

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

The first regular meeting of October 2020 of the Pike County Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Osterberg at 9:00 a.m. at the Pike County Administration Building, followed by the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag.

PRESENT: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini; Chief Clerk Orben; and Solicitor Farley.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the October 7, 2020 Agenda.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the September 16, 2020 Commissioners' Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the September 21, 23, 29, 30 and October 1, 2020 Commissioners' Conference Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Commissioner Guccini abstained from the September 21st Conference due to his absence. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of **\$346,299.95**, subject to further review.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from **PIKE COUNTY EMPLOYEES HEALTH INSURANCE FUND**, in the amount of **\$358,141.45**.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve exonerations of 45 properties from the 2020 Judicial Sale, as presented by Cynthia Gehris, Tax Claim Bureau Director.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

PERSONNEL:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to acknowledge receipt of a letter from the Courts advising that they have hired **NATASHA SMOLINSKI** as a part-time Clerk II for District Justice Magistrate Cooper's Office, for less than 1000 hours per year, effective September 29, 2020, with no benefits. This is a replacement position.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to acknowledge receipt of a letter from Warden Craig Lowe advising that he has hired, with Prison Board approval, **KERRY THOMPSON, CHRISTOPHER VALENTI, JOHN GARLEY AND AUSTIN MAURER** as full-time Correctional Officers for the Correctional Facility, for a 40 hour work week, effective October 5, 2020, with benefits after 90 days.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to acknowledge receipt of a letter from Warden Craig Lowe advising that he has hired, with Prison Board approval, **STEVEN MICKNICK** to fill a full time Maintenance position for the Correctional Facility, for a 40 hour work week, effective October 5, 2020, with benefits after 90 days. This is a replacement position.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to recess the Commissioners' Meeting to hold a Salary Board Meeting.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

A SALARY BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to award the bids for frozen foods and groceries for the Correctional Facility as follows: Mivila Foods - \$77,487.35; Keyco Distributors - \$25,663.08; Driscoll Foods - \$31,948.42; and Sysco Foods - \$17,542.35.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to open bids for the Pike County Correctional Facility Waste Water Treatment Plant Controls Building Roof Replacement Project.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Solicitor Farley opened the following bids received for the roof replacement: Dunmore Roofing - \$54,500 with additional items of \$900, the total bid of \$55,400; and Grimm Construction - \$69,370 with additional items of \$605.00, the total bid

of \$69,975.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to table the bids received until October 21, 2020 for the Pike County Correctional Facility Waste Water Treatment Plant Controls Building Roof Replacement Project.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to appoint Jeff Shook to the Pike County Economic Development Authority to fill an unexpired term ending December 31, 2022.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission Grant Agreement for \$46,651.51, Financial Statement and Letter of Compensation on behalf of the Juvenile Probation Office.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the proposal from L.J. Bogumil, as recommended by the Prison Board, for the static pressure monitoring at the Correctional Facility.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the FY 2020/21 Purchase of Service Agreement between Cornell Abraxas Group, Inc. and the County of Pike, on behalf of Children & Youth Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute Senior Rental Assistance Contract #43, on behalf of the Human Services Office.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Guccini voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to award the Covid-19 County Relief Funds as per the attached list.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg and Guccini voted 'aye'. Commissioner Schmalzle abstained. Motion carried.

Commissioner Guccini announced that one of those is an award of \$4,550 to the United Way of Pike County and that he is President of the Board of the Pike County of United Way. I did not have anything to do with submitting the application. It was filled out by another Board member, I kept myself out of that process. Ron (Commissioner Schmalzle) is recusing himself from all voting on this side so that we have a quorum on voting.

