

**COMMISSIONERS' MEETING, THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025, 10:02 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:**

Chlori Guyer (Commissioners), Lindsay Dempsey (Finance), A.C. Stickel (Controller), Brian Walters (Human Resources), Joe Cox and Faye Butterbaugh (PO), Grant Willis (GIS), Melissa Gillin (Social Services), James Ott (Sheriff), Paul Shaffer (Public Works / Highway), Nicholas Burkett (Public Works / Facilities), Sarah Seymour (Elections), Becky Robinson (Purchasing), Dennis Wisor (Blair Senior Services), Sherry Socie (Blair Planning Commission), Carol A. Dannenberg (Holidaysburg Community Watchdog), Jon Dwyer (WTAL-TV), Kay Stephens and Patrick Waksmonski (Altoona Mirror), Nate Taylor (Public Access Channel), Perry Miller, Bonnie Miller, Renee Wineland, Mandy Vitta, Virginia Shawley, Mike Sanders, James Rainer, Richard Behrens, Gary Clare, Cindy Kurtz, Geoffrey Behrens, Kimberly A Fedesco, Lou Ventura, Mike Carey, David Kurtz, Vernetta Nyland, Elizabeth Hoenstine, Lezly Lingenfelter, Daisy Decker, Jeff Decker, Georgianna Singer, Debra Brunner, John McIntyre, Thomas Pooler, Carol Davis, Alvin Davis, Ashley Robinson, Angela Treese, Lindsay Treese, Justin Treese, Justin Good, Ryan Good, Jessica Fulchiens, Christine McIntyre, Julie Turano Good, Susan Khacouf, Glenn Lunger, Cynthia Myers Lunger, Oliver Smith, Autumn Temple, Victoriz Miranda, Sue Ann Feather, Matt Paonessa, Jonathan Watts, Joanne Kruis, Wilma McKenny Wooding, Carin Pacifico, and Frederick Kissell (Public).

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Chief Clerk Tiracave confirmed there were two (2) Executive Sessions held since the last Board of Commissioners meeting. The first Executive Session was held on March 24, 2025 at approximately 10:00 A.M. with Commissioner Kessling, Commissioner Burke, and Commissioner Burke regarding a property. The second Executive Session was held on March 25 at approximately 11:40 A.M. with Commissioner Kessling, Commissioner Webster, and Commissioner Burke regarding one (1) open position.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Before beginning the Public Comment section of the Agenda, Commissioner Kessling read from the public comment policy instructing those that wished to address the Board to state their name, address, and municipality for the record. Any individual who wished to address the board has three (3) minutes to present their statements and he would let them know when they reached the 30 second point. At the end of the 3 minutes, he stated that he would ask the speaker to step away from the podium. If you do not step away from the podium, the speaker would be removed from the podium. Any individuals are free at anytime to express written comment to the commissioners via mail, fax, or email. Individuals should confine their remarks to statements of opinion, information, or fact. The public comment section of the agenda is not intended to be a debate, rather it is an orderly presentation of opinion, information, or fact to help the board make decisions concerning various issues concerning the county. The Board of Commissioners is here to perform business concerning the county. The Board of Commissioners has a meeting following this meeting with State Representatives. With the time constraints, the Board intends to limit the comment section as much as possible. Every Board of Commissioners meeting there is a Public Comment section and we welcome your comment.

Jonathan Watts, 2262 Tuckahoe Road Tyrone. I am an ordain minister and I speak on behalf of those with no voice. How do we treat those that have passed? We have examples like the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier are bones; remnants of those that passed. How do we treat our Native Americans? They have Federal laws to protect their dignity. Where is the law to protect the rest of us? You dedicated your life to the new building and I admire that and I support that. The problem I have is who is going to step up and start a movement give a voice for those with no voice?

Ryan Good, 309 31<sup>st</sup> St., Altoona. I am a great-grandson of R.P. Good. R.P. Good founded the cemetery in 1925. He promised a place of beauty and peace for many generations to come. To those with a family member buried at Alto Reste, his affects them as well. Not only is Alto Reste the most beautiful cemetery, it is a home to thousands of veterans and Blair County residents who passed on. The acreage that the County is interested in taking was bought and preserved as an integral part of the Alto Reste expansion. Of the sites that the county has considered, it is the only site that is a business, at alone a family business. That makes it personal to the Good family. In July of 2024, they signed a contract with a local farmer who farms the ground. He is invested as well. This not only helps him, but it helps Alto Reste by maintaining the land until it is ready for the expansion. This is about small business in Blair County. I respectfully ask you to please take this site off your list for the new Blair County Prison for the sake of our business, small businesses, and the common good of the community. Blair County residents made their thoughts clear. Please take them into consideration.

