

**BUSINESS SESSION
BLAIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATION BY TELEPHONE CONFERENCE ONLY
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020, 10:00 A.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
5. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Wednesday, April 22, 2020	3:00 p.m.	Blair Health Choices Phone meeting
Thursday, April 23, 2020	8:30 a.m.	Blair County Planning Commission
	10:30 a.m.	Salary Board*
	11:30 a.m.	Blair Sr. Services Phone meeting
Friday, April 24, 2020		
Monday, April 27, 2020		
Tuesday, April 28, 2020	10:00 a.m.	Commissioners Work Session*
Wednesday, April 29, 2020		
Thursday, April 30, 2020		
Friday, May 1, 2020		
Monday, May 4, 2020		
Tuesday, May 5, 2020	10:00 a.m.	Commissioners Business Session*

***Public meetings are held by conference call while the Courthouse is closed to the public. Please dial 1-888-748-9073 and enter meeting number 2468097683#.**

6. **COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**
7. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Resolution 171-2020:

- a. Payment of one (1) Warrant List dated 04/20/2020, #200421SS, in the total amount of \$129,574.91; Payment of two (2) Warrant Lists dated 4/21/2020 #200421MW, in the total amount of \$502,908.29; and #200421CY, in the total amount of \$133,588.14, which include payments of the following invoices:
 - UPMC in the total amount of \$33,165.91.
- b. Ratification of one (1) Warrant Lists, in the total amount of \$84.51 #200414VB
- c. **April 14, 2020 Consent Agenda** correcting an error in numbering: From Resolution 150-2020 To 159-2020.
- d. **2020 Budget Transfer** for protective equipment

<u>From:</u>	<u>Amount:</u>	<u>To:</u>
01101GCO – 41999 – Contingency	\$5,700	01106718-43010 Elections
- e. **2020 Budget Transfers** for 4 laptop computers

<u>From:</u>	<u>Amount:</u>	<u>To:</u>
01117 – 46060 – IT	\$7,492.00	01164711 – 46060 Victim Witness RASA
- f. **Resignations:** Donald McNulty, FT, Auto Mechanic, Public Works - Highway, \$20.20/hr., effective 03/27/2020; Olivia Chamberlain, FT, Probation Officer Aide I, Adult Parole & Probation, \$10.25/hr., Effective 4/1/2020; Susan Griep, Temp Director, Victim Witness, \$26.50, effective 3/27/2020.
- g. **Termination:** Tiffany Ross, FT, Corrections Officer, Prison, \$19.54/hr., effective 03/27/2020.
- h. **Return from Furlough (working part-time):** effective 4/13/2020: Kimberley Gray; effective 4/15/2020: Erin Bennett.
- i. **Return from Furlough (working full-time):** effective 4/13/2020: Christina Stacey.

8. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Department of Emergency Services:

- a. Requesting approval to complete the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) form DAP-2 with Attachment G, which is the grant agreement for Public Disaster Assistance Application and Agreement for Financial Assistance.
- b. Requesting approval to complete the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Electronic Payment Program Enrollment Form (PEPP).

B. Sheriff:

Requesting approval of a contract between County of Blair and Permittum for an online Weapons Permit application at no cost to the County for the period of May 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021.

C. Emergency Management Agency:

- a. Requesting approval of a Rate and Service Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Blair and Microtel Inn & Suites Altoona for overnight accommodations as needed during the COVID-19 Pandemic, at a rate of \$49.00 per night.

- b. Requesting approval of a signature on a Non-Disclosure Agreement between the County of Blair and Department of Health for Data Sharing related to the COVID-19 pandemic and to name Mark Taylor as the Blair County Point of Contact.

D. Social Services:

- a. Requesting authorization to enter into a Sub-recipient agreement between the County of Blair and Williamsburg Borough under FY16 in the amount of \$187,869.00.
- b. Requesting approval of budget revisions to the FY18 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) (C000070320) for the following:
Blair County Community Action Agency:
 - Increase existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Financial Assistance from \$9,345.00 to \$11,501.00 for a total net increase of \$2,156
 - Decrease existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Rental Assistance from \$37,380.00 to \$35,224.00 for a total net decrease of -\$2,156
Family Services, Inc.:
 - Decrease existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Financial Assistance from \$31,000.00 to \$29,216.14 for a total net decrease of -\$1,783.86
 - Increase existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Rental Assistance from \$57,982.00 to \$59,765.86 for a total net increase of \$1,783.86
- c. Requesting approval of a budget revisions to the FY19 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) (contract C000072744) for the following:
 - Reallocating \$25,000 from Rapid Rehousing to Emergency Shelter Operations
- d. Requesting approval of an Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) submission for FY2020 in the amount of \$560,447.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

SB 841 signed into law as Act 15 of 2020

Discussion concerning Act 15 of 2020 regarding the discount and penalty provisions for local tax collection.

