

Crisis Management Team

Update 5/13/2020

Human Services/Nonprofits and Services subcommittee

- we meet every Monday at 3:30. I have attended all but one meeting due to them being during my work schedule.
- Harry did a great job of covering most of what we've talked about but on the services side the main focuses have been the accessibility of food and helping nonprofits apply for grants
- Most non profits have received many volunteers and have been meeting the demands of the public
- Charles Barber is our chair and announced last meeting that some non profits will be receiving small grants due to the work of the committee. The team will keep applying for grants and find other ways to keep the non profits going

I am going to forward our meeting minutes as well. Councilman Haas has been putting together the notes and doing a great job.

Matt Vough

The Human Services/Non-Profits and At-Risk Populations Committee meets on Mondays at 3:30.

Food services are meeting the demand from the public. Most organizations actually have more volunteers than needed on a fairly consistent basis, and they have implemented precautionary measures like social distancing, mask wearing, and periodic sanitation.

The concern going forward is how to meet the indirect needs like mental health issues and the under-reporting of substance, human, and sexual abuse because of the sheltering and lack of interaction with coworkers and mandated reporters like teachers and coaches.

Another concern is the long-term need for people who have been out of work for almost 2 months to make mortgage, rent, and utility payments.

2) The Covid-19 Hazleton Quarantine Center Committee meets weekly on different days and at different times.

After a lot of hard work and several meetings by members from different community organizations, Luzerne County government, and individual business owners who worked very hard to meet the demand for a quarantine site in south county, it has been determined that the expected need didn't materialize. Therefore, the center will not open. At this time, no future committee meeting has been planned.

Harry Haas

The Tech/Finance team has met twice. I missed the second call due to work but we have been working many initiatives. Summarizing from various emails.

Wico van Genderen...

Much of our focus is to ensure visibility, information, direction and access to programs. *We have created our own COVID 19 Portal for Wilkes Barre and Luzerne County at <https://www.wilkes-barre.org/coronavirus-preparation-copy>, and have partnered with our Regional Chambers and Discover NEPA at <http://www.discovernepa.com/coronavirus> to do the same for the NEPA Region* to both provide access to business, family and community portals to provide linkages to the latest WHO, CDC, Federal, State, County and Local information and programs.

Economic recovery plan focused on 1. Health and Welfare, 2. Labor /Workforce, 3. Business and Industry, 4. Infrastructure.....a key piece will be on linking the unemployed with those businesses with job openings -- and this portal by CareerLink is a good start in that recovery process.....

Jeffrey Box...

On behalf of our Board of Directors and Jeffrey Box, our CEO, we are pleased to formally open the 2021 [Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#) grant funding round. Funding through the program is federal (ARC), state (PA DCED) and local (NEPA Alliance) partnership. The partners are certain that these resources will play a role in Appalachia's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are pleased to provide you with information related to the ARC [Area Development](#) and ARC [Local Access Road](#) Programs. NEPA serves as the regional partner and conduit for ARC funding.

My comments:

Overall, everyone has been teaming up to ensure resources and information are available to our business community. We have been consistent and common with messaging so all are on the "same page" as to provide guidance and program assistance within Luzerne County. Recovery will include getting people back to work in a safe manner.

Stephen J. Urban

Member of County Council

Luzerne County, PA

The Outreach Committee has met weekly, on Mondays via Microsoft Teams since the committee was formed by County Manager Dave Pedri.

One of the first accomplishments of the committee was the creation of a task force facebook page- "Luzerne County Pa Covid-19 Task Force", where we regularly post pertinent information relative to the health and well-being of our residents, in addition to important information concerning our small businesses including government funding sources.

The Committee also has done a great job reaching out, through various media as well as our respective networks, to the Hispanic community by using Spanish language releases and posts.

We also distribute information provided to us by the other committees of the task force and distribute through our broad networks and contacts sending emails, posting to websites, and utilizing social media, and it has been very effective. For example, we were very fast in getting out information on the drive-through testing site at Mohegan Sun Arena, again making sure it was out there in Spanish as well.

We have issued several press releases when the information provided to us warrants it, such as the information the Material/Committee and Kendra provide tours recently, thanking local companies that have donated time, supplies, equipment and opened doors to help essential workers.

Our committee continues to seek new information to help fight this pandemic, inform the public, and keep our Luzerne County residents safe.

Chris Perry

The Covid 19 Crisis committee that I was assigned to was the Emergency Crisis Team. The team was chaired by Michael Lombardo and consisted of several First Responders and Fire Personnel from several communities in Luzerne County.

The group meet once in March to setup and discuss our concerns regarding the Covid 19 Emergency as directed by the County Manager.

The discussion was concerning the overall status of our Hospitals and other health care providers and the ability to have sufficient Personal Protective Equipment as well as the need for any communications to the County 911 and emergency responders. The Team contacted the PA State Department of Health as well as PEMA and the Luzerne County EMA under the direction of Lucy Morgan, to be certain that the proper information was being provided to all Luzerne County EMS personnel in the event of an emergency so they can be properly prepared to respond to a possible COVID 19 patient or emergency.

The group meet once more in April to recap and review any other concerns or questions for the members of the group. There has been no further discussions since the first week in April regarding the emergency crisis team.

