

LUZERNE COUNTY HOME RULE TRANSITION COMMITTEE

February 9, 2011

MINUTES

The eighth meeting of the HRTC convened in the Commissioners Meeting Room at the Luzerne County Courthouse, 200 River Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. It was called to order by Chairman Jim Haggerty at 6:35pm.

Members in attendance were Vice-Chair Jim Bobeck, Secretary Ronna Ciaruffoli, Tom Cooney, Chairman Jim Haggerty, Kick Heffron, C J Kersey, Rick Morelli, Maryanne Petrilla, and Treasurer Susan Shoval (telecom). Rob Bakewell and Steve Urban were absent.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items

Ed Chesnovitch from Jackson Township for Tom Dombroski - disagreement with Rick Morelli regarding non-selection as member of Personnel and Recruiting Subcommittee
Fred Heller from Mountaintop - Public perception of transition activities
Kathy Dobash from Hazleton – Openness in Transition activities

Solicitor Report

None.

Treasurer Report

Susan Shoval briefed progress on establishing the HRTC bank account prior to requesting transfer of funds from the Controller.

Upon a motion by Maryanne Petrilla, and second by Rick Morelli, the following expenses were unanimously approved for payment:

12/31/10 – Citizens Voice	Public Mtng Notices (12/15; 12/22; 1/5)	\$73.50
1/12/11 – Chariton, Schwager & Malak	Monthly Retainer (Statement #11-110)	\$500.00
1/31/11 – Citizens Voice	Public Mtng Notices (1/12; 1/19; 1/26; 2/3; 2/9; Office Clerical	\$379.16
	TOTAL	\$952.66

Kick Heffron raised a question regarding the need to publish a legal notices announcing upcoming subcommittee meetings, noting the “Omnibus Motion Concerning the operation of Home Rule Transition Subcommittee Meetings” did not require legal notices; rather, required a one-time notice in the newspaper stating the date of the first meeting, and include the date, time and place of future meetings; without any mention of a requirement for a legal notice. He stated legal notices were an unnecessary expense, each at a cost to the county. CJ Kersey made a motion that legal notices not be required for subcommittee meetings (as stipulated in the approved Omnibus Motion), seconded by Ronna Ciaruffoli. Rick Morelli made a motion to table the motion to not require legal notices for subcommittee meetings; seconded by Maryanne Petrilla. The motion that legal notices not be required for subcommittee meetings proceeded following a 5-4 vote against tabling the motion, with Tom Cooney, Rick Morelli, Maryanne

Petrilla, and Susan Shoval dissenting. The motion to not require publication of legal notices for subcommittee meetings passed with a 5-4 vote, with dissenting votes from Tom Cooney, Rick Morelli, Maryanne Petrilla and Susan Shoval. Legal notices will continue to be placed for HRTC meetings.

Reports of Subcommittees and Working Groups

Authorities, Boards and Commissions – CJ Kersey is in the data gathering phase; no meetings scheduled to date. Maryanne Petrilla forwarded him a copy of the Luzerne County 2010/2011 Authorities, Boards and Commissions listing noting members, offices, and terms of office.

Admin Code – Susan Shoval briefed first meeting was held 7 February 2011. Susan Shoval was unanimously elected chairperson of the subcommittee. They discussed and drafted a general breakdown of responsibilities between Sub-Committees (related handout distributed at this HRTC meeting). She expressed her appreciation to Michael Cabell for volunteering to document subcommittee activities.

Ethics Code – Rob Bakewell briefed 1st meeting was held on 7 February 2011. General discussion involved goal of subcommittee, resources to be accessed, and latitude in augmenting state code, particularly making the county ethics code more stringent and detailed. Various members assumed responsibility for gathering state and nationwide related documents. Citizen members are Betsy Summers, Christine Dixon, Linda Trompetter, Peter Gagliardi, Rita Boyle, Lisa Eggleston, Len Frisbee, and Mike Cabell (who also volunteered to document subcommittee activities).

Personnel Code – Jim Bobeck briefed their 1st meeting was held 7 February 2011. Jim Bobeck was unanimously elected Chair. Marc Marchese outlined King's College's involvement with the subcommittee in which HR undergrads will be researching different county codes nationwide, then providing written reports regarding best practices. Various issues to be addressed by the subcommittee will be selection/hiring on a merit basis, the types of political activities employees may engage in, disciplinary practices, employee handouts outlining county procedures and employee conduct. Citizen members of the subcommittee are Dr Marc Marchese, Tom Dombrowski, Michael Giamber, Michael Cabell and Arthur Breese.

Personnel and Recruiting – An organization chart of the existing Luzerne County government, and an organization chart of a proposed organization under Home Rule was distributed. The subcommittee verified they would be pursuing a nation-wide search for the city manager. The next meeting is scheduled for 16 February at 6:30.

Liaison – Kick Heffron distributed a document noting the Liaison workgroup's mission, objectives and tasks. Raising concerns that Item #5 of the Omnibus Motion allowed meetings not advertised to the public. Rick Morelli made a motion to delete #5, seconded by Maryanne Petrilla. The motion failed 7-2 with Rick Morelli and Maryanne Petrilla being the supporting votes. Susan Shoval made a motion to designate the Liaison working group a Subcommittee, subject to the Omnibus Motion, seconded by Maryanne Petrilla. The motion passed with majority vote 6-3, with Jim Haggerty, CJ Kersey, and Kick Heffron voting against the motion. Kick introduced a motion to advertise for transition consultant services to, seconded by Ronna Ciaruffoli. The motion passed with a 5-4 vote; Jim Bobeck, Ronna Ciaruffoli, Jim Haggerty, Kick Heffron and CJ Kersey in favor of advertising, and Tom Cooney, Rick Morelli, Maryanne Petrilla and Susan Shoval against.

Factors in the Home Rule Charter having the potential of significantly impacting transition to the Home Rule Government January 2012 if not addressed - Maryanne Petrilla was not available to address.

Discussion Regarding Clerical Assistant

Ronna stated interviews were ongoing. Rick Morelli made a motion to release the names of the clerical assistant applicants to the public; the motion failed with no second.

Discussion Regarding Meeting Schedule

CJ Kersey's motion to schedule the next HRTC meeting for 23 February 2011 at 6:30 passed unanimously.

Old Business

Atty Jeff Malak stated he would be submitting Bonding, and Errors & Omissions documents when he got all required signatures, which he anticipated getting following the meeting.

Ronna Ciaruffoli distributed a proposed RFP for Professional Web Site Development and Maintenance Services to the committee for review, as requested at the previous meeting. After discussion regarding the need for the service as well as the capability of the county to provide the service thru the county website, Maryanne Petrilla stated she would get with the county IT manager to determine what the county website could support.

New Business

None

Citizen Comment (non-agenda items) was proffered by:

Fred Heller from Mountaintop – Professionalism in Committee activities

Kathy Dobash from Hazleton - Transparency

Ed Halloran – Consultant involvement in transition activities

Ray Gustave – Need for completeness in RFPs

Concluding Remarks of Committee Members

Jim Haggerty expressed frustration with collateral issues impeding the progress of the committee. He stated the largely off-subject issues were preventing the committee from maximizing the limited time available to do the work that needed to be done. He further stated when all was said and done, no one would remember the citizen comments or the arguments amongst the members; just how well we prepared Luzerne County for Home Rule Government.

Upon motion by C J Kersey, second by Ronna Ciaruffoli, and unanimous vote of the committee, the 8th meeting of the HRTC was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chairman Jim Haggerty