

Clinton County Government Study Commission Meeting
April 12 2006
Minutes

Call To Order:

Chairman Dan Harger called the Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Clinton County Courthouse. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was participated in by all present.

Roll Call:

Ms. Gardner took roll call as follows:

Present were Ms. Deb Day, Mr. Mike Hanna, Jr., Mr. Daniel Harger, Ms. June Houser, Dr. Kathleen McQuaid, Mr. Richard Novosel, Mr. Terry O'Connor, Mr. Ernie Renninger, and Mr. Les Robinson.

Excused were Ms. Coreena Meyer and Dr. Robert Wise.

Pennsylvania Economy League representatives present were Mr. Gerald Cross, Mr. Charles Waters and Mr. Joe Boyle.

Opening Statement:

Ms. Houser read a statement reviewing Act 62 and the purpose of the Clinton County Government Study Commission.

Approve Agenda:

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve the agenda as stated. Mr. Hanna seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took a roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the April 12, 2006 Agenda was approved unanimously.

Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2006:

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 5, 2006 as presented. Mr. Hanna seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the April 5, 2006 meeting minutes was approved unanimously.

Reports:

The Administrative Committee reported that interviews for the April 19, 2006 meeting are Mr. Donald Walker, Clinton County Coroner and Mr. Richard Kyle, Clinton County Commissioner.

The Administrative Committee is in the process of scheduling two public meetings; one in Renovo and one in Lock Haven.

Communications:

Mr. Harger stated Mr. Dan Reinhold a former Clinton County Commissioner has requested to be interviewed. Due to Mr. Reinhold's health, it was suggested that perhaps his interview could be taped at his home and the tape be presented to the entire Study Commission. The Commission Members agreed that taping the interview at the home of Mr. Reinhold is appropriate if he could not attend a meeting at the Clinton County Resource and Education Center which is handicapped accessible.

Old Business:

Chairman Harger thanked those individuals who were interviewed at the meeting on April 5, 2006 for their participation.

New and Continuing Business:

Interviews:

Ms Kathy Conrad, Clinton County Chief Clerk and Mr. Harold Yost, Clinton County Commissioners were present at the meeting to be interviewed on their job functions.

Chief Clerk:

Chairman Harger introduced Ms. Kathy Conrad who became Clinton County Chief Clerk in 2001. Ms. Conrad provided a copy of her job description to the Commission Members.

The duties of the Chief Clerk are as follows:

- Administrative duties mandated by law.
- Discretionary duties such as inventory.
- Budgetary duties including preparation, reports, budget versus actual reports and working with financial consultant.
- Personnel liaison with the Board of Commissioners.

- Gives recommendations to the Commissioner but has no decision-making powers.
- Official record keeping of the Board of Commissioners.
- Assists in Row Officers/Department Heads in the hiring process for new employees.
- Attends weekly Commissioners' Meeting.
- Works with county Union.
- Human Resource responsibilities.
- Project bids.
- County payroll.
- Accounts payable.
- Purchasing.
- Invoice and purchase order review.
- Record keeping to be compliant with Federal Gatsby 34.

Ms. Conrad stated the Chief Clerk's office has five full time employees and one part time employee including herself.

Ms. Conrad reported the financial consultant group of Susquehanna Advisory Group was hired in 2005. The consultant has been very helpful to her and the Commissioners. The consultant performs monthly, quarterly and end-of year financial reports. The consultant wrote a Clinton County Strategic Plan for 2005-2007. A copy of this plan will be forwarded to the Commission Secretary. She does not feel there is a need for a full time CFO or controller.

Ms. Conrad reported the process for purchase orders and invoices is as follows:

The Row Officer/Department Head completes a purchase order request and forwards to Commissioners' office for approval. When the invoice arrives the Row Officer/Department Head signs the invoice and forwards to the Commissioners' Office for their approval which requires two signatures. A check is then processed which is signed by the Treasurer and Commissioners' office.

Ms. Conrad stated that project bids under \$4,000.00 require three phone proposals and bids for over \$10,000.00 are advertised in the local newspaper. The project goes to the lowest bidder.

Ms. Conrad stated the Commissioners have the final decision on salaries and budget figures. The Row Officer/Department Head perform the background checks and drug testing for new hires. The Commission asked if the County had a nepotism policy. Ms. Conrad stated yes that "close relatives" cannot supervise one another.

