

Lewistown, PA

April 16, 2020

The Board of Mifflin County Commissioners met for their Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. In attendance were Commissioners Mark Sunderland, Robert Postal and Kevin Kodish; Solicitor Stephen Snook, BMZ Law and Chief Clerk Cathy Romig.

There were no members present from the news media.

Guests present: Treasurer Deb Civitts; Public Safety Director Phil Lucas; Sheriff Deputy Jim Aumiller; Human Services Director Allison Fisher; James Estep; Cindy Sunderland and Roger Herto, MCTV

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Sunderland.

I. Invocation: *The Invocation was given by Commissioner Kodish.*

II. Pledge of Allegiance: *The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all present.*

III. Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Commissioner Postal to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 2, 2020. Commissioner Kodish seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Bills:

1. General Fund, Accounts Payable:

Cks. #127993 to 128130 and EFTs # 26236 to 26326 in the amount of \$1,181,604.72

2. Payroll Account:

Cks. # 78861 to 78867 and Direct Deposit Advices # 31179 to 31418 in the amount of \$336,013.72

3. 911 Account:

Cks. #51951 to 51957 and EFT #20685 to 20688 in the amount of \$21,083.72

4. CDBG Account:

Cks. # 1502 to 1504 in the amount of \$57,610.71

5. Act 137 Account:

Cks. # 3074 in the amount of \$2,082.68

6. Liquid Fuels Account:

Check #1679 in the amount of \$20,110.52

Motion was made by Commissioner Postal to approve payment of bills as listed above. Commissioner Kodish seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

V. Treasurer's Report:

TREASURER'S REPORT

04/01/2020-04/14/2020

General Account Starting Balance **\$838,531.35**

DEBITS

Deposits Receipts #101334-101517	1,311,691.10
Transfer from 911	59.42
Transfer from Capital Reserve	0.00
Transfer from LEPC	249.93
Voided Checks	3,422.50
Interest	0.00

TOTAL DEBITS **\$1,315,422.95**

CREDITS

Bills Paid CK #'S 127993-128130, EFT'S # 26236-26326	1,181,604.72
Transfer to Payroll CKS 78861-78867, DD 31179-31418	336,013.72
Transfer to CDBG	0.00

TOTAL CREDITS **\$1,517,618.44**

Ending Balance (Interest @ 01.390% as of 04/14/2020) **\$636,335.86**

Liquid Fuels

Invested at JV Bank @ 01.390% as of 04/14/2020 **\$388,533.82**

Liquid Fuels - Act 89

Invested at JV Bank @ 01.390% as of 04/14/2020 **\$326,502.05**

911 Telephone Account

Invested at JV Bank @ 01.390% as of 04/14/2020 **\$375,529.14**

LEPC

Invested at JV Bank @ 01.390% as of 04/14/2020 **\$38,829.22**

Local Use Fund

Invested at JV Bank @ 01.390% as of 04/14/2020 **\$427,621.23**

Capital Reserve Account

Invested at JV Bank @ 0.36% as of 04/14/2020 **\$8,298,686.58**

Report Subject to Audit

Motion was made by Commissioner Postal to approve the Treasurer's Report as received, subject to audit. Commissioner Kodish seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

VI. Meetings and Events:

Chairman Sunderland: COVID-19 Meetings

*Commissioner Postal: First Responders Meeting
Central Counties Youth Services Board Meeting
Conference Call
SEDA-COG Conference Call*

*CCAP Board Meeting Conference Calls
SEDA-COG Natural Gas Executive Committee Conference
Call*

*Commissioner Kodish: SEDA-COG Board Meeting Conference Call
CARS Board Meeting Conference Call
Regional Services Executive Committee Conference Call
COVID-19 Meetings*

VII. Public Comment:

None to report.

VIII. New Business:

- A. *Reports from Mifflin County School District, Call-A-Ride Services, Area Agency on Aging and Mifflin County Library*

