

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING: TUESDAY MAY 21, 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 988 9066 9264, and enter the meeting passcode 423423.*

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Kessling called the meeting to order.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION:

Commissioner Kessling called for a moment of silent reflection.

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 Assistant County Administrator Allison Senkevich.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Lori Guyer (Commissioners), Sam Dunkle (Court Administration), Glenn Nelson (Fort Roberdeau), Becky Robinson (Purchasing), Devin Saylor (Assessment), Mark Taylor (Public Safety), Mindy Hostler (CYF), Julia Burke (Public Defender), Bill Forsht and Ray Benton (Coroner), Rebecca Countess (Senate Regional Representative), Carol A Dannenberg (Holidaysburg Watchdog), Marianne Simsi (Public), Kay Stevens (Altoona Mirror), and Nate Taylor (Public Access Channel).

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT:

Assistant County Administrator Senkevich confirmed there were two-2 Executive Sessions held since the last meeting.

The first session was held on Friday, May 17th at 1:30 p.m. with Commissioners Kessling, Commissioner Burke, HR Manager Melena Koegler, and Chief Clerk Nicole Hemminger to discuss one-1 employee discipline matter.

The second session was held on Tuesday, May 21st at 11:00 a.m. with Commissioners Kessling, Commissioner Webster, and Commissioner Burke to discuss land acquisition.

APPROVAL OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES – 5/14

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to accept the minutes as prepared.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Commissioner Kessling called for public comment.

Kay Stevens from the Altoona Mirror asked when the meeting to discuss the Opioid Settlement money will be held since it is not an item on today's agenda.

Commissioner Kessling responded that the Opioid Settlement discussion was originally scheduled for Thursday, May 23, 2024, but has since been cancelled since all three commissioners will not be able to attend. It will be rescheduled when all three commissioners are available.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Kessling called for commissioner comments.

There were no comments.

PROCLAMATIONS:

Commissioner Kessling read the following proclamation:

**PROCLAMATION
Emergency Medical Services Week, May 19 – May 24, 2024**

WHEREAS, emergency medical services is a vital public service; and,

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week;

WHEREAS, access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and,

WHEREAS, emergency medical services has grown to fill a gap by providing important, out of hospital care, including preventative medicine, follow-up care, and access to telemedicine; and,

WHEREAS, the emergency medical services system consists of first responders, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, firefighters, police officers, educators, administrators, pre-hospital nurses, emergency nurses, emergency physicians, trained members of the public, and other out of hospital medical care providers; and,

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams, whether career or volunteer, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their lifesaving skills; and,

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of emergency medical services providers by designating the Emergency

Medical Services Week; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, the Blair County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the week of May 19 – 25, 2024 as Emergency Medical Services Week and recognize the theme for the 50th Anniversary of EMS Week, which is "Honoring Our Past, Forging Our Future" and encourage the community to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

**BLAIR COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

David Kessling, President

Amy E. Webster, Vice-President

Laura O. Burke, Secretary

ATTEST:

Nicole Hemminger, Chief Clerk

Director of Public Safety, Mark Taylor, added that we should all be proud of our local EMS centers as well as our first responders, who are mostly volunteers.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to accept the Proclamation as prepared.

CONSENT AGENDA:
Resolution 243-2024:

i. Payment of the following three-3 Warrant Lists:

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
05/21/2024	240521SS	445,875.08
05/21/2024	240521CY	199,530.19
05/21/2024	240521WW	137,785.82

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

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
05/16/2024	240515RA	96.75
05/16/2024	240515RA	14,915.04
05/16/2024	240502CY	800.00
05/15/2024	240515RF	3,095.68
05/14/2024	240514ML	28,200.96
05/16/2024	240516HR	8,870.85
05/13/2024	240513DA	62,020.00
05/10/2024	240510CY	20.00
05/13/2024	240513FS	3,435.27

- Which includes payments to Blair Senior Services in the amount of \$808.92 and McQuaide Blasko Inc. in the amount of \$3,079.38.

iii. Ratification of Total Payroll for the check dated 05/17/24 in the total amount of \$883,231.65

iv. **2024 Budget Transfer:** To cover legal fees from Campbell Durrant:

From \$ _____ **To** _____

01101GCO-44080 General County Operations \$3,020.90 01209PO-44080 Prison

v. **Resignations:** Lancaster, Jacob L., FT, Corrections Officer, Prison, \$22.66/hr., effective 04/29/24. Ness, Katie L., FT, Corrections Officer, Prison, \$22.66/hr., effective 05/12/24. Vallor, Rochelle L., FT, Receptionist Clerk, Prothonotary, \$11.31/hr., effective 05/13/24. Emswiler, Autumn C., PT, Caseworker, CYF, \$17.29/hr., effective 05/24/24.

vi. **Employments:** Brumbaugh, Casandra L., FT, Caseworker, CYF, \$20.50/hr., effective 05/20/24. Morina, Adrea M., FT, District Court Administrative Support, MDJ Jones, \$11.58/hr., effective 05/20/24. Schwartz, Dustin P., Temporary Department Assistant, Highway, \$12.50/hr., effective 05/20/24. Tarras, Morgann, Temporary Department Assistant, Highway, \$12.50/hr., effective 05/20/24.

vii. **Status Change:** Easterling, Minyhah A., Temporary Department Assistant, Highway, \$12.50/hr., effective 05/13/24 to Temporary Department Assistant, Highway, \$12.50/hr., effective 05/20/24.