Geoffry Behrens, 768 N. Douglass Lane, Tyrone. I am also the Vice-President and General Manager of Alto Reste Cemetery Association Incorporated at 109 Alto Reste Park in Allegheny Township. I submit to the County Commissioners signatures of almost 6000 people of a petition created last Saturday to stop the seizing of Alto Reste Park land. I would like to first correct the record of the negotiations comment made by a Commissioner at the last meeting and in the media. There have been no negotiations between the County and Alto Reste Park Cemetery Association Incorporated, but simply an offer from the County on January 7<sup>th</sup> 2025 and a refusal sent to the broker appointed by the

Commissioners from us on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2025. There has been no contact from the County to us since that time. We are here today because of the action taken at the last meeting to proceed down the path of eminent domain. At the end of this hearing you are charged with making the decision to seize our land and take away the serenity and peace that families have experienced on our property for 100 years. I want the community to know that we are not degrading the Commissioners, yet questioning their judgement for selecting our ground for the prison without speaking to us, the land owners, about the potential impact on area families. Despite the engineering concerns stated by the Commissioners about the alternate sites, the purchase of those sites would have minimal impact on the community as they are parcels already for sale. While our land is part of an historic existing business and also directly impacts the many families of those buried on our grounds. I stated last meeting that this decision will have significant negative impact on the present business at Alto Reste Park and would severely limit, if not completely hinder, our ability to operate in the future. Starting Friday, myself, our family, and staff have been hearing about that impact. And you are about to hear what they have been sharing with us. We ask that you hear them like we have and consider the cost that cannot be measure in dollars that moving forward with a prison on our property would have on them. I think that you will feel the same way that we do. The cost that these families will pay forever is substantially greater than additional cost to the county to move more dirt in another location. I appreciate your time.

Bonnie Miller, 15 Hillside Drive, Duncansville, Allegheny Township. I spoke to you on Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup> with a request to continue to look for alternative sites for the proposed Blair County Prison. And the first my husband and I were made aware of your idea was on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2025 in an Altoona Mirror article. At last week's meeting I heard about eminent domain, So, I went home and began to research and after awhile I came across something called lack of necessity. It reads "Lack of necessity may be argued if some viable alternative locations or methods do not require your property." This challenge asserts that taking your property is not essential to achieving the project's goals and therefore the eminent domain action should be reconsidered. And since there are admittedly other alternative sites and methods available, this is a clear reason to continue looking elsewhere. My husband and I trust in our local government agencies and it saddens me to say that in this situation the lack of transparency has been a concern. It has created more questions than answers. How many sites were considered? How many sites did the real estate agent, Richard Johnston, who you retain, find for you? Why have you stopped looking? Why do you need 75 acres when the current prison is on, I don't know, approximately three city blocks? What type of expansion are you planning? Are you being pressured? Is your engineering firm pressuring you? I realize they presented you with a \$100,000.00 study that included just three sites. Did they happen to mention in that study vital information regarding their preferred site and how it would create interruption of a cemetery park and the private homes that border that site? It just seems that someone has dropped the ball. I realize that this has been an enormous undertaking for you and I respect that. And because of that fact, it cannot be rushed to the point that the engineers and commissioners are not even aware of all the implications and consequences for their community for the choices made. Last week, Commissioner Burke listened to the needs of her community of voters when she voted to take more time and look at other options. And I think for that reason she needs to be applauded. So, please give this search your due diligence and don't move forward today with requesting approval to adopt the ordinance to authorize the taking by eminent domain two parcels of land in the township of Allegheny. I sincerely thank you.

Richard Behrens, 254 Hickory Drive, Tyrone, Snyder Township. I am Geoff's dad but I am not here because of that, although I support the position they've taken. I am here today because my daughter is buried at Alto Reste Park. That is a beautiful, beautiful place of peace, beauty, and serenity. It is an open place. Anyone can drive to the top of Alto Reste Cemetery and look out over the beauty of Blair County. It is also a Holy place I would submit that it was committed to God 100 years ago by a man that was committed to God. I am also a pastor now. I love prison ministry and my father-in-law was the Blair County chaplain at the Blair County Prison. The prison must be placed somewhere else. It cannot overshadow the dreams and memories. I am here to honor the memory of my daughter, Laura, who was a bright shining light. I beg you reconsider your decision. Thank you.