10. ADJOURN:

BUSINESS SESSION: TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020, 10:00 A.M.:

Location: By Phone.

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

Others Present: Trina Illig (Social Services), Jennifer Sleppy (Finance), Kay Stephens (Altoona Mirror), A. C. Stickel (Controller), DeAnna Heichel (Assessment), Mark Taylor (Emergency Services), Katherine Swigart (Human Resources), and Helen Schmitt (Public).

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 all present stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Commissioner Erb called for public comment.

No comments noted.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

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COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Commissioner Erb called for commissioner comments.

Commissioner Webster announced that she would like to take a moment to recognize the Blair County Public Works building and maintenance staff for the extra demand of cleaning and sanitizing the Courthouse building.

Commissioner Burke stated that the County now ranks 43rd out of 67 Counties in the Robert Wood Johnson County Health Ranking Report of Pennsylvania Counties. Healthy Blair County did have to cancel their step challenge that was set to start in March due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution 171-2020:

- a. Payment of one (1) Warrant List dated 04/20/2020, #200421SS, in the total amount of \$129,574.91; Payment of two (2) Warrant Lists dated 4/21/2020 #200421MW, in the total amount of \$502,908.29; and #200421CY, in the total amount of \$133,588.14, which include payments of the following invoices:
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- g. **Termination:** Tiffany Ross, FT, Corrections Officer, Prison, \$19.54/hr., effective 03/27/2020.
- h. **Return from Furlough (working part-time):** effective 4/13/2020: Kimberley Gray; effective 4/15/2020: Erin Bennett.
- i. **Return from Furlough (working full-time):** effective 4/13/2020: Christina Stacey.

Commissioner Erb noted his abstention due to a conflict of interest on the payment of invoices to UPMC Altoona.

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 171-2020 with the abstention as noted.

OLD BUSINESS:

Department of Emergency Services:

Requesting approval to complete the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) form DAP-2 with Attachment G, which is the grant agreement for Public Disaster Assistance Application and Agreement for Financial Assistance.

Requesting approval to complete the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Electronic Payment Program Enrollment Form (PEPP).

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated that both items are still waiting on legal review from the State on the documents.

No action taken.

Blair County Sheriff:

Resolution 172-2020: A Resolution approving the contract between the County of Blair, Blair County Sheriff's Office and Permittum for an online Weapons Permit Application at no cost to the County for the period of May 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021

Motion by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 172-2020.

Emergency Management Agency:

Katherine Swigart and Mark Taylor requested approval of a Rate and Service Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County of Blair and Microtel Inn & Suites Altoona for overnight accommodations as needed during the COVID-19 Pandemic, at a rate of \$49.00 per night.

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated that the employees recognized as First Responders as outlined by the Department of Labor (Caseworkers in CYF, Sheriff Deputies, EMA, 911 Center, Prison, Public Works, Adult Parole and Probation and Juvenile Probation) would be eligible for the hotel room accommodations as outlined in the MOU with the Microtel.

Katherine Swigart stated that the trigger for the use of the hotel would follow the COVID-19 Protocols distributed to employees on April 3, 2020. The sections of the protocol include:

- Box D: Respiratory symptoms of the employee but a question as to the cause
- Box E: COVID symptoms of the employee
- Box H: Positive Case of COVID exposure but not the employee
- Box I: Employee presumed infected but not confirmed
- Box J: Employee is positive for COVID
- Box J: Coworker infected with COVID

Ms. Swigart stated that the Human Resources Department will take the lead on arranging for the employee's accommodations.

Discussion followed.

Resolution 173-2020: A Resolution approving a Rate and Service Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Blair and Microtel Inn & Suites Altoona for overnight accommodations as needed during the COVID-19 Pandemic, at a rate of \$49.00 per night.

Motion by Commissioner Webster, Second by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 173-2020

Requesting approval of a signature on a Non-Disclosure Agreement between the County of Blair and Department of Health for Data Sharing related to the COVID-19 pandemic and to name Mark Taylor as the Blair County Point of Contact.

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated that the Non-Disclosure Agreement between the County of Blair and Department of Health is not ready for action at this time.

Social Services:

Resolution 174-2020: A Resolution authorization to enter into a Sub-recipient agreement between the County of Blair and Williamsburg Borough under FY16 in the amount of \$187,869.00.

Motion by Commissioner Erb, second by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 174-2020

Resolution 175-2020: A Resolution approving a budget revision to the FY18 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) (C000070320) for the following:

Blair County Community Action Agency:

- Increase existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Financial Assistance from \$9,345.00 to \$11,501.00 for a total net increase of \$2,156
- Decrease existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Rental Assistance from \$37,380.00 to \$35,224.00 for a total net decrease of -\$2,156

Family Services, Inc.:

- Decrease existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Financial Assistance from \$31,000.00 to \$29,216.14 for a total net decrease of -\$1,783.86
- Increase existing activity for Rapid Rehousing/Rental Assistance from \$57,982.00 to \$59,765.86 for a total net increase of \$1,783.86

Motion by Commissioner Erb, second by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 175-2020.

