

December 1, 2020

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners was held via video conference on Tuesday, December 1, 2020.

BOARD MEMBERS: Commissioner Preston Boop, Chairman, Jeff Reber, Vice-Chairman, and Stacy Richards, Secretary

GUESTS: Linda Harris, Becky Perez, Roberta Greene, Don Wilver, Teri McBride, Sue Auman, Emily Goldman, Mary Beth Clark, Toni Byrd, Matt Ferrand, Eric Scicchitano, Helen Lauterbach, Greg Katherman, Elections Director, Diane Reigle, Treasurer and Jeff McClintock, Finance Director

STAFF: Susan Greene, Chief Clerk and Sheryl Vrabel, Executive Administrative Assistant.

## ACTION MINUTES

### A. MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Richards, second by Commissioner Reber, to approve the minutes of November 17, 2020. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

### C. NEW BUSINESS

Motion by Commissioner Reber, second by Commissioner Richards, to approve payables ending the week of November 27, 2020 in an amount of \$504,579.37. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Motion by Commissioner Richards, second by Commissioner Reber, to approve application for headstone for deceased service person's grave for John H. Persing. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Motion by Commissioner Reber, second by Commissioner Richards, to nominate and approve Commissioner Boop to serve as County Commissioner Director Appointee for 2021 to the Union County Conservation Board. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Motion by Commissioner Richards, second by Commissioner Reber, to approve reappointment of Lucas Criswell as Farm Director and Glenn Troester as Public Director to the Union County Conservation District Board for a four-year term, January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2024. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Motion by Commissioner Reber, second by Commissioner Richards, to approve Resolution Number 27 for 2020 appointing Shawn McLaughlin to the SEDA-COG

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a four-year term January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2024. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Motion by Commissioner Richards, second by Commissioner Reber, to approve reappointment of Shawn McLaughlin to the Union County Trail Authority Board for a five-year term, January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2025. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Motion by Commissioner Reber, second by Commissioner Richards, to approve Inmate Housing Agreement with Columbia County and Union County at a rate of \$70 per day for a one-year term effective January 1, 2021. Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Motion by Commissioner Reber, second by Commissioner Boop, to approve Resolution Number 28 for 2020 designating November 30-December 4, 2020 as Frontline Healthcare Workers and First Responders Week.

Commissioner Richards commented the following:

I join my Commissioner colleagues in honoring our region's medical staff and emergency responders. The dedication and commitment of these workers to our community's health has been extraordinary.

However, I am disappointed by and ashamed of my colleagues' fear to join me in further resolving this resolution to request that all County residents simply follow the Center for Disease Control's COVID-19 guidelines to wear a mask, to socially distance and to wash our hands.

The facts are that all of the hospitals in our region are at capacity due to this COVID pandemic. Of the 80 patients being medically treated at Evangelical Community Hospital today, 40 patients are sick with COVID. And four additional COVID patients are waiting for beds to become available. These FACTS tell us that today more than 50% of the patients in Evangelical Community Hospital are so sick with COVID that they need medical intervention. These facts tell us that our hospitals neither have enough capacity to treat all people ill with COVID, nor enough capacity to treat people needing hospitalization for other illnesses and conditions.

This lack of capacity of our hospitals to meet all of our medical needs is an emergency of potentially disastrous proportions. We are now at the place where we didn't want to be. Supportive words are no longer adequate. COVID's surging spread in our region must place each resident in our County, not just medical workers and emergency responders, on the COVID front line. The only way to reduce the spread of COVID in our community is for each and every person to take individual responsibility to wear a mask, to keep a safe distance apart, and to frequently wash our hands.

Wearing a mask is NOT a political statement. We have individual rights, but not the right to make others sick, harm our economy and shortchange our children's education.

My colleagues' wish to honor with simply words but without any recommendation for public action has been, and continues today, to be an abdication of the County Commissioner's emergency management responsibilities. Under PA law, County Commissioners are tasked with the responsibility of helping communities and organizations anticipate hazards and vulnerability, and undertake measures to deal with disasters. This means to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

County Commissioners have declared COVID to be a natural disaster. However, my colleagues continually balk at taking any leadership actions to protect our community's

health, economic and educational well-being by requesting that we all take the simple steps of wearing a mask, keeping our distance and washing our hands.

If we continue to ignore these important medical guidelines, more County residents will spread the virus, more will sicken, more will die, more businesses will fail, fewer children will receive the education they deserve, and the burden on our network of social services will greatly increase.

Therefore, although my Commissioner colleagues will not join me, I ask every Union County resident, for the sake of the community we hold dear, to resolve to follow CDC's COVID guidelines. Wear a mask, keep a safe distance from others, and wash your hands.

Commissioner Reber responded that he has recommended the county follow CDC guidelines from the beginning.

Motion carried and all members voted yes.

Commissioner Boop recessed the regularly scheduled meeting to hold the Union County Salary Board meeting.

The regularly scheduled meeting reconvened.

Commissioner Boop recessed the regularly scheduled meeting to hold the Union County Election Board meeting.

The regularly scheduled meeting reconvened.

Commissioner Boop recessed the regularly scheduled meeting to hold the Union County Retirement Board meeting.

The regularly scheduled meeting reconvened.

Motion by Commissioner Richards, second by Commissioner Reber, to approve proposed 2021 budget with final adoption scheduled for December 29, 2020.

Jeff McClintock presented the proposed budget.

Motion carried and all members voted yes.

## B. OPEN FORUM

Eric Scicchitano asked for an explanation of the Community Action Agency (CAA) contract that was mentioned in the budget. Commissioner Boop responded that one staff position has been eliminated due to duplication from our Probation Department. This is still a work in progress.

Matt Ferrand asked is there a chance to bring this position back? Commissioner Boop responded that Union County Probation will have a greater presence and there are other factors involved before the decision is final.

Commissioner Boop declared meeting adjourned.

Union County Commissioners

Susan Greene  
Chief Clerk

Sheryl Vrabel  
Executive Administrative Assistant