James Reimer, 3105 Pine Avenue, Altoona. My son died at 3 ½ month old and is laid to rest at Alto Reste Park. I wrote the poem called "A Bank in the Chain" for his first birthday. (Mr. Reimer read a poem.) Being a grieving parent means you get a life sentence. Even though as parents we did not commit a crime. So, putting a prison right next to our children's final resting place is so evil. It's an appalling reminder that we are a prisoner of our mind and a prisoner of our circumstances. Being a grieving parent means living through a cataclysm day after day. And there is nothing more courageous than that. But being here today is just another event that a grieving parent should not have to endure. I brought in for each of you, pictures of my little pup Vincent Hersel James Reimer. I included wristbands that we had made for him. The original ones made said "Fly High Little Pup" but I had them changed to "Walk with me Little Pup" because there is nothing comforting of losing your child and them flying without you.

Angela Treese, 348 Cashman Road, Altoona. I am here to discuss why my family feels building a prison at Alto Reste Park is wrong and immoral because our beautiful 17 year old daughter was just laid to rest at Alto Reste Park on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2024. October 27<sup>th</sup> 2024 was undoubtedly the worst day of our lives. We lost our beautiful daughter, Lundyn Treese at 17 years old to a reckless drunk driving accident. Lundyn was not just our first born baby, she was one of three lights that illuminated our lives. Lundyn touched a lot of lives and those lives are now forever changed. She's robbed of her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, her senior prom, graduation, a career, countless memories with her sisters and family as well as being robbed of being an aunt, a wife and someday becoming a mother. Devastated and heartbroken doesn't even scratch the surface of how we all feel. You are never prepared to lose a child and especially not prepared to face the challenging and seamlessly impossible decisions that follow in these first few days after lose you are in shock trying to process what's happening, but you have to extremely hard decisions fairly quickly. While you are supposed to be grieving you have to figure out funeral arrangements. Whether or not you are going to cremate or bury, pick a casket, and write an obituary. As a parent, how do you make any of these decisions and then ultimately find an eternal resting place for your child. All the while you think to yourself, is this what she would want? Is this good enough for her? These are the type of conversations you don't have with your child and never should have with your children. We ultimately decided in burying Lundyn so she would have a peaceful resting place for everyone to visit her. We visited the plots at Alto Reste and knew immediately that that was where Lundyn would be laid to rest. It provided us peace, serenity and comfort. Her park,

that's what we call it. Lundy's Park is up on the hill backed by trees surrounded by openness and quietness all around. It's perfect. It is absolutely perfect. This space would allow us to share picnics, holidays, laughs, tears, and stories for years to come. Alto Reste takes pride in maintaining the landscape and making sure it is beautiful every day of the year for every visitor. We are one family of thousands whose loved ones is buried at this beautiful park. Choosing to build a prison next to an eternal resting place for thousands is just shameful. How is it right to build a prison housing criminals who committed crimes that put some of our loved ones in this very park. It's sickening and takes our feelings of peace and comfort and turns it into feelings of fear and evilness while feeling downright corrupt. Those in charge of this decision and those forcing the decision upon them should put themselves in our shoes and question if the world, if this would be your family, would you want to be next to a prison while visiting your children, your parents, your siblings. How would you feel? How would you feel if you had to move them from their eternal resting park just because a prison was being built next to their loved ones? I know my family has thought about this and we have purchased additional plots just to be next to our beautiful daughter.

Commissioner Kessling stated this is obviously a very passionate issue but we do not have time to listen to everybody. He asked those who are opposed to the County taking the land to raise a hand so that we can get a count so it can be entered into the record. In addition, there are pink sheets on the table to sign if you are opposed to the County taking the land. These will be entered into the record along with the 6000 signatures that Mr. Behrens submitted.

Assistant Chief Clerk Lori Guyer counted 36 hands.

Commissioner Kessling asked that anyone that has anything to different to say, other than what has already been said to approach the podium.

Karen Pacifico, 1716 Sylvan Drive, Allegheny Township. I am Election Judge at the Convention Center and sees a lot of familiar residents. She is shocked and appalled at what a misguided plan this is for the neighbor. A prison in that location will present enormous traffic issues. She is shocked to think a prisoner could escape and grab a person in the Target parking lot. Even though it saves electrical and sewer costs, it creates an enormous public safety hazard in a residential neighborhood where people appreciate the quiet and already put up with commercial investment in that area. She is shocked and appalled at how little notice they received to respond to it. It looks like a quick grab of land. We have been closing prisons in this area but do have a national government that wants to open up immigration prisons and I don't think immigration prison populations are an economic development plan for the county. This is very misguided in the part of the commissioner who spoke in defense of it.

