthers the purposes of fair housing law; and,

WHEREAS, Blair County recognizes its mission to ensure that all residents are granted an opportunity to obtain safe, affordable, energy efficient housing; and,

WHEREAS, Blair County further recognizes that in achieving its mission, it must also realize and further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act to overcome discrimination, achieve truly balanced and integrated communities, and promote fair housing choice; and,

WHEREAS, Blair County is committed to its duty to affirmatively further fair housing and to furthering its mission by making equal access to affordable housing available to every resident without regard to any citizen's race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, sex, or disability.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Blair County Commissioners, that in the pursuit of the goal and responsibility of affirmatively furthering fair housing opportunities for all citizens of Blair County, the Blair County Commissioners do hereby join in the national celebration by commemorating the Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act and proclaiming April 2024 as "Fair Housing Month" in Blair County, Pennsylvania.

DULY, adopted by the Commissioners of the County of Blair, Pennsylvania this 28th day of March 2024.

ATTEST:

Nicole M. Hemminger, Chief Clerk

David Kessling, President

**BLAIR COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**



Amy E. Webster, Vice-President

Laura O. Burke, Secretary

Trina Illig spoke about the Emergency Solutions grant and the Homeless Rapid rehousing.

Natasha Brubaker added that the Center for Community Action works closely with Trina to ensure the funds are used in the best way possible.

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt the Proclamation as Resolution 172-2024.

Unfinished Business:

Adoption of Resolutions:

Resolution 159-2024: Approving a temporary Easement Agreement between the County of Blair and the Altoona Water Authority, along the Lakemont Reservoir fence line, in the total amount of \$6,118.50 and a permanent Easement Agreement between the County of Blair and the Altoona Water Authority in the total amount of \$23,891.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 159-2024.

Resolution 160-2024: Approving the Supplemental Proposal of Service/Contract between the County of Blair and Keller Engineers, Inc. for additional consultation and construction inspection services for Bridge #70 in the total amount of \$38,549.50.

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and approved to adopt Resolution 160-2024.

Resolution 161-2024: Approving the Supplemental Proposal of Service/Contract between the County of Blair and Keller Engineers, Inc. for the additional construction consultation, shop drawing review and construction inspection services for Bridge #87, 88, 89 and 92 in the total amount of \$76,319.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and approved to adopt Resolution 161-2024.

Resolution 162-2024: Approving the County of Blair Affordable Housing Trust Fund Program allocation to supplement funding of the Owner Occupied Rehabilitation program throughout Blair County that will be administered through the Community Development programs in the not-to-exceed amount of \$50,000.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 162-2024.

Resolution 163-2024: Approving the FY 2024/2025 Agreement for Payment of Legal Services between The County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families and Mary Ann Probst, Esquire, Attorney of Forr, Stokan, Huff, Kormanski & Naugle, as Counsel for Minor Child, for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, at the rate of \$85.00 per hour.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 163-2024.

Resolution 164-2024: Approving the FY 2024/2025 Agreement for Payment of Legal Services between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families and Mary Ann Probst, Esquire and Tyler Rowles, Esquire, Attorneys of Forr, Stokan, Huff, Kormanski, & Naugle, for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, at the rate of \$2,100.00/per month, per attorney for Guardian ad litem services.

Commissioner Burke expressed her appreciation for Mary Ann Probst performing multiple duties on various CYF cases. She thanked the Bar Association and President Judge Kagarise for their support as well.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 164-2024.

Resolution 165-2024: Approving the 2024 Agreement and Terms between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Simple In/Out.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 165-2024.

Resolution 166-2024: Approving the 2024 Agreement for Purchases Under Bidding Threshold between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families and Positive Promotions, Inc. in the total amount of \$1,458.04.

Chief Clerk Hemminger mentioned that Mindy Hostler provided the figures as requested by the Commissioners from Tuesday's meeting.

Commissioner Burke confirmed that of the total amount, \$1,166.43 is funded by the State and \$291.61 was budgeted in the county's General Fund.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 166-2024.

Resolution 167-2024: Approving the FY 2024/2025 Agreement for Payment of Legal Services between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families, Matthew Dombrosky, Esquire, attorney of Law Offices of Lucas A. Kelleher LLC., for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, at the rate of \$2,100.00/per month, per attorney for Guardian ad litem services.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 167-2024.

Resolution 168-2024: Approving the FY 2023-2024 Purchase of Service Agreement and HIPAA Business Associate Agreement between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families and Professional Family Care Services.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 168-024.

Resolution 169-2024: Approving a Court Interpreter Services Grant Application for Language Access Reimbursable Costs for Calendar Year 2023 to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), in the total amount of \$9,392.62.

Commissioner Burke asked whether this grant would be able to reimburse any applicable expenses for senior judges, as some grants do not.

Chief Clerk Hemminger confirmed that the Courts are requesting full reimbursement, which does include applicable expenses for senior judges. The County will need to wait and see what expenses AOPC approves for reimbursement.

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and approved to adopt Resolution 169-2024.

Resolution 170-2024: Approving the submission of the 2023 Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF) annual report to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 170-2024.

Resolution 171-2024: Approving the overall allocation of \$20,000.00 for community based Park and Recreation grants. Each grant would be eligible for a maximum award of \$3,000.00.

Chief Clerk Hemminger opened the discussion by outlining the availability of funds in the Park and Recreation budget line item for appropriations. The line currently has \$12,500.00, with grant awards only being a portion of the allocation.