Mifflin County School District

Mr. Estep gave an update on what the District has been doing since the school closure. Beginning on March 13, leadership met to discuss a plan for continuity of education for the students. This was quite an endeavor to organize given the number of students and teaching staff. The leadership/support staff were given three curricular options by the Department of Education and they selected the enrichment and review option. Staff designed review and enrichment activities provided on the district website for students and parents. Students and parents without good internet service can go to the parking lot of a district building to download information and take it back home to work on. In some isolated incidents, paper packets have been provided to families that don't have access to technology. The buildings and grounds crew are working on an "as needed basis" at this point. They are mainly trying to keep up with mowing and may get a little behind on the trimming. He's looking at how this will affect the district long term. Some universities have already announced they won't open courses until the second semester of next year, which would be January. There's a possibility we could see that in our district in the fall. With a potential second round of the virus, our fall return date may be delayed or we may return and then be shut down for period of time. Now that the governor has closed schools, leadership will be discussing the possibility of offering normal planned instruction in a few subject areas such as math and language arts. This would be done through Zoom or Google Classroom. At this point, the district has hardware for every two to three students. They have applied for a grant to obtain additional technology in the wake of the pandemic. All School Board meetings are being conducted through Zoom and will continue that way until the shutdown ends. He's looking at how to maintain services currently being provided when the economy could be facing a potential revenue shortage in the future.

Commissioner Postal asked if people have been coming to the district building parking lots. Mr. Estep stated they have and mentioned that this situation highlights how rural broadband expansion is desperately needed.

Commissioner Kodish asked about graduation. Mr. Estep announced that some form of graduation will hopefully take place, but there hasn't been a definitive time set at this point. The teachers' association has been working on a plan for the graduating seniors. He is very impressed by the leadership, teaching staff and support staff for how well they are stepping up during this time.

Call-A-Ride Services (CARS)

Ms. Sunderland mentioned that in the middle of March, PennDOT recommended CARS go to reduced service. This means that only medically and grocery necessary trips can

be done. The office is open as usual but staff is staggered so that half work one week and the other half works the next week. Medical Assistance also offered guidelines that questions need to be asked in regard to the medically necessary trips. They are asking individuals if they have a cough, fever or if they've been close to anyone that has tested positive for COVID-19 before they will accept their trip. The drivers are watching for these symptoms and will let the office know if they see anyone who is visibly sick. They are also saying all individuals, including drivers, must wear a mask. At last Board meeting, it was presented that there was an allowance through PennDOT that same day service could be offered. The Board and PennDOT both approved this action. Same day trips are now being offered.

Commissioner Kodish asked if dialysis patients were still able to get to their appointments on the weekends. Ms. Sunderland said that they were since the appointments are medically necessary.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Commissioner Kodish thanked Pat Fitzgerald, Director of AAA for providing this information. Mifflin Juniata Regional Services and its affiliate, Mifflin-Juniata AAA continues to provide services during the pandemic. They are providing care management, protective services and community services throughout the two counties. The care management team continues to prepare and monitor in-home services including personal care, home support and home-delivered meals. Referrals are still being accepted and home delivered meals remain a top priority. The protective services continues to receive and respond to reports of abuse. Senior centers and adult daily living centers remain closed. Home delivered meal recipients continue to receive meals and senior center participants have the option of a take out meal. Weekly telephone wellness checks are made to the center and adult daily living recipients to ensure needs are being met. Ombudsmen are staying in touch with long term living facilities and advocating for residents as needed. Apprise counselors are still taking appointments by phone to help with Medicare needs and questions. Person-centered counsellors are still available to help individuals connect with services in the community. Older adults may still call for information and referral. Tax season was discontinued but will pick up when permitted by the IRS. On behalf of Mifflin-Juniata Regional Services and the Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging staff and volunteers, they wished to thank all of the community officials for their support. Community members desiring services should call 1-800-348-2277.

Mifflin County Library

Commissioner Kodish received the following report from Molly Kinney, Director of the Mifflin County Library. "From the Mifflin County Library Board of Directors, staff and friends, next week is National Library Week, a time to celebrate and recognize the important roles that all libraries, large and small, public and private, contribute to the communities they serve. During this unprecedented time, when libraries are closed, take the opportunity to broaden your horizons and stop thinking of a brick and mortar building you visit most often and vision beyond that three dimensional artifact known as a book, with its unique smell, crisp pages and hard binding. Since the governor directed public and private institutions to close their doors, libraries across this great nation have been working hard to find alternatives to delivering the services you want, expect and need. Electronic libraries are open 24/7/365, just waiting for you to visit. Locally, you enter the library through our website at www.mifflincountylibrary.org. Just like our physical space, there are collections, areas and spaces to visit with a wealth of reading materials, many to check out or download, and some to enjoy in house. Please connect and engage in the ideas and activities we are pushing out for you via our Facebook page and our YouTube channel. Don't have the internet? We've boosted our Wi-Fi service all around our buildings, so you can connect to friends and family, download school assignments and complete necessary online tasks for services and businesses that no longer allow entry into their buildings. While our community is coping with whatever this new normal is, Actress Lauren Ward's words embody the spirit of national library week. "Libraries always remind me that there are good things in this world." Thank

you, Commissioners Sunderland, Postal and Kodish for recognizing, supporting and understanding the value of all the libraries in Mifflin County.”