Renee Wyland, 621 Chimney Rocks Road, Hollidaysburg. I am a United States veteran and as a veteran, I believe we fight for our country and other countries. Eminent Domain is not something that should be done when there are other sites available. I live on Chimney Rocks Road and I heard there was a site mentioned on Chimney Rocks as I would not want it in my neighborhood, I also hear to say something different than this and I didn't think about it till now. My husband's brother was murdered. And the hearings from someone being murdered, or DUI's, they are held in Blair County and people are brought to Blair County temporarily until they have hearings and they are shipped. I do not feel it would be right to have a family member, or friend, or anyone buried in the cemetery at Alto Reste, and some of these family members have been taken by some of the people that are going to be in that jail, and they have to be reminded of that when they want to go see their loved ones. I recommend that you take your chances and look around a little longer and find a better plot of land. There are different plots of land just like Chimney Rocks. I know it's very steep, but there are other plots of land that are for sale and you can find a better place. It is not as if it needs to be done right now, today. Please take this into consideration. I have no problem with a prison, but a prison where that cemetery expansion would be would be very detrimental and take that, if not anything else into consideration.

Mike Sanders, 901 North Third Street, Altoona. I am here for three reasons. As a father, have two sons buried at Alto Reste where it is going to be right next to the prison. I am here as a son, because my father is buried there. I feel this is very wrong to build a prison on top of a cemetery. I picked the spots for our two premature sons that died in 1988 and I spent countless hours up there with my wife, visiting these children. Some people can visit there children on holidays. If I want to see my children, I have to go to the cemetery. I think this is wrong. And I am also here as a veteran. If you want to see the most beautiful cemetery in the world, it is Alto Reste. If you want to experience the most humbling experience, go to Alto Reste on Memorial Day and stand at the top of the hill and all you can see is American flags sticking out of the ground. Each one of those people that belonged to that flag is someone that served this county, fought for this county, and died for this country. We cannot let those people in that cemetery die in vain by putting a prison on top of that hill.

Commissioner Kessling stated that this will be the last public comment that we hear today as we are not hearing anything different. We will, if time permits, allow public comment at the conclusion of this meeting if you would like to stick around. We are trying to be sensitive to this. We know it's a very passionate subject. So, we will open it up at the conclusion as long as we can. And again, we as a Board of Commissioners are inviting you to come to the next Board of Commissioners meeting, or other Board of Commissioners meetings, if you would like to be able to give public comment. Again, we must conduct business, so this will be the last individual until the conclusion of the meeting. At that time we will continue to take public comments until we have to shut it down.

Louis Ventura, 123 James Way, Hollidaysburg. My dad and grandmother are also buried at Alto Reste and it is beautiful facility and I agree with that, but I'm here about something else. My mother owns the nine-acre parcel that is also being considered for potential development of the new prison. I have a lot of questions about the project, but the one that is forefront in my mind is what is the urgency and fervor about this decision? We were made aware that Richard Johnson was in possession of an offer for the ground from the County on January 7th of this year. On January 8<sup>th</sup>, my brother, who is also my mother's power of attorney responded that my mother was not interested in selling the ground for the offer. In February it was announced that the county had received the results of the feasibility study and that the commissioners had intended to pursue the project. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, the Commissioners voted to advertise the eminent domain process in an

effort to acquire the property without ever speaking to any members of my family. That is ten weeks from initial offer to threat of condemnation with zero communication to the affected parties. I think all of us in this room understand the fact that someday the Plank Road corridor will infill with new businesses and increase our county's tax base. If this land is used for prison development, it will not only eliminate the potential for tax generation from our 19 acre parcel, but it could degrade the surrounding properties values, further eroding our tax base in Blair County and potentially stymieing development across the entire corridor. So, why the hurry? Are the Commissioners concerned their actions might breach their fiduciary responsibility to their constituents? Are the Commissioners concerned that there is certainly better options for locations when considering the loss of future revenue for highly valuable commercial property and the degradation of the existing tax base along the corridor after the development of a prison? Are the Commissioners concerned about reelection? Well, it's my opinion and apparently based on everybody here, other people's opinion that you should probably be concerned about all of these things and look for more appropriate property and use of our public monies in an effort to have a better end result.

