

BUSINESS SESSION: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023, 10:00 A.M.

Location: Commissioners Meeting Room, Basement.

**Public meetings are being held both in-person and by Zoom. To participate in the meeting please dial-1-301-715-8592 or-1-646-876-9923, enter meeting number 966 3545 3323, and enter the meeting passcode 423423.*

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 those participating in the meeting please stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Commissioner Erb, Commissioner Burke, Commissioner Webster, Solicitor Karn and Melissa Harpster, Administrative Office Coordinator Commissioners Office.

Members Absent:

Chief Clerk Hemminger

Others Present:

Allison Senkevich (Commissioners Office), Carol A. Dannenberg (Hollidaysburg Community Watchdog), Rebecca Robinson (Purchasing), Jim Ott (Sheriff), Lindsay Dempsie (Finance), Kay Stephens (Altoona Mirror), Wade Kagarise (Judge), Jackie Bernard (Judge), Elizabeth Doyle (Judge), and Nicole Smith (Court Administration).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Commissioner Erb called for public comment.

Judge Kagarise, Judge Bernard and Judge Doyle presented comments in favor of the county entering a contract with Speak and Scribe LLC for court reporting services. Former county court reporter Jackie Kormanski, who resigned her position with the county in July 2023, developed Speak and Scribe LLC. All three-3 Judges’ expressed their willingness to review and address any labor-related issues the board feels could arise by signing a second contract for court reporting services.

Judge Kagarise stated that prior to this current Board of Commissioner’s the county’s standard practice has been that of using an independent contractor for court reporting services. He stated that two-2 years ago the county had five-5 reporters, and today it currently has two-2 vacancies including that of Ms. Kormanski and no qualified applications.

Judge Kagarise stated it is critical to the courts that we have court reporters in the courtrooms. He stated that he also shares the Board’s concern about proper management because he too feels there is a lack of training opportunities on this issue. Because of this, he has begun to reach out to various education contacts to find courses available for people who want to pursue this type of occupation.

Judge Bernard stated that, with the lack of courtroom reports, the county is at risk for not being able to conduct court sessions.

Judge Doyle stated when Ms. Kormanski resigned, ten-10 counties were looking to hire court reporters. She stated those counties could not find reporters and neither can Blair County.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Adoption of Resolutions:

Resolution 426-2023: Approving the FY 2020/2021 Early Intervention Income and Expense Report.

Motion by Commissioner Erb, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 426-2023.

Resolution 427-2023: Approving eight-8 FY 2023/2024 Mental Health Student Assistance Program (SAP) Letters of Agreement between the County of Blair, Department of Social Services, UPMC Western Behavioral Health of the Alleghenies and the school districts listed below for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024:

Altoona Area School District	Hollidaysburg School District
Bellwood Antis School District	Spring Cove School District
Bishop Guilfoyle High School	Tyrone Area School District
Claysburg School District	Williamsburg School District

Motion by Commissioner Erb, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 427-2023.

Resolution 428-2023: Approving Commissioners Bruce R. Erb and Laura O. Burke to sign the FY 2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) e-Contract between the County of Blair and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acting through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), in the total amount of \$829,777.00, for flood drainage improvements, owner occupied housing rehabilitation and administration fees; and authorization for Tricia Maceno, Blair

County Social Services Director to serve as the delegated signing authority to submit any financial invoices for the duration of the said contract period.

Motion by Commissioner Erb, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 428-2023.

Resolution 429-2023: Approving a FY 2023/2024 County Children & Youth Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network, Older Child Matching Initiative between the County of Blair, Blair County Children Youth and Families and Diakon Adoption and Foster Care. Said initiative is 100% grant funded.

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 429-2023.

Resolution 430-2023: Approving a FY 2023/2024 renewal Purchase of Service Agreement and HIPAA Business Associate Agreement between the County of Blair, Blair County Children, Youth and Families and Family Services, Inc., for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 430-2023.

Resolution 431-2023: Approving the submission of the Southern Alleghenies Cooperative (SAC) 911 Regional FY 2024 Maintenance Grant Requests and Capital Project Requests for Statewide Interconnectivity Funding to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), in the amount of \$8,365,562.60, of which the County of Blair requests \$259,292.70 for maintenance and \$2,304,417.56 for projects intended for the purpose of supporting the identified equipment maintenance and capital projects needed to maintain operations and improvements at the PSAP's within the cooperative.

Motion by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Burke and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 431-2023.

Resolution 432-2023: Approving an Election Integrity Grant Program Contract (#C000086360) between the County of Blair and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), in the total amount of \$406,631.91 for the period of August 15, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Motion by Commissioner Erb, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 432-2023.

Resolution 433-2023: Approving the School District Election Polling Place Agreement between the County of Blair, on behalf of the Blair County Board of Elections and the Hollidaysburg Area School District for the 2023 Municipal Election and the 2024-2025 Primary and General Elections.

Motion by Commissioner Erb, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 433-2023.

Resolution 434-2023: Approving the submission of the final report to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for the Peer-to-Peer Grant, verifying all project expenditures have been made in accordance with the grant contract, and accepting the report for the purposes of closing out the grant.

Motion by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Webster and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 434-2023.

Resolution 435-2023: Approving the agreement between the County of Blair and Speak and Scribe, LLC for court reporting services at the rates of \$200.00/per day and \$2.35/per page.

Commissioner Erb stated he would like to discuss with President Judge Doyle some labor-related concerns he has with entering an agreement with Speak and Scribe LLC.

Commissioner Erb stated he feels that it would be more cost effective to pay court reporters for additional work hours than to pay for contracted services.

Commissioner Erb suggested that the county update the job description with realistic salary figures. He stated that the county's starting salary for a court reporter is \$29,666.00 per year; however, his review of recent pay records indicates that a reporter is earning \$47,000.00 to \$48,000.00, which includes compensation for typing transcripts.

Commissioner Burke stated she supports contracting with Speak and Scribe LLC as long as the union that represents the courts has no issues or objections.

Commissioner Webster stated that entering an agreement with an independent contractor offers no guarantee of their availability for work.

Discussion followed.

Commissioner Erb Nay, Commissioner Webster Nay, and Commissioner Burke Yay for the adoption of Resolution 435-2023. Motion failed with one-1 vote in favor and two-2 votes against.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURN:

Meeting Adjourned,

Allison G. Senkevich, Assistant County Administrator