Commissioner Burke noted her abstentions on the payments to Blair Senior Services in the total amount of \$808.92 and McQuaide Blasko Inc. in the total amount of \$3,079.38.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 243-2024 with abstentions as noted.

STAFF REPORTS & SPECIAL BUSINESS:

Coroner:

Coroner Ray Benton requested approval to accept, the bid(s) received for 1) Removal and Transportation of Decedents and for 2) Storage of Decedents for the Blair County Coroner and to award or reject per county code thereafter.

Coroner Benton noted that two companies provided bids for the removal, transportation, and storage services from Clear Creek Company and Forsht Livery Service and noted that, after the bids are accepted, they will be sent to the Solicitors for legal review.

Resolution 244-2024: Approving the acceptance of bids received for the removal and transportation of decedents and for the storage of decedents for the Blair County Coroner for review and award or rejection, according to county code thereafter.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 244-2024.

Public Safety:

Director of Public Safety Mark Taylor requested approval of the contract agreement between the County of Blair, on behalf of the Department of Emergency Services E-911, and Compliance Associates, Inc. for a Hazardous Material Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Transcaer project to provide a county wide tabletop/functional exercise specializing in the transportation of hazardous materials by roadway in 2024, in the total amount of \$8,200.00 (to be paid: HMEP \$6,560.00 and LEPC \$1,640.00).

Director Taylor mentioned that the last exercise focused on railroad safety, but this year's exercise is highlighting highway incidents.

Resolution 245-2024: Approving the contract agreement between the County of Blair, on behalf of the Department of Emergency Services E-911, and Compliance Associates, Inc. for a Hazardous Material Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Transcaer project, to provide a county wide tabletop/functional exercise specializing in the transportation of hazardous materials by roadway in 2024, in the total amount of \$8,200.00 (to be paid: HMEP \$6,560.00 and LEPC \$1,640.00).

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 245-2024.

Children, Youth and Families:

Mindy Hostler requested approval of the FY 2024-2025 Agreement for Payment of Legal Services between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families, and Larry Lashinsky, Esquire, Attorney of Rea, Rea & Lashinsky, to provide guardian ad litem legal services for the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, at the rate of \$85.00/hour.

Commissioner Burke asked if the "guardian ad litem" was correct or if it was an error on the agenda.

Ms. Hostler confirmed that "guardian ad litem" was an error on the agenda and should be "legal services".

Resolution 246-2024: Approving the FY 2024-2025 Agreement for Payment of Legal Services between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families, and Larry Lashinsky, Esquire, Attorney of Rea, Rea & Lashinsky, to provide legal services for the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, at the rate of \$85.00/hour.

Motioned by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Kessling, and approved to adopt Resolution 246-2024 with the removal of "guardian ad litem" as noted.

Fort Roberdeau:

- i. Glenn Nelson requested approval of the quote from Altoona Soft Water to provide water treatment service at Fort Roberdeau for the period of May 2024 through October 2024, in the estimated amount of \$1,025.00.

Resolution 247-2024: Approving the quote from Altoona Soft Water to provide water treatment service at Fort Roberdeau for the period of May 2024 through October 2024, in the estimated amount of \$1,025.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Kessling, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 247-2024.

- ii. Glenn Nelson requested approval of the submission of a Rotary Club of Altoona Grapes for Good Fund Allocation Application, in the requested amount of \$2,500.00, to support the printing costs of Fort Roberdeau trail and recreational maps.

Mr. Nelson expressed his thanks to GIS Director, Grant Wills, for his assistance with creating the new brochure and maps for the Fort.

Resolution 248-2024: Approving the submission of a Rotary Club of Altoona Grapes for Good Fund Allocation Application, in the requested amount of \$2,500.00, to support the printing costs of Fort Roberdeau trail and recreational maps.

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Kessling, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 248-2024.

- iii. Glenn Nelson requested approval of two Holding Tank Inspection forms received from the Blair County Sanitary Administrative Committee for the 2024 annual inspection fees for two holding tanks at Fort Roberdeau in the total amount of \$80.00 (\$40.00 each).

Commissioner Kessling asked if the inspection is for the new restrooms at Fort Roberdeau.

Mr. Nelson confirmed this inspection is for the two new restrooms that have to be pumped each year.