Commissioner Osterberg said we have hired Hailstone & Associates along with the assistance of Robert Ruiz and Kayla Orben and their office to take in the applications and to identify how people would qualify for the funds. I know that they did a stellar job. It was a job that we, the Commissioners, for obvious reasons like what Steve just said, we are all part of this community and it was best that we as Commissioners stayed out of that process. We allowed them to do it through a matrix and a formula that they came up with so that we are sure that everybody received what they are due. We are very appreciative of what they've done. This took months to do as the rules were constantly being re-identified by DCED. There are some people who may have put in applications, who didn't qualify. There was no intention of asking people to put in applications knowing that they didn't qualify. There are 58 on the list and there were a few others that applied and for some different reasons they didn't qualify.

Director of Human Services Robert Ruiz thanked the Commissioners and Sara (Hailstone) and her associates, Jessica and Shannon, along with Kayla (Orben) who has really helped us move forward with this entire project. We created categories that would fit into: Sole Proprietor, Hospitality and Tourism, Municipality, Non-Profit, EMS, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol, PPE, Broadband and the County's expenses as well. We created an on-line application to fill out the application and submit to us on line so we stay safe during this process. We reviewed all of the applications into different categories. We made sure that COVID assistance funds were individuals and businesses that needed assistance to help move past this crisis. We also assisted businesses with PPE with individuals who needed extra expenses with protecting their businesses and keeping them safe from fines and for themselves as well. This COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant is over \$5M from DCED and it is from the CARES Fund that was from the Federal Government and trickled down to the State and has trickled down to us. There are still some under review, there are some businesses that we still have to reach out and ask for more information because they are still under review. However, we did not want to hold up these other applications in the process right now. We felt it was important to present them to you as soon as possible when the applications were reviewed.

Reporter Chris Jones asked about the "other ones" that you have to finalize, is there other rounds? There is several million left in the pot. Rob answered there is about \$1M left in the pot. We are currently under review for the County's expenses and some other businesses that we needed more information on because rules were changing as we were going along and we're trying to follow them as best we can.

Reporter Chris Jones asked if there was \$5M total? Rob said yes. Chris said there is only \$2M here. Rob answered \$2.6M and those will all be presented once we allocate them and once we figure out where they would be funded.

Reporter Chris Jones said some of the larger sums for the bigger corporations, what's the basis here? Is it based on lost revenue? Rob Ruiz replied lost revenue, administration costs and also if you have rent or mortgages. They had to prove to us what amount of revenue they lost as well. All of it can also be PPE expenses as well.

Commissioner Guccini added that he thinks there are two general ideas here. Number one, as a County, we are not sure yet if we're going to be reimbursed for losses and for things we spent money on from other sources outside of this. There is money still in here for the County, but we may get money from other sources and that is still an unknown. Our general

idea was to make sure that we could do our best to keep the County whole so we weren't increasing taxes and hopefully, we really won't have to. We started the budgeting process now to make as much money as we could available to businesses and non-profits who have suffered through this so that was the general gist of what we are trying to do within the context of this is Federal money so there are rules and regulations from both the Federal government and the State government (it came from the Feds through the State). I think that is a summary of what we were trying to accomplish and also I think Rob and Sara and everybody who works with them.

Reporter Chris Jones asked for the spelling of Sara's last name and Sara replied H-A-I-L-S-T-O-N-E. She added that Hailstone Economics is the name of the firm and her first name is spelled S-A-R-A.

Sara Hailstone said she wanted to clarify that the County received over \$5M in block grant funds (\$5,040,000). We had set aside a little over \$3M for business and non-profit and PPE. We're doing \$2.6M today and we have about \$1M left in that fund. There are additional funds in the overall \$5M as the Commissioners were explaining that will go to other community based expenses related to COVID, we are still trying to figure out where that all goes. Commissioner Guccini added that the other part of this was to try to use the formulas and criteria that they used for each recipient. I believe that there are some counties who got this money and just said like we have 200 applicants and, if they all qualify, we're going to give all 200 the same amount of money. Some counties did that, didn't they? Sara Hailstone said she believed so and some counties aren't even giving money to their non-profit community, they're keeping it all in-house. This is unique in the way we went about it and we did our best and the businesses and non-profits were wonderful providing us with information, but as you know, everyone is hurting and so we did our best to stretch the dollars in the best possible way to support the community with their needs.

