

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

The second regular meeting of August 2021 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 (via Zoom), Schmalzle and Guccini; Chief Clerk Orben; Assistant Solicitor Beecher.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today’s agenda.

Commissioner Schmalzle announced they will change the order of the Agenda moving the Resolutions to this point in the Agenda.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to amend the meeting and move Items 1, 2 and 3 under New Business section to this point.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adopt Resolution No. 21-24, Pike County Conservation District’s 65th Anniversary.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read Resolution No. 21-24 aloud. Commissioner Schmalzle said one of the first things that he got involved with when he became a Commissioner was being appointed to the Conservation Board as a representative. It is a vibrant group of people. It’s an eclectic group of people that get together once a month and beyond to organize this wonderful organization. Pike County has a special place in this area because we’re the birthplace of Conservation. I think, as a business owner, you can look at these types of organizations in a couple of different ways. We do need to look at them as a partner and an education, and not just their enforcement processes and maybe some fines from time to time. Their mission and goal is always to protect what is the most important part that people come to Pike County for: the natural beauty and protecting that. I would like to personally thank the organization and thank them for having a soft hand. When my business has dealt with them and many of the other businesses that have dealt with them, just in educating us to develop and look forward in a way that conserves what we have.

Commissioner Guccini seconded that – thank you all. It’s a really well run organization. We can see that and there are people who sometimes have difficulty with it, but you’re always willing to look at an issue, talk to people and when you do that at the local level, things get accomplished – thank you. Commissioner Schmalzle added that any good organization that is successful requires good leadership and we have exceptional leadership in Michele (Long) and with a long-term Chairman, Scott Savini.

Director of Pike County Conservation Michele Long was introduced. She thanked the Commissioners for recognizing the Conservation District for 65 years. I’ve been with the Conservation District for 18 years. My predecessors and the Board of Directors have always been very supportive and work closely with the community and our partnering agencies: State, Federal and Local to provide natural resource protection from our community. Since 1956, the district has worked closely with those Local and State Government Agencies, individuals, non-profits and other organizations to protect our extraordinary natural resources here in Pike County. We are glad some of the agency partners are able to join us today. We have some of our Board members today – Scott Savini, our Board Chair, he’s been with the Board for almost as long as I’ve been here. Ken Coutts, one of our Directors and Jim Andre, who is our Associate Director and new to the district. Ron (Commissioner Schmalzle) has always been supportive with the district since he’s been on board and former County Commissioner Rich Caridi as well. We’re very happy that the Commissioners have taken this opportunity to support the district and recognize the work that we do. In June we celebrated our 65th Anniversary at Grey Towers National Historic Site, which was the birthplace of Conservation. We take that responsibility to heart and we move forward to helping our partners. Today we not only reflect on the district’s accomplishments of the past, but look forward to the future as the district is actively engaged in the mission to conserve the natural resources, which make our County unique.

Board Chair Scott Savini thanked the Commissioners for their support over the years – 18 years since I’ve been involved. I will tell you that it is a joy sitting on the Board because of our staff team. They’re the boots on the ground – they’re the ones that make everything happen. It’s not always a popular position, but they’re protecting our natural resources and I’m proud to be able to support them and help them along the way.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adopt Resolution No. 21-25, Overdose Awareness Day, August 31, 2021.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read Resolution No. 21-25 aloud. Commissioner Guccini continued that there are some members from Pike County Drug & Alcohol Commission here and introduced Shannon Wisniewski. Shannon Wisniewski said, as always, we continue to appreciate the support the Commissioners have given the Drug & Alcohol Commission in addressing this issue. I do have flyers for Overdose Awareness Day. At our office we are going to be holding an event that day (August 31st) from 2PM – 4PM to be able to distribute Narcan as well as education in regard to overdose, not only opiate use disorders, but as well as other substances that we have seen overdose on. We know in this County we continue to see an increase over the last few years, not only in the amount of overdose deaths that we’ve seen, but in the amount of overdose numbers that 911 responders are going out to. In 2021, up to June of this year, we’ve seen 51 overdose calls that ambulances were dispatched to. Those are ones that we know are overdoses, that’s not including the general illness causes, the families aren’t sure of whether or not it’s an overdose, and whether or not it’s purposeful or accidental. I also have flyers for our September event. September is Recovery Month, which will really be focusing on those in the community that have continued to recover and continue to have success in that. I have information that I’ll be able to give you the additional flyers and things like that, we’ll have tons of information on the 31st (August) in our office. We’ll also, in regard to Overdose Awareness Day, have the pinwheels out in front of the Courthouse. Since 2014, we’ve had 100 residents in Pike County that have died from overdoses in the County. We’ll

be able to have those on display starting next Monday, August 23rd through Overdose Awareness Day. Rob Mikulski thanked the Commissioners for their continued support, not just in the treatment area, but also the prevention and intervention areas and our expansion of the School Districts, the community partners and bringing the whole community together to fight this disease.