Walter L Griffith Jr.

I am a member of **the Facilities and Materials Committee** of the Crisis Management team chaired by Mayor Tom Blaskiewicz. We typically hold our conference calls on Mondays at 1pm and communicate via email in between. Our focus has been to secure facilities and necessary materials to assist in combatting COVID-19 in Luzerne County. A few examples of this would be securing the Woodlands Inn and Marriot to allow healthcare workers and all those working on the front line a place to stay, rest, or clean up. Another example would be LAMAR advertising- who has donated ad space around the Mohegan Sun Arena testing site.

Something else we have been doing is keeping a list of all local businesses and individuals who have donated space or items to the fight against COVID-19 in our county. We feel it's important to show our appreciation and positive things that are happening during this time of uncertainty. Our list was posted on Facebook by the outreach committee as well as released in a press release last week.

Thank you to Dave Pedri for creating this team, to Mayor Tom Blaskiewicz for his leadership on our committee, and to all committee members.

Kendra Radle

I would like to share the information regarding the **Governmental Committee**. The committee was chaired by Mayor Lombardo. The initial meeting was held April 3rd with the following agenda:

- 1) Introductions & Updates
- 2) Develop Operational Objectives
- 3) Action Steps
- 4) Open Discussion to Discuss Concerns

At that point there were many unanswered questions and much concern because of the uncertainty of the pandemic crisis. Everyone agreed that they would all work together.

The second meeting was held April 24th. I was not available to be in attendance due to a scheduling conflict. I have not been notified that any further meetings have been scheduled.

Bob Schnee

Private Sector Crisis Team

So far we have had information put on the Discover NEPA website. The Luzerne County website has a link which takes viewers to the Discover NEPA website. I have been sending updated business related information almost daily to Ted Wampole so that it can be added.

Warren Faust, who is on my committee, is offering metal strips free of charge and free shipping to anyone making masks. This metal strip can be sewn into masks for a better fit around the nose. Ted Wampole may want to do a press release with the information. I requested detailed information from Warren so that I can pass it on to Dave and Ted.

The Committee will now be part of the initiative to develop plan for “re-opening”.

Lee Ann McDermott

The Education team includes educational leaders from public, parochial, and private school systems K-12 as well as higher education. The members of the committee have been in contact over the past weeks to ascertain any areas in which the county can be of assistance during the pandemic. The need for PPE for school personnel and the internet access of students in various communities in the county are 2 identified areas of concern. Additionally, the Manager reached out independently to some members of the committee as well as other superintendents of area schools to discuss the potential use of school buildings for the June election.

Linda Houck

Health Care Crisis Team

1. Luzerne County Coroner and the office have provided to all parties a complete procedure for dealing with Covid-19 deaths. They have been very pro-active and have developed outstanding working relationships.
2. There has been outstanding cooperation and sharing of information between all the hospital facilities. They have all prepared detailed plans to deal with any surge in cases. They have continued to function very efficiently throughout the pandemic.
3. The Team has a Nursing Home provider that has provided updates regarding the nursing home facilities. The Homes have been working with our team and particularly the Coroner. Obviously due to our elderly population, the Nursing Homes have many vulnerable clients.
4. Geisinger Health Care has provided medical education materials for the County facebook page in Spanish. The information is excellent.

Tim McGinley

Legal Crisis Team

The initial meeting of the Legal Crisis Team took place on Friday, April 3, 2020. After the announcement of the Legal Crisis Team, local attorneys raised certain issues of concern.

At this initial meeting the issue of transition to alternate filings with the Prothonotary, Register of Wills, Recorder of Deeds, and Clerk of Courts for attorneys and *pro se* litigants was discussed. In addition, a call for *pro bono* assistance to address the confusion and difficulty with the loan paperwork associated with newly offered federal and state programs.

The next meeting took place on Wednesday, April 22, 2020. Attorney Crocamo sought input on an issue that had arisen regarding the June 2nd primary. Act 12 permits, without court or other approval, the consolidation of polling locations of up to a 60% reduction of existing polling locations in the county. [For purposes of illustration, a 60% reduction means that if a county normally has 100 polling locations for its precincts, the county should make its best efforts to provide at least 40 polling locations for the upcoming primary.] However, under necessitous circumstances, if a county is unable to do so and it is necessary to reduce the number of polling locations to greater than a 60% reduction, the county may apply for an exception from the Department of State by submitting a plan that provides for such a reduction.

The discussion among the Legal Crisis Team members included (1) legally acceptable exceptions; (2) the potential causes of action (i.e., disenfranchisement of voters) that might be brought against the county; and (3) if the County proceeds with the exceptions, what type of evidence will the County need to secure to defend against any possible litigation.

After considerable discussion, the Legal Crisis Team determined that to reduce the number of polling places to greater than 60% of our original number of polling places would require evidence of a substantial reduction of poll workers willing to work on election day. Other points of discussion dealt with possible financial incentives for poll workers; accommodations at the polls for disabled voters; preventative measures for social distancing; and the safe use of touch screen machines for any voters unwilling to use paper ballots or mail-in ballots. Following the discussion and our suggestions to provide a safe voting experience for all voters, these suggestions were incorporated into the County Manager's voting plan for the primary election.

Sheila Saidman

