



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION MINUTES

Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 11:00 A.M.

Willowbank Office Building
420 Holmes Street, Room 146
Bellefonte, PA 16823

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The public work session of the Board of Commissioners was convened at 11:04 AM by Chair of the Board Michael Pipe.

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Deputy Administrator John Franek Jr., and Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith.

County personnel present included Controller Jason Moser, Ray Stolinis, Travis Walker, Liz Lose and Peter Butler.

Guests present included Kim Stank and Corey Troutman (phone).

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

IV. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

A. Housing Study Update

Director Ray Stolinis reported that the Planning Office has been meeting with Mullin Lonergan to discuss what to expect out of the study and what was the problem implementing the 2005 study.

Marjorie, Principal Consultant at Mullin Lonergan, has provided a schedule through November/December 2022. The first event is a County Municipal Planning Workshop that will be held on March 9th to gain perspective on housing issues in Centre County.

Betsy Barndt has compiled a list of stakeholders to interview. She will schedule virtual meetings to discuss their views of affordable housing. She has received positive feedback and stakeholders are excited to give their input to the study efforts.

The draft study will be completed in August with final presentation to Board of Commissioners in November.

B. Broadband Update

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The Planning office is developing a stakeholder list and will be rolling out meetings within the next three weeks. They are also preparing to hold a Town Hall meeting for municipalities as an educational component of the study.

Peter Butler presented the Board with a map highlighting fiber optic cables that have been identified across the County.

C. ARPA Allocations

Kim Stank reported that the County has expended up \$5.8 million in ARPA funds to date, which recently included the cost to supply all Centre County Government employees with surgical-grade masks. Revenue replacement expenditures total \$500,000 for employee bonuses.

She presented the revenue loss calculations for 2021 through 2023. If the projected loss would remain consistent with 2020, and all factors would remain the same, in 2021 that would grow to approximately \$10 million; in 2022, \$14 million and in 2023 \$18 million. Total revenue loss could exceed \$49 million using a 5.2% average to perform calculations. The \$49 million would be the best-case scenario. The county would have until 2024 to commit and 2026 to expend funding.

Commissioner Pipe suggested that the proposed allocation for Centre Crest renovations may decrease from \$7 million to \$3 million.

The Board also discussed the budget allocation for Central Booking in 2022. Corey confirmed the revenue shortfall was budgeted using ARPA funding. Controller Moser asked for clarification regarding invoices to the municipalities. Commissioner Pipe stated some of the municipalities have received them but need to clarify if 2022 is included in budget.

D. Funding Requests

- i. Administrator Margaret Gray received an informal request from the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority expressing interest in a donation in recognition of the space provided at no cost for the COVID-19 Testing Site. Their COVID related expenditures approach \$300,000.

Commissioner Pipe said the Board has considered this and there was consensus to consider a donation amount and discuss at the next ARPA meeting.

- ii. Deputy Administrator John Franek introduced an inquiry for potential recreation funding. The County may receive a request from the Wildlife for Everyone Foundation. An opinion letter, requested by We Conserve PA, was submitted from a law firm in the benefit of DCNR to help promote tools for recreation.

Director Ray Stolinas added that Wildlife for Everyone is anticipating a second phase of their project, the Soaring Eagle Wetland. Ray asked Wes Fahringer to provide justification of ARPA eligibility.

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V. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:39 AM.

ATTEST:

Margaret N. Gray
Administrator