Commissioner Guccini added that this statistic of 100 deaths was brought out at our last meeting, and I was shocked, quite frankly. I don't know why I was, I shouldn't have been, but I was. This is like grappling a monster with seven heads - you try to figure out what the best thing to do is. We try to have some leadership here to the extent we can, the Carbon-Monroe-Pike Drug & Alcohol Commission does a really good job. From my perspective, the main thing that the community can do is: a) recognize we have a problem. I think that there is still a little bit of burying your head in the sand and 'this doesn't happen here, it only happens in cities' - not true. Rural communities have been devastated by this across the country; and b) just try to understand that there's all sorts of factors that lead to this, but if we have this stigma issue where we continue to, I don't know, obviously personal responsibility is a big thing here, but there are other factors involved and it takes a whole lot of information and programs to try to right this, in addition to just the individual involved. If we can all remember that, it would be really appreciated - thank you.

Commissioner Osterberg asked if he could just add to that - in regard to 'we need to remove this stigma'. We all need to understand that these individuals are suffering and we as a community need to do the best we can to recognize their suffering. Sometimes it's hard to give support to these individuals that are struggling but I think we, as a community, need to know compassion and we need to work harder to give that compassion to them. They're struggling, in many cases, with mental illness. There are many things contributing to these addictions and we need to recognize that. We need to, at least, give them a helping hand when they reach out to us. I know sometimes that's difficult, especially when it's within your family and you've tried countless times. The end result is devastating as Shannon just mentioned - the number of deaths that occur in our County. The one thing we need to recognize is that that does not count the people that pass away outside of the County. If they're transported by an ambulance and die in New York, New Jersey or someplace else, or outside the State I should stay, they are not addressed. There's more than you realize that are suffering from this. I just ask everyone to show compassion, I know Steve works really hard with the Reentry group, which is an important part of this to give people a chance when they come out of the Correctional Facility, but there's also the individuals that don't end up in the Correctional Facility - they are just out there. All of the programs that Carbon-Monroe-Pike are advocating for, whether it's AA or many others, and we as a County just need to keep on supporting them because each one of them you save is just best for that family. Thank you for what you do up at Carbon-Monroe-Pike and we will continue to support you as long as it takes.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adopt Resolution No. 21-26, Wyooska Club, 100th Anniversary.

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

Commissioner Schmalzle read Resolution No. 21-26 aloud. Commissioner Schmalzle said he had the wonderful opportunity to visit the club and the many interesting characters that formulate the club. It is a gem in Pike County and it's beautiful in every respect. We got a good tour of the dam there and some of the properties and the plans for the future. Again, we commend and recognize you. We have a couple of members here today, Art Hoffman and Mark Erhard.

Mr. Hoffman thanked the Commissioners and other Pike County residents for recognizing us today. It's not easy to do anything for 100 years these days and when you think of all the things that changed in the past 100 years, how do you keep one organization together? It was those 12 men from Scranton, originally, who came out to Pike County and formed the club. It has evolved over the years. We do have members-approximately 25 members with various statuses, honorary members, third generation members, members of families who've been with this organization for countless years. In line with the Conservation District here today, we are good stewards of the land as you've seen yourselves in person. It's something we strive to do. It's actually in our Charter than we can really never be sold or developed, we will always be a hunting, fishing, outdoor organization. We think that's important and in that sense we are very good stewards of the land, as you've witnessed in your visit and thank you for coming out, I guess it was about 2 years ago now. We do have a common interest, we have a flood control dam in the middle of our property and the County and the club have been working very closely together to make sure that that goes forward properly in the future. Again, thank you - I have another representative from the club here - he has some pictures of the club from its' start many years ago. Thank you again.

Commissioner Schmalzle added they look forward to celebrating with you sometime in the near future. Commissioner Guccini also thanked them for coming and said he appreciated it. He said he is a lifetime Greentown resident, which is fairly rare these days, so I'm just up the road. I never really was at the club until 1979 or 1980 when I returned to the area from law school. We had a giant ice fishing party on the lake with a bon fire and probably beer and it was interesting because that ice fishing party over the years has now morphed into being inside and nobody fishing and there not being any fish where we have the party. It was good to be out on the lake and drill holes in the lake and ice fish. It was a long, long time ago. Thank you all.