Commissioner Kessling reminded everyone that at the conclusion of the meeting the Board will continue with public comment as long as they can. Obviously, they have other things to do; that is why they are in office: they have work. He invited everyone to the weekly Board of Commissioners meetings held each Thursday. They always allow for public comment. . If you are not heard today and you want to be heard, we are encouraging you to come to the other Board of Commissioners meetings where at that time you will be able to continue you testimony.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENT:**

Commissioner Burke thanked everyone for coming and those that reached out. You are actively participating in a democracy and in the civic process and that is to be commended whether you agree with us or not. We need to hear the criticism. We are in these positions where a lot of times we have people sugar coating or telling us what we want to hear and that is not a healthy thing for us. As my time as a Commissioner, we met weekly for a few years, then meeting twice a week, and I can only recall maybe three meetings that generated this type of crowd. I'm happy to see you here. There were several points that she went over. She clarified that if the Commissioners exercise eminent domain the property owners would be compensated for the property through the valuation process. Also, there has been a lot of media coverage regarding this project over the past year, and that it was moving forward. No one is taking this decision lightly. Her first meeting regarding the expansion/relocation of the prison was back in 2020. The work has gone into this so far has been fairly exhaustive. Despite the vote taking place last week to advertise, there is and has been an ongoing re-evaluation of all the properties we previously considered. We want to make sure this is the right decision for the County, and when we were elected, we took an oath, and our duty is to the County. The County is an entity. The County is a community. The County is a geographic region. We have a significant problem with the current building. I have a duty the employees that work there, prison board, and the Commissioners have a duty to the inmates there to keep them safe. We have to balance all those concerns, which will ultimately affect the taxpayers if we do not do anything, with all the concerns you all have shared today. That is difficult. We heard from you. We will continue to hear from you. And we will continue making the best decisions for the County.

Commissioner Webster thanked everyone for coming. We always are asking to people to come and give public comment and we rarely hear anything. It is nice to see you all here today. This has been a long-term issue for the County Commissioners for many years, not just this board. She remembered studies done for the past 30-40 years indicating that Blair County is well beyond the point of replacing the current prison with something that is newer, safer, more secure for our employees and the guests of the prison. This is something that we have been working diligently on since we began. We have actually looked at over 300 parcels within the county, as well as a couple parcels outside the county, in order to determine what would be the best place. We have taken many different things into consideration, and the engineers have narrowed it down and gave us a study as to why this is the best location. We have been willing, and will continue to be willing to hear your comments. Thank you for your attendance and we will continue to hear what you have to say.

Commissioner Kessling stated that If you don't think this is personal, I have two family members who rest at Alto Park; one of which is a World War II veteran and I am a veteran. I would also like to say I have a personal friend who is part of the Good family. If you do not think this is not tearing us apart, you are wrong. I would like to say that we have been told here, we have heard here anyway, that this is a rush. The prison is 156 years old. It is falling apart. It is in appalling conditions. As Commissioner Burke and Webster have said, we have a duty and a responsibility and by law for those individuals who are incarcerated as well as the safety and security of our staff members and the public. We are looking and considering taking seventy seven acres out of two hundred and two acres that Alto Reste has. We are not considering taking all of it. I want to make sure that people understand that we are not going in and taking all the property they have. We are not. As Commissioners, we do not want to take property. I have my own property and I would be very upset if the County, or the State or the Federal government came to me and said they were taking some of it. I would be just as upset as you are. But, I'm not sure we have much of a choice. As has been stated, three hundred and twenty-four parcels have been considered. This process started in 2021. Four years ago, the County was given a grant to work with a consultant company, which was paid \$184,000.00, to help us evaluate all of the sites. Out of the 324, it was determined that 15 parcels were identified suitable. However, among the reasons they were not considered were environmental impact, floods, waters, wetlands, zoning regulations and compliance, storm water management requirements, slope terrain, hazardous contamination, flood-plane, easements, right-away, utilities and infrastructure, proximity to essential services such as medical, courthouse, and law enforcement. So, as I stated in the beginning, we appreciate you coming here. We understand there is passion in this and there is a reason why no Board of Commissioners has wanted to touch this for years and years because this is what would happen. And to the gentleman's point about being reelected, I didn't take this position looking for reelection. I took this position because this County needs to move forward and I believe, and I am proud to sit here between these two Commissioners because in the last fifteen months, I think we have addressed many of the issues that has been left along from this County for years and years. In a couple years there will be a reelection. If you do not want me in office, that is when your voice is heard. But what we are saying to you is we are trying to do the best thing that we can for this County and we understand it is very compassionate. I have gone to Mrs. Miller's house on her request. I have personally met with Mrs. Miller and her husband. I stood on her back porch and she



showed me where her concern is and she told me about her family, which I greatly appreciate. We do not have to do that, but we did because we believe that we need help to understand the impact that we have on people. So again, most of the time we have these meetings no one comes out. I recognize that may be because of the time of the day. We have tried to meet in the evenings. We have two meetings in the evenings in various parts of the County and no one showed up so we stopped doing it. We do want to hear from you. So again, I just want you to understand that there is none of us up here that is taking this lightly, and it certainly has not been a knee-jerk reaction. This has been going on Four Years.