Commissioner Osterberg added that it's important to note that we recognized every business. It didn't make a difference if it was an office or if it was tourist based, everybody had an opportunity to put in an application. You can look down the list and you will see there are some law firms, non-profits, hospitality, townships, some churches and all of them fit into the matrix or the rubric that you use to be able to identify that they would get money. Some of this money was strictly for PPE for some of them. Some of it was for the other criteria that they met. There was different criteria that they could meet under what Robert (Ruiz) talked about earlier for PPE and a number of other uses. That is why you see dentist offices and township offices and retail stores and, in some cases, quarries. All of them qualified in some form or another underneath the guidelines. I want to stress that this is why this took some time to do. There's going to be an audit by someone at some point in the future and we need to be sure that what we did is that all the T's are crossed and all the I's are dotted. When it's not, we're going to have to go back to them and say this isn't the case and no one wants to go back and say you need to give us the money back, no one wants to do that.

Reporter Chris Jones asked Sara Hailstone you evaluate the financials, what is your expertise in that area? Sara said 20 years of community based grant and loan program administration, primarily doing it on the side of municipalities. Before Hailstone Economics started, I worked for a number of municipalities who needed me to administer community based loan and grant requests. I have a Masters Degree in Public Administration and I have two other people on my team.

Commissioner Osterberg said Hailstone is also the Consultant for our Community Development Block Grant programs that pre-date COVID and that's why we chose her to do this, she has helped us. There was a gentleman by the name of Marvin Brotter, he had that role up until last year and, unfortunately, Marvin passed away. We then hired Hailstone and then this all occurred and it was a perfect fit for both of us.

MISCELLANEOUS: None.

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT

Reporter Chris Jones asked Commissioner Schmalzle to identify his business interests that he recused himself from. Commissioner Schmalzle answered that it became evident very early in the process that I was too connected to the business community, either in ownership or in management. Pine Forest Camp - I have been the Executive Director for over 25 years. I own Recreation Management Corporation and that operates Ski Big Bear and Costa's Family Fun Park. Commissioner Osterberg added that Ron had absolutely nothing to do here. Ron took himself out of the process, but also had nothing to do with submitting the applications. It was entirely his staff that did that. We understood that there needed to be an arm's length distance from him for that, even though he wasn't voting and had nothing to do with the process through Rob and Sara's organization, as me and Steve did neither. That's why up until a few days ago, while we were discussing how the process was going, we didn't know any of this. Me and Steve were not sitting here and looking at people's financials making decisions. That was done away from us and we trusted that was the best way for us to do this. People feel there was some impropriety, but there was absolutely nothing.

Reporter Chris Jones said, getting back to the policy of getting permits for events at the Courthouse, I got an email saying I was invited to attend a "Public Square Rosary Rally" Saturday, October 10th @ Noon at the Pike County Courthouse, did you give an approval for that? Commissioner Osterberg answered yes they did. They send in their approval letters all the time and then we forward it to the Borough and the Sheriff just to be consistent with anything that is happening on County property.

Reporter Chris Jones mentioned that he saw the big boom out here yesterday, is that for the flagpole? Commissioner Osterberg answered yes they put the new flagpole up and we took down the old one. Commissioner Schmalzle and I were over there watching them take down the flagpole which was put up in the 40's. We looked at the top of the flagpole, which looked like a copper ball on the top, only in Pike County would that be a copper toilet tank ball!

Reporter Chris Jones asked about the Community House, what's going on there? Commissioner Osterberg said the Community House is putting a new entranceway in off the corner leading up to the building. Beautiful stonework, replicating what is a little further down the street with the half-moon that the Rotary Club did a number of years ago, in the shape of a keystone. There's going to be a sign included in that. The Community House Board has been working on putting a sign up to identify our partners in the building for 3 years now and our architect, Richard Briganti, came up with a magnificent design which is available in this brochure. Chris Jones then asked who is paying for that? Commissioner Osterberg answered the Community House Board through fundraising efforts.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2020, AT 9:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.