B. Department Head Reports

Human Services

Ms. Fisher stated Human Services continues to provide resources around food security, housing, income and trying to promote the census. Something she wanted people to be aware of is to check the County website, click the Department link and go to Human Services for the food calendar, which lists all of the food pantries, their times of operation and phone numbers. The food pantries are continuing to do distributions. Also, one thing she enjoys about living in a rural community is how creative people are. We have to use our limited resources well and she feels we do a great job. There’s a group that has put together a website called Feeding.MifflinCounty.us and it is a list of all free lunches available for kids right now. They also have a spot where you can donate. She reiterated now is not the time to be moving around. Evictions should not be happening during this time, but individuals should still make an effort to pay their rent. There is a line at PA.gov for folks who feel they’ve been wrongly evicted. She encouraged folks to use their stimulus checks if they are behind on rent. She mentioned that utility shut-off’s should not be happening either. People can call 211 if they need assistance with utility resources. The tax program has been suspended, but the filing deadline has been pushed to July 15, 2020. She directed people to the IRS.gov site to find instructions on how to get a stimulus check if you normally don’t have to file taxes. People that don’t normally get a tax refund must do an extra step before they can receive the stimulus check. She also mentioned that some churches are still doing take-out community meals. There are some resources available on the 2020Census.gov website for children. She reiterated that it’s very important for people to fill out their census paperwork. People with PO boxes will not receive any mailings, so they can go to 2020Census.gov to fill out their census information. Commissioner Kodish stressed that it is very important that everyone complete the census information since there are so many federal funding streams based on the County’s census information.

Emergency Management

Mr. Lucas mentioned this is National Telecommunicator Week. The 911 Center has 14 dedicated individuals working day in and day out in the midst of the Coronavirus epidemic and he wanted to recognize the work they do.

Next, he mentioned that Lewistown Hospital has two patients admitted and on ventilators. The same is true for Mount Nittany and the hospitals in the Blair County region. Overall, our region is significantly below the numbers of the southeast region of PA. He feels PA will plateau in the number of cases they see either this week or next. We continue to provide PPE to first responders and necessary services at the County level. The Department of Health has set up a program where they are providing PPE to nursing homes and acute care facilities. We see biweekly deliveries to those facilities and we have a small stockpile here for our first responders. Even though the supplies are limited, the State is doing a fair job at pushing out small supplies as frequently as they can to those facilities. When asked why the daily coronavirus case numbers sometimes go down, Mr. Lucas stated it is because an initial address is provided during testing, which is usually the address of where the test is collected. Once there is a positive result, it goes to the public health nurse in the county, who works Monday through Friday. They follow up to determine who actually tested positive and where they actually live. If they were tested at public health in Lewistown, the case gets attributed to Mifflin County whether it was a Mifflin or Juniata County resident until the residency is verified. Mifflin County has two formal testing sites, which are Geisinger Lewistown Hospital and the Public Health office. Tests can take anywhere from several hours to several days depending on the lab. The quickest tests are being done on those people who are being admitted so they can determine what level of protection is needed for those patients, but they tend to be the most inaccurate.

C. *Proclamation – April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month*

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Proclamation

APRIL 2020

In the United States, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The goal of this proclamation is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities on how to prevent it. This proclamation calls attention to the fact that sexual harassment, assault, and abuse is widespread and impacts every person in this community.

Rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment harm our community, and statistics show one in five women and one in sixty-seven men will be raped at some point in their lives (Smith et al., 2017).

Child sexual abuse prevention must be a priority to confront the reality that one in six boys and one in four girls will experience sexual assault before age eighteen (Dube et al., 2005).

On campuses, one in five women and one in sixteen men are sexually assaulted during their time in college (Krebs et al., 2007).

This year, Sexual Assault Awareness Month is celebrating its 19th anniversary. The theme for this year's campaign, "I ASK" helps empower all of us to put consent into practice and shares the message that asking for consent is a normal and necessary part of sexual activity.

We, the Mifflin County Commissioners, join advocates and communities across the United States in taking action to prevent sexual violence.

Proclaimed the 16th day of April, 2020.

