

LUZERNE COUNTY HOME RULE TRANSITION COMMITTEE
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June 8, 2011

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

The seventeenth 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 Chair, Jim Bobeck at 6:32pm.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Jim Bobeck, Chair
Ronna Ciaruffoli, Secretary
Susan Shoval, Treasurer, arrived late
CJ Kersey
Kick Heffron
Rick Morelli
Tom Cooney
Steve Urban, arrived late

ABSENT

Rob Bakewell, Vice Chair
Jim Haggerty
Maryanne Petrilla

ALSO PRESENT

Gloria Kijek, Clerk
Jeff Malak, Attorney
Ken Mohr, Consultant
Adam Szumski, PEL Intern

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept May 25, 2011 meeting minutes, with punctuation correction. (Motion 1)

Motion Tom Cooney.

Second CJ Kersey.

Unanimous vote.

Motion carried.

Jim Bobeck abstained because he had not attended the meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENT (agenda items)

Kathy Dobash, Hazelton – Commented on meeting agendas, suggested returning some County funds because of grant money received, and on the expense and utilization of the consultant.

Jim Bobeck responded to the suggestion of returning funds stating the account is maintained in an interest bearing account, and money surplus to the transition effort would be returned to the county, as was the surplus from the Home Rule Commission.

CONSULTANT REPORT

Ken Mohr reported work on the following items: 1) Distributing Comprehensive Transition Plan for committee to review and approve, 2) Revised draft of FAQ, 3) Work with intern on Early Intervention Program integration into the home rule transition and the codes, 4) Attended meetings.

Jim Bobeck clarified that any committee member requesting assistance from consultant, should go through the HRTC Chair, to ensure all consultant charged time was authorized and properly accounted for, for billing purposes.

SOLICITOR REPORT

Attorney Malak reported he is working with the consultant on various legal matters that have come up. He is continuing to research penalties for elected officials as well as reviewing and editing draft of the Accountability, Conduct and Ethics Code, and the FAQ.

TREASURER REPORT/APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Susan Shoval requested approval for the following expense:

Motion to approve Gloria Kijek, clerical work \$68.75 (Motion 2).

Motion Ronna Ciaruffoli.

Second Kick Heffron.

Unanimous vote.

Motion carried.

Motion to approve Ken Mohr, Consultant \$3,420.00 (Motion 3)

Motion Susan Shoval.

Second Jim Bobeck.

6 in favor, 2 opposing votes by Kick Heffron and Steve Urban.

Motion carried.

SECRETARY REPORT

Nothing to report at this time.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF FAQ (Freq. Asked Questions) REGARDING HOME RULE TRANSITION

Committee discussed question referring to positions up for appointment in 2012. Concerns were addressed regarding the language in 2nd paragraph. Suggestion was made to change the wording so it doesn't imply termination.

Motion to approve FAQ, excluding part of Question A3.

Motion Rick Morelli

Motion Removed by Rick Morelli, due to further discussion requested on remaining FAQs.

Question A5 was also discussed in reference to the Judiciary. Discussion ensued on how some changes to the staffing/structure of the judicial system should be looked at and compared with other Counties. It was also noted that staffing wasn't addressed in the FAQ and that issue may be better addressed within budget discussions.

Motion to approve the FAQ with amendment of Question A3. (Motion 4)

Motion Rick Morelli.

Second Tom Cooney.

5 in favor, 3 opposing votes of Ronna Ciaruffoli, CJ Kersey, and Kick Heffron.

Motion carried.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF REVISED BUDGET TO REFLECT DCED GRANT Susan

Shoval reported on format of budget spreadsheet which shows the original budget and the revised budget reflecting grant money received. Going ahead it will show what was spent, and the balance of each line item.

Motion to adopt the revised budget. (Motion 5)

Motion Ronna Ciaruffoli.

Second CJ Kersey.

Unanimous vote.

Motion carried.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION PLAN

Ken Mohr reported on the Comprehensive Transition Plan spreadsheet. It will be considered a ‘living document’ and periodically modified after posted on the HRTC webpage.

Motion to approve Comprehensive Transition Plan and post on the HRTC Webpage. (Motion 6)

Motion Rick Morelli.

Second Susan Shoval.

Unanimous vote.

Motion carried.

DISCUSSION REGARDING SPACING LOGISTICS AND TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES’ FROM CURRENT TO NEW GOVERNMENT

Jim Bobeck asked the current County Commissioners to start considering appropriate meeting place at the courthouse for the new County Council, County Manager, and associated admin. He will readdress at a future meeting to allow them time to think about possibilities. He also asked the commissioners to consider any issues they felt were not being adequately addressed in preparation for the new government in January 2012.

It was suggested that candidates for county council make it a point to come to the commissioners’ meetings to start familiarizing themselves with issues being addressed.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS REPORTS

ADMINISTRATIVE CODE SUBCOMMITTEE

Susan Shoval reported Administrative Code Subcommittee last met June 6. They are working the financial section, purchasing policies, legislative and executive branches, and expect to be ready to present the code to the committee by the end of June.

AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

CJ Kersey reported AB&C Subcommittee is in a holding pattern until August. A template member application will be ready for review/approval at that time.