Resolution 176-2020: A Resolution approving a budget revision to the FY19 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) (contract C000072744) for the following:

- Reallocating \$25,000 from Rapid Rehousing to Emergency Shelter Operations

Motion by Commissioner Erb, Second by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 176-2020.

Trina Illig requested approval of an Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) submission for FY2020 in the amount of \$560,447.

Ms. Illig stated that Blair Community Action and Family Services Inc. have requested ESG funds in areas of Rapid Rehousing, Homeless Prevention, Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Case Management, administration fees and for a total request application of \$581,463.00.

Resolution 177-2020: A Resolution approving a proposed 2020 County of Blair Emergency Solutions Project to be funded by a grant in the amount of \$581,463 to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

Motion by Commissioner Erb, second by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 177-2020.

NEW BUSINESS:

SB 841 signed into law as Act 15 of 2020

Discussion concerning Act 15 of 2020 regarding the discount and penalty provisions for local tax collection.

Commissioner Erb stated that the Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting to discuss SB 841 the prior week. SB 841 was signed into law by the governor yesterday which allows counties to extend the discount period and remove the penalty percentage on property tax collections.

Commissioner Erb asked Solicitor Karn if there was any flexibility of the dates stated in the law for the extension of the discount period or change to the penalty phase. Solicitor Karn stated there was no flexibility in the dates.

Commissioner Webster stated that this legislation would allow for additional months for taxpayers to pay at a discounted rate. Commissioner Webster stated she supports the extension only. She does not support the elimination of the penalty period. The Coronavirus has effected Blair County residents throughout the months of April and May, which are the months the discount period is offered. Businesses were closed resulting in a loss of revenue and taxpayers have been laid off or lost their jobs as a result of the closures.

Commissioner Burke stated her concern in the short time period for the notice of the extension of the discount period.

Commissioner Erb stated there is a projected revenue loss of approximately \$112,000.00 if extending the discount period and \$219,000.00 if the penalty phase is eliminated. Adding to that would be unknown expenses that can not be quantified such as unbudgeted interest payments to continue to borrow money on the Tax Anticipation Note until tax payments come in.

Commissioner Erb reminded the other two commissioners that the prior Board voted to keep a lower tax increase, under 4%, and balance the 2020 budget with reserve funds. The Counties reserve funds are lower than recommended guidelines at \$3,000,000.00.

Commissioner Erb stated that the median average home is \$126,100.00. County tax on that property is \$513.82. The 2% discount equates to \$10.28 for the taxpayer however has a significant impact on the County finances.

Controller Stickel stated that as of this morning the County has a little over \$6,000,000 in the bank. If the discount period is extended and taxpayers wait to send in their payments until August 31, 2020 the County will face payroll payments of over \$7,000,000.00, health insurance premiums over \$2,000,000.00, an outstanding Tax Anticipation Note balance of \$1,500,000.00 and retirement contributions of more than \$2,200,000.00. These numbers do not account for any day-to-day accounts payable.

Commissioner Burke stated that often times hard decisions need to be made with very little information. Departments are coming to the Commissioners asking for out of the ordinary items to accomplish social distancing with the impression that Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) or the Federal Government will provide reimbursement.

Like the questions regarding reimbursement, many questions are still left without answers. These answers would make today's decision much easier: How many banks hold tax payments in escrow and how many of these payments have been remitted to the County? Commissioner Burke stated that she feels extending the discount period could result in a tax increase next year.

Commissioner Erb stated that if the County is unable to pay off the Tax Anticipation Note for any reason at the end of the year that this would result in refinancing the Note into long term debt which would damage the financial position of the County and also the credit rating for future borrowing.

Commissioner Webster stated that she feels banks, which may not be local, will not be aware of the extension for the tax money held in escrow and the payments to the County would not be delayed. She stated that she feels that the banks do not have the ability, as the fiduciary of the escrow money, to pay any later than the original discount deadline.

Commissioner Erb stated that it would be very naïve to believe that the banks would not be monitoring the County's action on the law closely. Banks play the "float" to earn additional interest on escrowed monies. There would be a lot to gain for the banks if they could float the escrow payments for a few more months.

County Administrator Hemminger stated that the calls and e-mails coming into the County have related to tax payment due dates and are from banks and taxpayers of the County.

Commissioner Webster made a motion in accordance with the authority granted to Commissioners under Act 12 that the discount period for County real estate taxes be extended to August 31, 2020. There was no second to the motion. The motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Erb stated that he would like to take an opportunity to thank the Salvation Army and the various food banks for their efforts in making sure that no one is going hungry at this time of need. There are many churches and agencies in neighborhoods to help. These organizations have been assisted by volunteers who are making this effort possible.

ADJOURN:
Meeting Adjourned,

Nicole M. Hemminger, Chief Clerk