Commissioner Burke commented that the fixed assets that are budgeted, including roadway improvements and addressing the condition of the accessibility at Valley View Park are essential and should be considered first.

Commissioner Webster echoed these sentiments, adding that the pedestrian bridge and road improvements should be funded first, rather than dispersing grant funds.

No motion or second. No action taken.

Old Business:
None.

New Business:
Information Technology:

Chief Clerk Nicole Hemminger requested approval of the submission of an application to the FY2023 State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) choosing one of the following options:

Option 1: OPT-IN to the State provided cybersecurity products at no cost to the County and are federally funded through 2027. These products would replace the current system that the County uses.

Option 2: OPT-OUT to the State provided cybersecurity products and continue using County-provided cybersecurity products at the annual budgeted rate.

Resolution 173-2024: Approving the submission of an application to the FY2023 state and local cybersecurity grant program (SLCGP) to opt-in to the State provided cybersecurity products at no cost to the County and are federally funded through 2027.

Chief Clerk Hemminger opened the discussion by having Don Weakland, Director of Information Technology, explain the differences between Option 1 and Option 2.

Mr. Weakland provided additional information for the Commissioners to consider, such as: transitioning to new products, managing multiple products, and the use of grant funds.

Commissioner Webster raised concerns about the state's involvement in future decisions about whether or not to use these products.

Commissioner Burke also questioned whether the County would incur additional costs with termination fees by ending its current contract with its current cybersecurity vendor.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 173-2024.

Commissioners:

Requesting approval to amend Resolution #137-2024, dated March 14, 2024, to correct the total amount of the agreement from \$1,195.00 to \$1,255.00.

Resolution 174-2024: Approving the request to amend Resolution #137-2024, dated March 14, 2024, to correct the total amount of the agreement from \$1,195.00 to \$1,255.00.

No further discussion.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 174-2024.

OPEN DISCUSSION: OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

i. In-person Public Comment

- Amy Marten-Shanafelt, from Blair HealthChoices/Community Care discussed their request for up to \$292,000 of opioid settlement dollars to implement a Contingency Management program in Blair County. This program would reinforce abstinence from both drugs and alcohol, including opiates. She also provided the Commissioners with a breakdown of how the funds would be spent.
- Doug Egen, a Hollidaysburg resident, discussed his experience as a board member on the Salvation Army in regard to adult rehabilitation programs. He asked the Commissioners to consider donating a portion of funds to this organization to aid in building a learning center.
- Marianne Sinisi, from Families United for Change, spoke about her personal experience of being an advocate for those lost to opioid use. She continued to urge the Commissioners to take the public's opinions and suggestions into consideration when it comes to spending the opioid settlement funds. Ms. Sinisi also read an additional statement from a fellow advocate in addition to speaking about creating memorial garden across the country, which would be dedicated to those victims.
- Jordan Sesame Wild, President of Wild Ones and Ectopian Earthcare, spoke about building greenway trails systems to use as an education tool for mental health and an outlet for connecting with nature. He feels that trails and nature gardens would be a place to foster community and build relationships, which many of those with opioid disorder would benefit from.
- Judy Rosser, from Blair Drug and Alcohol, discussed the many ways her organization can assist in fulfilling many uses under Exhibit E of the Opioid Settlement Trust. These uses include expanding availability of wrap-around services (currently there are 114 people on the wait list for intensive case management). Ms. Rosser also suggested that the Commissioners establish a commission or authority to drive these projects, specifically when discussing a Recovery Community Center in Blair County. The Center would provide outreach opportunities to reduce stigma around this disease as well as providing an education-based support program. Ms. Rosser ended her public comment by mentioning additional uses of funds to include: expanding Narcan availability through dispensing machines, highlighting early intervention programs, and having a strategic program dedicated to reentry.
- Ekna Hue, member of Wild Ones, reiterated the need for funding their organization to provide a safe place and green space for those struggling with this disease.

ii. Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Burke ended the discussion by reiterating that this was the first of several that will continue the topic of opioid settlement funds. She said there is no clear path on how to apply and as such, there is no form available, but the Commissioners are working on the appropriate medium to receive requests for funding.

iii. Written Public Comment

Chief Clerk Hemminger read several public comments that were received via email.


- Aleisha Albertson highlighted ways she feels the opioid settlement fund monies can be used to support the community including increased training, compensation, and incentives for those who interact directly with individuals with opioid disorder.

- Marianne Sinisi reflected on her personal experiences with grief and loss and asked the Commissioners to consider using opioid settlement funds to create memorial plaques and gardens across the country.
- Michelle Lynam also wrote about her connection to this effort through the loss of her son, Greg and mentioned how she feels the opioid settlement dollars should be spent. She provided resources to several organizations such as Lost Angel Blessing Bags, The Circle of Hope Monument, and Ben Blessed, that honor those lost to overdoses. Ms. Lynam urged the Commissioners to put the money toward supporting recovery efforts in our local communities.
- John Grove provided input regarding a need for a licensed clinical social worker or professional counselor to provide services to inmates.
- Robert Craig wrote about the importance of cardiac monitors and how they assist in monitoring patients that are experiencing an opiate overdose. He also requested a monetary donation of \$160,000 to help pay for these monitoring devices.

ADJOURN:

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and moved to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned,



Nicole M. Hemminger, Chief Clerk