ETHICS CODE SUBCOMMITTEE

Jim Bobeck reported in Rob Bakewell’s absence that the next meeting will be June 16, and Attorney Malak is currently reviewing the draft of the Ethics Code.

LIAISON SUBCOMMITTEE

Kick Heffron reported he would like to resign as the Chair of the Liaison Subcommittee. He feels some of the work they have done has been meet with resistance. He suggested the Liaison Subcommittee be

eliminated. Ronna Ciaruffoli feels there is still need for a Liaison Subcommittee and volunteered to Chair this Subcommittee.

Motion to Eliminate Liaison Subcommittee.

Motion Rick Morelli.

No Second.

Motion Failed.

Jim Bobeck clarified the Liaison Subcommittee will continue and Ronna Ciaruffoli will be Chairing.

PERSONNEL CODE SUBCOMMITTEE

Jim Bobeck reported last met June 7 and subcommittee is making final edits before sending to the solicitor for review.

PERSONNEL AND RECRUITING SUBCOMMITTEE

a. Personnel Recruiting-Discussion/approval of County Manager Job Description.

Rick Morelli reported Personnel and Recruiting Subcommittee last met June 7 and next meeting will be June 21. Job description for County Manager is completed and has been distributed to the HRTC and posted on website. He asked if there were any questions before the committee voted on approval. After a lengthy discussion on several items and suggested changes, the HRTC decided to defer the motion to approve to the next meeting. Rick Morelli also suggested the committee take a look at the rough draft of the advertising template before next meeting. Discussion followed as to whether or not a salary range should be listed in the job description/advertising, and if they should develop a list of possibilities for an interim in the event there is not a county manger in place on Jan. 2. The committee decided to hold action on this. Committee also discussed and decided to have the applicant screening process, and determination as to whether applicants' names should be made public listed as future agenda items. Ken Mohr will draft a spreadsheet to help with the screening process for county manager applicants.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Rick Morelli asked about the Budget Work Group status. Jim Bobeck reported that Rob Bakewell is the point of contact and he was setting up a meeting for July. The commissioners requested they be part of the group.

Steve Urban said he would like Ken Mohr to look at the judicial staffing of other Counties for budgetary reasons. Ken Mohr suggested doing a study on judicial staffing and the consolidation of fiscal and row offices. Jim Bobeck felt this shouldn't be considered at this point because of: 1) the expense, 2) it is likely beyond the scope of this committee, 3) there is a publication that provides some of this information, and 4) consulting with an attorney on a volunteer basis would be valuable. Committee discussed these issues and if consultant should do study into these items. Jim Bobeck asked if anyone wanted to make a motion disagreeing with his decision. No motion was made. Jim Bobeck clarified he has authorized Ken Mohr to work with the Budget Work Group on salary of County Manager and County Council Clerk and certain positions.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Kathy Dobash, Hazleton - Commented on the Liaison Subcommittee, the priority of hiring the County Manager, the salary of the Manager, and the disclosure of names of applicants for the position.

William James, Exeter Township - Commented on the importance of Attorney, Consultant, and sticking to the subject at meetings.

Charles Hatchko, Jackson Township - Commented on importance of the ethics code and job description for the County Manager.

Tom Dombroski, Trucksville - Suggested the consultant make a flow chart from Charter showing organizational structure.

Ed Warkevicz, Lehman Township – Addressed degree requirement and salary for County Manager; suggested salary augmented with incentive pay.

Jim Bobeck said the Charter has to be followed on degree and salary requirements of County Manager.

George Race, Exeter - Asked what EIP tracking is and if HRTC can adjust the budgeting procedure, he recommends 0 based budgeting.

Ken Mohr explained EIP was a study conducted of the County operations and offices in 2004. It is posted on the HRTC webpage.

Jim Bobeck responded to his budget question that the County Commissioners control the 2012 budget and the County Council has 45 days to amend if they disagree with it. HRTC can only recommend. Some procedures are stipulated in the Charter others may be addressed in the Admin Code. Commissioners have been using 0 based budgeting for 2 years.

Walter Griffith, Wilkes-Barre Twp - Asked if Committee saw the Consultants fees prior to hiring and commended the HRTC on conduct of the meetings

Jim Bobeck responded yes, the Committee received the consultant’s fee statement in his proposal package.

Kick Heffron commented that he didn’t question the fees but wanted to be sure the current invoice items were approved by the Chair prior to the consultant proceeding with action.

Walter Griffith commented on postings on the HRTC webpage, but would like to see more information in meeting minutes, and suggest treasurer’s reports on website. Thanked Attorney Malak and the HRTC their cooperation sending him the information he needs to track HRTC spending.

Ronna Ciaruffoli pointed out that documents distributed at meetings (budget statements, invoices, draft reviews) were posted on the webpage as attachments to the minutes of the meetings at which they were addressed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ronna Ciaruffoli commented that the new budget format would be posted on the website.

Rick Morelli commented on what he feels role of Budget Work Group should be.

Kick Heffron suggested Budget Work Group also address union contracts.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion Ronna Ciaruffoli.

Second Susan Shoval.

Unanimous vote.

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:56

Respectfully Submitted, Chairman Jim Bobeck