Motion was made by Commissioner Postal to approve the Proclamation designating April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Commissioner Kodish seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

D. *Request for exoneration of 2020 county real estate tax bills and relieve the Tax Collectors from collecting these bills:*

- *Parcel No. 15,10-0141--,000 located in Decatur Township – survey determined portion of land is located in Snyder County. Will be re-billed with the August supplemental billing.*
- *Parcel No. 16,11-0424 located in Derry Township – Veteran's exempt status*
- *Parcel No. 19,07-0106M,002 located in Oliver Township – carport was removed*
- *Parcel No. 19,07-0106M,003 located in Oliver Township – carport was removed*
- *Parcel No. 19,07-0106M,004 located in Oliver Township – carport was removed*
- *Parcel No. 19,07-0106M,005 located in Oliver Township – carport was removed*
- *Parcel No. 19,07-0106M,006 located in Oliver Township – carport was removed*
- *Parcel No. 21,10-0122A,050 located in Wayne Township – carport was removed*

Motion was made by Commissioner Postal to approve the requests for exoneration. Commissioner Kodish seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

E. *Letter of Support for the PennDot District 2 – Community Traffic Safety Program Grant*

Motion was made by Commissioner Postal to approve the Letter of Support for the PennDot District 2 – Community Traffic Safety Program Grant. Commissioner Kodish seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- F. *Resolution No. 35 of 2020 authorizing Planning Director, Mark Colussy, to submit a DCNR Trail Grant for Phase II of the River Walk Project and approval of a letter of commitment and local funds*

RESOLUTION NO. 2020 - 35

OF THE MIFFLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AUTHORIZING AN APPLICATION FOR THE

*COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM GRANT FUNDS THROUGH
THE PA DEPARTMENT CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES*

WHEREAS, Mifflin County wants to implement recommendations in the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan adopted on April 24, 2014;

WHEREAS, the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan incorporated the recommendations of the County's Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan adopted on February 4, 2010;

WHEREAS, two of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan were to improve recreational opportunities and encourage healthy lifestyles for the residents of Mifflin County;

WHEREAS, a key recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan was to enhance trail opportunities along the Juniata River; and

WHEREAS, the Juniata River Trail Feasibility Study of June 2015 fully supports this proposal;

WHEREAS, Mifflin County seeks to complete Phase II of the Juniata River Trail (S. H., Rothermel Trail) and has the support of the Borough of Lewistown.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Mifflin County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes an application through the Community Conservation Partnerships Program for up to \$295,000 to develop Phase II of a multi-purpose trail along the Juniata River and authorize the following:

- 1. The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners be and is authorized and directed to submit an application, including all understandings and assurances contained therein, to the fullest extent of funds allowed on behalf of the County of Mifflin to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as the authorized representative of the County of Mifflin, and to provide such additional information as may be requested; and*
- 2. The Chairman of this Board of Commissioners is hereby authorized and directed to execute on behalf of the County of Mifflin such certifications and/or agreements as may be required to accept and implement the proposed program and activities.*

I hereby certify that the above is true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania at a legally convened meeting held on the sixteenth day of April 2020.

Motion was made by Commissioner Kodish to approve Resolution No. 35 of 2020 authorizing Planning Director, Mark Colussy, to submit a DCNR Trail Grant for Phase II of the River Walk Project and approval of a letter of commitment and local funds. Commissioner Postal seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Sunderland read a statement on behalf of the Mifflin County Commissioners as follows:

"At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, we essentially hit the pause button on matters until we had a firmer idea of how long this pandemic may continue and to allow us to better gauge what essential services we needed to continue to provide, how we were going to provide them and the number of employees needed to achieve that. Once the State and Federal

guidelines were issued on continued social distancing efforts until at least April 30, we conferred with our Department Heads and determined that we could lay off the equivalent of 41.5 full-time, non-essential employees effective this past Monday, April 13 through Friday May 1. We gave those individuals the option of either paid time off, such as vacation, sick or personal time or file for unemployment, whichever best suited their individual situations and we've had different people selecting different options. Our plan is to continue to monitor the situation and revisit the staffing arrangement in the coming weeks to see if these levels need to be continued and extended past the initial May 1 target date. Whatever decisions we all need to make, we will make them with the input and guidance of our Emergency Management leader, Phil Lucas, as well as pursuant to State and Federal guidelines. Our continued goal is to maintain a level of essential services provided by County government while balancing the health and welfare of our employees.

Chairman Sunderland also thanked President Judge Barron for working with the Commissioners and his laying off of numerous employees in the Court Office that he supervises.

IX. Adjournment:

With no other business on the agenda, Chairman Sunderland adjourned the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

Secretary

ATTEST:

Chief Clerk