

February 13, 2004

On the above date at 4:00 P.M., the Luzerne County Board of Commissioners convened with the following present: Gregory A. Skrepenak, Chairman; Todd A. Vonderheid and Stephen A. Urban, Commissioners; Samuel T. Guesto, County Manager for Legislation/Chief Clerk; Mark R. Dingman, County Manager for Administration/Deputy Chief Clerk; James Blaum, County Solicitor; Stephen L. Flood, Controller;

Mr. Skrepenak called the meeting to order and asked everyone to join in saying the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of Silent Prayer. It is noted that all meetings are electronically recorded.

Commissioner Skrepenak reviewed the protocol for Public Comment and directed Mr. Samuel Guesto, Chief Clerk, to ensure the five-minute time limit is adhered to.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Comment.

Request a Motion to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION - NO.02132004-LF

WHEREAS, there was presented to the Board of Commissioners of the County of Luzerne on December 9th, 2003, a proposed budget for Luzerne County Liquid Fuels for the year 2004 indicating revenues in the amount of \$1,743,150 and disbursements in the amount of \$1,245,000; and

WHEREAS, said proposed budget was made available for public inspection as required by law, and public notice was given as required by law; and

WHEREAS, said budget was duly adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Luzerne on the 30th day of December, 2003; and

WHEREAS, said budget is amended for the year 2004 indicating revenues in the amount of \$2,231,752 and disbursements in the amount of \$1,733,602; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Liquid Fuels Budget for Luzerne County for the year 2004, as amended, be and it is hereby adopted.

It was moved by Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Vonderheid.

"AYES" SKREPENAK, VONDERHEID, URBAN

Request a Motion to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION - NO.02132004A

WHEREAS, a previous the Board of Commissioners of the County of Luzerne on December 30th, 2003, a proposed budget for the year 2004; and

WHEREAS, on February 3, 2004, a new Board of Commissioners of the County of Luzerne by law, and public notice was given as required by law; and

WHEREAS, said revised budget was made available for public inspection as required by law, and public notice was given as required by law; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has given mature consideration to said proposed budget and has recommended the adoption of a budget of \$36,667,471 as now proposed, and has computed the tax levy necessary to raise the funds required at 98.9 mills; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Budget for Luzerne County for the year 2004, as proposed, be and it is hereby adopted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED, that the tax levy for the year 2004 for Luzerne County to raise and provide the funds set forth in the said budget be and it is hereby fixed at 98.9 mills, or \$9.89 on each \$100.00 as the assessed valuation of taxable property in Luzerne County to provide for general and sinking funds purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ENACTED, that for the expenses of Luzerne County appropriated from the revenue available from the year for the specific purposes set forth below, which amounts are more totally itemized in the County Budget Form on file in the Office of the Luzerne County Commissioners, Hazleton Courthouse Annex, and the Luzerne County Law Library.

RESOLUTION - NO.02132004A: (cont.)

OPERATION FUNDS SUMMARY - Estimated Receipts

Cash and Securities for Appropriation	\$ -----0-----
Receipts from Tax Levy	76,090,477
Intergovernmental Revenues	23,877,145
Fines and Forfeits	1,642,500
Charges for Services	8,666,450
Other Financing Sources	26,390,899
<u>Total Available for Appropriation</u>	\$136,667,471
Operations and Maintenance	\$122,798,343
Debt Service	13,869,128
Total Estimated Expenditures	\$136,667,471

Commissioner Urban requested Mr. Guest to outline the five differences in the budget from the proposed budget presented on February 3rd, 2004.

1. Controller's Office: Transfer of the Accounts Payable Department inside the current Personnel Office to the Controller's Office as requested by the Controller.
2. Courts: Anticipated savings of \$2.1 million. After reimbursement fixture and adjustment has been adjusted to \$1.8 million savings.
3. District Attorney Office: Added two Assistant District Attorneys to the current personnel budget.
4. Prothonotary Office: Restoration of the Deputy Prothonotary
5. Overall Consolidation effort of the four departments: Moon Lake, Solid Waste Management, Environmental Special Projects and Recreation for an overall savings of \$180,000.

Commissioner Urban provided comment stating that he sees progress in working with his colleagues but the changes were minimal and include tax increases, referring the 8-mill tax hike, which he cannot support. Commissioner Urban stated he is committed to working with his colleagues to take off the 5 mills recently granted by court approval per the County Code plus an additional 3 mills. He added equity among County employees needs to be address referring to recent raises granted to certain employees this year

It was moved by Commissioner Vonderheid, seconded by Commissioner Skrepenak.
"AYES" SKREPENAK, VONDERHEID "NAYES" URBAN

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Luzerne on the 13th day of February, 2004.

Samuel T. Guesto, Jr.
 County Manager for Legislation/Chief Clerk

MEDIA

James Comny, Citizens' Voice questioned what line item was affected to reallocate to the District Attorney's office for the two Assistant District Attorneys. Commissioner Skrepenak commended the District Attorney's office for the tremendous job that they do. Funding was taken form the Commissioners' Contingency Fund line item.

Jennifer Learn-Andes, Times Leader, questioned where the adjustment from the reduction in savings from the Courts would be taken from and impact would this have on other projects. Commissioner Vonderheid responded the allocation would come from the Commissioners' office Contingency Fund and Contract line items. Commissioner Vonderheid further added the Commissioners would have to be vigilant as cost decisions are made throughout the year and not exceed the Contingency amount that has been set.

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COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Urban provided comment that the Unions may be unhappy with the Wage Raise freezes. He hopes that as the Commissioners move ahead and work to reduce the five mills that we revisit the eight percent raises given by the Courts. Commissioner Urban stated he is committed to the equitably and fair treatment to all County Employees and that no Department should be treated differently.

Commissioner Vonderheid provided comment stating that the budget presented and passed today is by no means perfect. The Commissioners are committed to not making decisions now that will not preclude them from making the right decisions in the future. Commissioner Vonderheid recognized and thanked the Row Officers and Department Heads for their cooperation with Public Financial Management. Our administration really begins on Monday, the Commissioners have spent the last six weeks cleaning up a \$23 million deficit.

Steve Flood, Controller, provided comment and congratulated the Commissioners on their working together in unison and it is the first time in years that he has seen real numbers on the books. Mr. Flood also extended his thanks to the Commissioners for their support in bringing the Controller's Office into the 21st Century with the implementation of new financial audit computer system.

Commissioner Skrepenak provided commented saying this has been the most difficult day since he has taken office. He realizes this does not help those who will be laid off. He stressed the Commissioners' must be fiscally responsible. Commissioner Skrepenak thanks Sam Guesto, Mark Dingman, the Row Officers and Department Heads for their continued support and cooperation. He also thanks Mike Nadol and his staff at Public Financial Management. In closing, he thanked everyone for attending.

A Motion was entertained to adjourn the Commissioners' Meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Vonderheid.

“AYES” SKREPENAK, VONDERHEID, URBAN

Respectfully,

Patricia Wilk, Recording Secretary