**Consent Agenda:**  
**Resolution 143-- 2025:**

a. Ratification of the following nine-9 Warrant Lists:

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
3/1/7/2025	250317FS	\$1,419.20
3/4/2025	250304WC	\$5,627.67
3/20/2025	250320EH	\$21,129.70
3/20/2025	250320HR	\$11,432.14
3/18/2025	250318RF	\$2,589.31
3/19/2025	250318RF	\$1,342.97
3/25/2025	250325CY	\$6,300.00
3/25/2025	250325WW	\$340,914.21
3/25/2025	250325SS	\$4,091.58

Which includes payment of the following invoices:

- Blair Senior Services in the total check amount of \$155,809.00.
  - Hollidaysburg Borough in the total check amount of \$18,922.10.
- b. Ratification of Total Payroll for the paycheck dated 3/21/2025 in the total amount of \$914,703.32.
- c. **Bridge #33/Old Mill Run Bridge Replacement Project:** Requesting approval of ECMS submission Invoice #9, Part 1, Preliminary Design, in the total amount of \$18,764.57, received from Keller Engineers. Expenses are 95% reimbursable and will be paid from the Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund.
- d. **Blair County Conservation District Board:** Requesting approval for the appointment of Thomas Gearhart II as Farmer Director, filling the term of Cindy Bigelow, through 12/31/2028.
- e. **Status Changes:** Conrad, Brayden, PT, Probation Officer Support, Adult Parole and Probation, \$11.58/hr., to PT, Deputy, Sheriff, \$15.52/hr., effective 3/1/0/2025.
- f. **Resignations:** Imler, Melissa Gale, PT, Department Assistant, Domestic Relations, \$12.28/hr., effective 3/19/2025. Green, Morgan, FT, Assistant District Attorney, District Attorney, \$2,091.01 biweekly, effective 3/20/2025.

Commissioner Burke noted her abstentions on the payments to Blair Senior Services and Hollidaysburg Borough.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 43-2025 with the abstentions as noted.

**STAFF REPORTS & SPECIAL BUSINESS:**

**Blair Senior Services:**

Dennis Wisor requested acceptance of the FY 2023-2024 Medical Assistance Transportation Program's (MATP) final allocation received from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, in the amount of \$1,969,626.00.

**Resolution 144-2025:** Accepting the FY 2023-2024 Medical Assistance Transportation Program's (MATP) final allocation received from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, in the amount of \$1,969,626.00.

Commissioner Burke abstained from voting due the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 43-2025 with the abstention as noted.

**Sheriff:**

Sheriff James Ott requested approval of the Agreement between the County of Blair, on behalf of the Blair County Sheriff's Office, and Citizen2A to activate the Citizen2A features on the Agency's version of the Permittum's PermitDirector Platform and the sharing of certain Agency-owned data with Citizen2A at no cost to the County.

Sheriff Ott added that Citizen2A is an outside organization that would provide up-to-date information or establish information for the citizens as far as their second amendment rights and gun rights.

Commissioner Burke asked for an explanation regarding the relationship between Permittum and Citizen 2A and what information is being transferred.

Sheriff Ott responded that there is no information actually being transferred. Permittum is an outside source. It is not County owned. It is a partnership. It does not affect our IT structure. You do have to have access to get into it. Therefore, our citizens have to choose to use that route. While in that route, they will be given an option or a button so Citizen 2A partners with Permittum, and they give them basically a tab that says if you are interested in your gun rights reciprocity, etc., click here. There is a warning that comes up that warns them saying you are leaving this site; you are now entering into a private site of your own fruition at no cost. Then there is one more check before it allows them to navigate or be canalled into Citizen 2A's site. We can also use that as an app. There is a way we can work it up to set it up as an app down the road that we are looking at that would provide them the resource outside. The County has no control of it. Permittum does not share that person's information. It is solely between that person and Citizen 2A. They

also have the security measures put into place that are cis approved, which is the same as what Permidium did. While they are not required for that they wanted their customers to be satisfied and safe being able to use their system.

Commissioner Burke asked if this is something they could opt into if they chose to, but they do not have to.

Sheriff Off responded that is correct.