Ms. Conrad stated that Clinton County runs very smoothly and that a structure change is not needed. The County has sufficient technology available to them. She does not feel that initiatives and referendums would be a good tool for the citizens of the county.

Ms. Conrad stated some of the challenges facing the County are:

- Voter readiness with the new electronic voting machines.
- Clinton County Sewer Authority issues.
- Continued decrease in State monies; utilizing grants to fill this void.

It was noted that the grant consultant and the CDBG Department completes and files grants for Clinton County.

The Commissioner requested a listing of where savings were found in the last budget submitted and approved over the previous budget year. Ms. Conrad stated she would forward that information to the Commission Secretary.

Commissioner:

Chairman Harger introduced Mr. Harold Yost, Clinton County Commissioner who has been in office the longest the current Commissioners. Mr. Yost felt that Ms. Conrad had answered many of the questions concerning the running of the Commissioners' office in her interview.

Mr. Yost stated the main functions of a Commissioner are:

- Work sessions.
- Various County and Bi-County Board meetings.
- Lobby legislators and governmental meetings.

Mr. Yost feels that the County Code can be limiting in the performance of duties. He feels that the County Treasurer should be the County's sole tax collector. Mr. Yost feels that non-residents such as the college students should be paying a County fee to help offset the costs of County services that they utilize.

Mr. Yost feels there needs to be a mix of Republican and Democratic representation in the Commissioners' office. The Commissioner work well together and with the Row Officers. Mr. Yost stated an appointed manager would be a "yes" man and an elected manager would be too political. He stated you need to be nonpartisan in running the County. He stated the working relationship with the Court System is as well as it can be.

Mr. Yost feels that the technology of Clinton County is excellent.

Mr. Yost stated the Commissioners are involved with the Economic Partnership and that they are working together to ensure that infrastructure is in place to capitalize on tourism dollars. A Tourism Director is being hired by Clinton County to oversee this project along with the Economic Partnership.

Mr. Yost stated the financial consultant does an excellent job for Clinton County. He stated there is no need for a CFO or controller. The Commission asked if the financial consultant advised the Commissioners to reopen the union contract. Mr. Yost stated the consultant was not involved in that decision. He further stated that wages of County employees needed to be raised to keep good employees with the County. He stated the prison had a problem with employees being trained and then moving on to higher paying state and federal prison jobs. This was costing the County a lot of money in constantly educating and training new employees.

The Commission asked who the members of the Prison Board are. Mr. Yost stated the three Commissioners, District Attorney, Prison Warden and the Clinton County Treasurer.

Mr. Yost stated that in 2000 there 248 full time and 48 part-time County employees, in 2003 there were 224 full-time and 32 part-time employees and now there are 217 full time and 15 part-time employees.

Mr. Yost stated that the EMS and 911 Departments were combined into one department. Mr. Yost stated that a regional police and fire department would be too expensive for Clinton County to operate.

PEL Response:

The PEL reported that representatives from Lehigh County are available to attend the May 10 meeting along with Doug Hall from the County Commissioners Association.

The Study Commission asked the PEL why the date of June 18 was proposed for them to make a decision. The PEL responded that the Commission will need one to two months to review the information requested, re-ask questions, and write a report on their findings which needs to be completed in August. If an optional plan is decided upon, the Commission will need to write that plan. If the Commission decides home rule charter is the way to go, the Commission will have additional time to formulate that charter.

The PEL suggested Mr. Reinhold be invited to attend one of the advertised public meetings.

The PEL noted that the Commission Members need to be clear on what the responsibilities and duties of a county controller are compared to county auditors. The PEL can help with the comparison. The PEL also stated the Commission needs to review the ability of the County to run like a \$22M business utilizing the County Code in its current structure.

Invoice Review:

Mr. O'Connor, Treasurer presented the following invoices for payment:

\$ 123.75 - Clerical Expenses
\$2,287.03 – PEL Expenses
\$2,410.78 - Invoice Total

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$2,410.78. Mr. Hanna seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve payment of the invoices was passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

The reason for the reading of the statement at the beginning of the meeting was reviewed. This statement is designed to assist the public in understanding the purpose and responsibilities of the Study Commission.

Comments from Members:

Ms. Houser requested that Invoice Review be moved to the Report Section of the Agenda so that all weekly tasks are performed before the Interview Section of the agenda. The Commission Members agreed this would be appropriate.

Adjournment:

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:53 p.m. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion.

Deb Day, Secretary
Clinton County Government Study Commission

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