Resolution 249-2024: Approving the submission of two Holding Tank Inspection forms received from the Blair County Sanitary Administrative Committee for the 2024 annual inspection fees for two holding tanks at Fort Roberdeau in the total amount of \$80.00 (\$40.00 each).

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Kessling, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 249-2024.

Public Defender:

Attorney Julia Burke requested approval to submit an application to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for the FY 2023-2024 Indigent Defense Grant Program Funds in the total amount of \$97,092.00.

Attorney Burke provided the following breakdown of the items she will be including in her application submission:

\$10,412.36: Legal Assistant (Full-time)

- a. Eliminate current full-time Administrative Support position
- b. Create full-time Legal Assistant position
 - i. Base pay rate: \$17.10/hour full time (H11 pay grade plus retirement)

\$2,000.00: Recruitment Incentive for Legal Assistant Hiring

\$23,530.73: Investigator (Part-time)

- a. Create part time Investigator position
 - i. Base pay rate: \$21.82/hour part time (H16 pay grade – 999 hours/year, with no retirement contribution from County).

\$8,000.00: Retention Incentives for Full-time Staff

- a. Non-union, more than 10 years in office: \$2,500
 - i. Two eligible staff members
- b. Union, more than four years with office: \$1,350
 - i. Two eligible staff members
- c. Union, less than one year with office: \$300
 - i. One eligible staff member

\$8,000.00: JusticeText Software

- a. One-year subscription to a video transcription and organizing software to efficiently analyze voluminous video and audio files

\$45,148.91: Conflict Counsel Compensation

- a. Increase the budget allocated to compensation for conflict counsel appointments
- b. Modify the existing payment framework

Attorney Burke addressed the unsustainability of using grant funds for incentives by adding that she expects a continuing commitment from the Commonwealth to provide this yearly grant opportunity.

Commissioner Burke reminded everyone that after an award is received, the issue of implementing the incentive money would still need to be presented at Salary Board for approval and anything union related would need to be presented to the union.

Commissioner Burke asked that if our grant application is rejected, can we amend it with different items for consideration.

Attorney Burke confirmed that we can amend the request if needed.

Commissioner Kessler asked how many cases does the Office of the Public Defender have per year.

Attorney Burke commented that historically, on average, their office handles around 3,000 cases per year.

Commissioner Webster closed by thanking Attorney Burke for her creativity in designing the items on the grant application.

Resolution 250-2024: Approving the submission of an application to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for the FY 2023-2024 Indigent Defense Grant Program Funds in the total amount of \$97,092.00.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessler, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 250-2024.

Commissioners:

- i. Assistant County Administrator Senkevich requested approval of a Facility Use Agreement between the County of Blair and Greenfield Township for the use of the Claysburg Community/Senior Center.

Resolution 251-2024: Approving the Facility Use Agreement between the County of Blair and Greenfield Township for the use of the Claysburg Community/Senior Center.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessler, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 251-2024.

- ii. Assistant County Administrator Senkevich requested approval of the Settlement Agreement between the County of Blair, on behalf of Blair County Children, Youth and Families, and the Department of Human Services, for the purpose of resolving the County's appeal of the license revocation, for a 24-month period, pending the terms set forth in the agreement.

Resolution 252-2024: Approving the Settlement Agreement between the County of Blair, on behalf of Blair County Children, Youth and Families, and the Department of Human Services, for the purpose of resolving the County's appeal of the license revocation, for a 24-month period, pending the terms set forth in the agreement.

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Kessler, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 252-2024.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Kessling asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Marianne Sinisi interjected, asking when exactly the Opioid Settlement discussion will be held since all three commissioners were currently present at today's Board meeting.

Commissioner Kessling restated that originally the Opioid discussion was scheduled for May 30th, but since all three commissioners would not be able to attend, it will be scheduled at a time when all three can be there. He added that all three commissioners recently attended the PA County Opioid Symposium presented by CCAP, and noted that the event was very insightful and gave them much to consider on how to spend the funds in the best way possible.

Commissioner Kessling reiterated that there have been do decisions made on what the money will be spent on.

Ms. Sinisi asked if there will be a roundtable discussion.

Commissioner Burke responded that many topics will be addressed at the upcoming Opioid Settlement discussion, and one of them will be to discuss the establishment of a committee.

Ms. Sinisi asked if the commissioners could comment on the appropriate use of funds, specifically, those monies spent on Adult Probation salaries. Her concern was that there would be little money left if the Opioid Settlement funds were used to pay salaries and also questioned whether this was an allowable use of the funds under Exhibit E.

Commissioner Kessling confirmed that salaries of Adult Parole and Probation Officers were an allowable use of funds under Exhibit E, but restated that no decisions have been made on the spending of Opioid Settlement funds.

Motion by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adjourn today's meeting.


Allison Senkevich, Assistant County Administrator