Commissioner Webster stated that was her question. It would be initiated by the citizen?

Sheriff Ott confirmed that the citizen would have a choice to enter into that site. It does not automatically direct them there. They click a button and say yes, this is what I want to go. There are several layers of warnings ahead saying you are leaving this and going here. Is what you want to do.

Commissioner Webster stated that is sounds like a great way to pass along information as to their legal rights and responsibilities.

Sheriff Ott added that he will go on record to say that we are the first in the nation to do this. This is a company he worked with on other avenues including Permidium . This was the founder of Permidium and he has branched off to do it. So, coming back to us being first in Pennsylvania to do Permidium and now have 37 other counties that have joined it. He came to Sheriff Off and said you were the first in Pennsylvania, do you want to be first in the nation?

**Resolution 145-2025:** Approving the Agreement between the County of Blair, on behalf of the Blair County Sheriff's Office, and Citizen2A to activate the Citizen2A features on the Agency's version of the Permitium's PermitDirector Platform and the sharing of certain Agency-owned data with Citizen2A at no cost to the County.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 145-2025.

**Elections:**

Sarah Seymour requested approval for the award, rejection or rebidding of the bids received for the printing of the Blair County Election ballots.

Ms. Seymour added that she recommends that the award go to NPC, Inc. that came in at the lowest price.

Commissioner Kessling asked if this is covered by a grant.

Ms. Seymour responded that it will be covered by a grant.

Vendor	Total Price 4 Years	Price Per Ballot	Comments
NPC, Inc.	\$131,820.00	\$18 -\$21	Low Bidder, Recommended Award
William Penn Printing	\$175,760.00	\$0.26	

**Resolution 146-2025:** Approving the award, rejection or rebidding of the bids received for the printing of the Blair County Election ballots.

Vendor	Total Price 4 Years	Price Per Ballot	Comments
NPC, Inc.	\$131,820.00	\$18 -\$21	Awarded
William Penn Printing	\$175,760.00	\$0.26	

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 146-2025.

**Social Services:**

- i. Melissa Gillin requested approval to authorize Commissioner David Kessling, as the Chief Elected Official, to sign the two (2) Site Specific Checklists Tier 2 Environmental Review Records (ERR) for Blair County Housing Rehabilitation Existing Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program.

**Resolution 147-2025:** Authorizing Commissioner David Kessling, as the Chief Elected Official, to sign the two (2) Site Specific Checklists Tier 2 Environmental Review Records (ERR) for Blair County Housing Rehabilitation Existing Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 147-2025.

- ii. Melissa Gillin requested approval of a Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 1519 18th Avenue, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$4,395.00.

**Resolution 148-2025:** Approving the Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 1519 18th Avenue, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$4,395.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 148-2025.

- iii. Melissa Gillin requested approval of a Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 1229 4th Avenue, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$3,745.00.

**Resolution 149-2025:** Approving the Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 1229 4th Avenue, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$3,745.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 149-2025.

- iv. Melissa Gillin requested approval of a Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 715 N. 6th Avenue, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$4,370.00.

**Resolution 150-2025:** Approving the Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 715 N. 6th Avenue, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$4,370.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 150-2025.

- v. Melissa Gillin requested approval of a Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 1914 11th Street, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$6,386.50.

**Resolution 151-2025:** Approving the Blair County Demolition Fund Disbursement to assist with the demolition of blighted property located at 1914 11th Street, Altoona, PA in the total amount of \$6,386.50.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 151-2025.

**Public Works / Facilities:**

- i. Nicholas Burkett requested approval of the Quote dated February 26, 2025 from Empire Communication Systems to update the freight elevator intercom system in the amount of \$3,548.00.

**Resolution 152-2025:** Approving the Quote dated February 26, 2025 from Empire Communication Systems to update the freight elevator intercom system in the amount of \$3,548.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 152-2025.

- ii. Nicholas Burkett requested approval of the Quote dated March 21, 2025 from Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP for the updating of the fire alarm NAC control panels in the amount of \$10,131.00.

Commissioner Burke asked if this is paid by PCoRP (Pennsylvania Counties Risk Pool).

Mr. Burkett responded that it is paid by PCoRP.

**Resolution 153-2025:** Approving the Quote dated March 21, 2025 from Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP for the updating of the fire alarm NAC control panels in the amount of \$10,131.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 153-2025.

- iii. Nicholas Burkett requested approval of the Quote dated March 21, 2025 from Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP, for the updating of the fire alarm relay on the 4th floor of the Courthouse in the DA holding room, in the amount of \$1,431.00.