Photographs were taken during a pause.

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

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

A RETIREMENT BOARD MEETING WAS HELD.

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

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the August 18, 2021 Agenda.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the August 4, 2021 Commissioners' Meeting Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve the August 4, 10, 12 and 16, 2021 Commissioners' Conference Minutes.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve payment from the **GENERAL FUND (County Bills)**, in the amount of **\$340,933.73**, subject to further review.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to approve exonerations as presented by Cynthia Gehris, Tax Claim Bureau Director, for two properties located in Greene Township.

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

PERSONNEL:

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to set the annual pay of **RACHEL MARQUES** at \$36,000, as a full time Watershed Specialist 1 for the Conservation District for a 40 hour work week, effective September 7, 2021, 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 Osterberg, 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 Osterberg, 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 Osterberg, to award the bid for fortified flavored beverage bases for the Correctional Facility to Bernard Food Industries for \$8,176.32.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Schmalzle said we covered the first 3 items on that list already.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adopt Resolution No. 21-27, Notice of Intent to Participate In, and Approving an Application for a Grant Under the Pike County Scenic Rural Character Preservation Program.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to acknowledge Governor Wolf's Proclamation recognizing August 2021 as Child Support Enforcement Awareness Month.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to appoint Cordell Bowman to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council to fill an unexpired term ending 12/31/2023.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to authorize the Vice Chairman to execute Change Order No. 1 between Pioneer Construction and the County of Pike, for a credit of \$48,800 for the Winona Falls Road Over Saw Creek Bridge Parapet Joint Repairs Project.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute the Letter of Engagement for the Provisioning of Next Generation 911 (NG911) Services between the PA Emergency Management Agency and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Communication Office.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute the 4th Quarter FY 2020-21 Act 148 Certification Statement on behalf of Children & Youth Services.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute the FY 2020-21 Plan and Budget Amendment Certification Statement on behalf of Children & Youth Services.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute Purchase of Service Agreements for FY 2021-22 between the following providers and the County of Pike, on behalf of Children & Youth Services: Hoffman Homes, Adelphoi Village, Concern Professional Services for Children, Youth and Families, and Justice Works Youth Care.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute the Agreement for Subcontracted Services between Destiny Empowerment and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to execute the Program Management Agreement for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) between the PA Department of Agriculture and the County of Pike, 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 execute the Sub-Grant Agreements for the State Food Purchase Program Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program for 2021-22 between the following food pantries and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Human Services Office: Holy Trinity, Ecumenical, Blooming Grove, Pike County and Bushkill Outreach Food Pantries.

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

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to authorize the Vice Chairman to execute the PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund 2021 Grant Agreement between the PA Housing Finance Agency and the County of Pike, on behalf of the Human Services Office.

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

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Penn State Extension Calendar of Events – September 1-15, 2021.
- Commissioner Meeting/Conference changes effective September 1, 2021 – Commissioner Schmalzle explained that this is from now on – our meetings will be held on the same days, but at 11:00 AM instead of 9:00 AM to give an opportunity to meet the latest guidance handed down from the Sunshine Act.

Questions and comments were opened to the Public and the Press:

Reporter Chris Jones asked about #11, all the Purchase Service Agreements for these different companies, are they like residential treatment places? I'm thinking we now have, over on High Street, the center to integrate the kids and give some treatment and so on. These aren't duplicative of any of that, what are they? Commissioner Guccini responded he doesn't know what each specific ones are, I am familiar with Justice Works. I don't know that these are necessarily residential treatment programs, but they are not related to the Child Advocacy Center. These are just services that are provided to children in care. They may be residential services, they may be in-home services, but I'm not sure I know what each one does at this point. The Child Advocacy Center is a very specific thing for interviews and medical tests and exams for suspected physical abuse. These are general services for any child in care. When I say 'in care', I mean they can be in care under the auspices of the court or they can be in what they call 'General Protective Services' which is just the Agency providing services to a family. These are all contracted services, I'm not aware of anybody who does in-house services anymore in the State.

MOTION: by Commissioner Guccini and seconded by Commissioner Osterberg, to adjourn the Commissioners' Meeting.

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

ADJOURNMENT: THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2021, AT 11:00 A.M., AT THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.