**Resolution 154-2025:** Approving the Quote dated March 21, 2025 from Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP, for the updating of the fire alarm relay on the 4th floor of the Courthouse in the DA holding room, in the amount of \$1,431.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 154-2025.

**Public Works / Highway:**

- i. Paul Shaffer requested approval for the award, rejection or rebidding of the bids received for the Blair County Salt Storage Building contract #1.

Contractor	Contract #	Base Bid Amount	Comments
John Claar Excavating, Inc.	1	\$423,994.00	Contract #1 - Low Bidder. Recommend Award
Ventura Construction	1	\$458,500.00	
Lawruk Builders, Inc.	1	\$480,000.00	
Antares Site Work LLC	1	\$491,591.00	
C.E. Wood Construction, Inc.	1	\$499,524.00	
Mid-State Construction, Inc.	1	\$644,958.00	

**Resolution 155-2025:** Approving the award, rejection or rebidding of the bids received for the Blair County Salt Storage Building contract #1.

Contractor	Contract #	Base Bid Amount	Comments
John Claar Excavating, Inc.	1	\$423,994.00	Contract #1 - Awarded
Ventura Construction	1	\$458,500.00	
Lawruk Builders, Inc.	1	\$480,000.00	
Antares Site Work LLC	1	\$491,591.00	
C.E. Wood Construction, Inc.	1	\$499,524.00	
Mid-State Construction, Inc.	1	\$644,958.00	

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 155-2025.

- ii. Paul Shaffer requested approval for the award, rejection or rebidding of the bids received for the Blair County Salt Storage Building contract #2.

Contractor	Contract #	Base Bid Amount	Comments
Westmoreland Electric Services LLC	2	\$35,600.00	Contract #2 - Low Bidder. Recommend Award
Electric Workz LLC	2	\$37,515.00	
Schultheis Electric, Inc.	2	\$39,500.00	
Leverknight Electric	2	\$41,660.00	
Bob Biter Electric, Inc.	2	\$77,000.00	

**Resolution 156-2025:** Approving the award, rejection or rebidding of the bids received for the Blair County Salt Storage Building contract #1.

Contractor	Contract #	Base Bid Amount	Comments
Westmoreland Electric Services LLC	2	\$35,600.00	Contract #2 - Awarded
Electric Workz LLC	2	\$37,515.00	
Schultheis Electric, Inc.	2	\$39,500.00	
Leverknight Electric	2	\$41,660.00	
Bob Biter Electric, Inc.	2	\$77,000.00	

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 156-2025.

**Finances:**

Lindsay Dempsie requested approval of the Schedule A Agreement for the Annual Demand Response Program between the County of Blair and KOREnergy for the years beginning 2025 through and including 2028.

Ms. Dempsie added that this is so we can participate in the electric reduction program and we can receive a rebate of up to \$5,000.00 each year.



**Resolution 157-2025:** Approving the Schedule A Agreement for the Annual Demand Response Program between the County of Blair and K OREnergy for the years beginning 2025 through and including 2028.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 157-2025.

**Commissioners:**

- i. Chief Clerk Tiracave requested ratification for the submission of the 901 Municipal Waste Planning Grant to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

**Resolution 158-2025:** Ratifying the submission of the 901 Municipal Waste Planning Grant to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 158-2025.

- ii. Chief Clerk Tiracave requested approval to accept the 901 Municipal Waste Planning Grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection in the total amount of \$93,750.00. \$75,000.00 (80%) to be funded by the DEP and \$18,750.00 (20%) to be funded by the County.

Commissioner Webster stated that the County is always happy to accept grants.

**Resolution 159-2025:** Accepting the 901 Municipal Waste Planning Grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection in the total amount of \$93,750.00. \$75,000.00 (80%) to be funded by the DEP and \$18,750.00 (20%) to be funded by the County.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 159-2025.

- iii. Commission Kessling requested to table the adoption of the Ordinance authorizing the taking by eminent domain two parcels of land in the township of Allegheny to be heard again on Thursday, April 3, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to table the adoption of the Ordinance authorizing the taking by eminent domain two parcels of land in the township of Allegheny to be heard again on Thursday, April 3, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

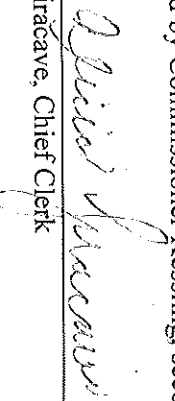
Geoffry Behrens stated that the he does not want to cause the Board of Commissioners pain.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**Adjourn:**

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

  
Alicia Tiracave, Chief Clerk

