

**Clinton County Government Study Commission Meeting**  
**April 26, 2006**  
**Minutes**

**Call To Order:**

Chairman Dan Harger called the Commission to order at 7:09 p.m. at the Clinton County Resource and Education Center. 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, Ms. Coreena Meyer, Mr. Richard Novosel, Mr. Terry O'Connor, Mr. Ernie Renninger, and Mr. Les Robinson.

Excused was Dr. Robert Wise.

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

**Approve Agenda:**

***Mr. Hanna made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took a roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the April 26, 2006 Agenda was approved unanimously.***

**Meeting Minutes of April 19, 2006:**

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 19, 2006 as presented. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the April 19, 2006 meeting minutes was approved unanimously.***

**Reports:**

**Invoice Review:**

Mr. O'Connor, Treasurer presented an invoice for March and April from Clinton County Information Technologies for services to the website totaling \$60.00.

***Mr. Hanna made a motion to approve payment of the invoice totaling \$60.00. Dr. McQuaid seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve payment of the invoices was passed unanimously.***

The Administrative Committee reported that Mr. Dan Reinhold a former Commissioner would be taping statements for the Commission's review at the May 3, 2006 meeting. The remainder of the meeting will be utilized to prepare the format and advertising for the public meeting on May 22, 2006. The Committee asked Mr. O'Connor to help organize a public meeting in the Renovo area for the week of May 22, 2006.

The Administrative Committee reported that at the May 10 Meeting at the Clinton County Courthouse the following individuals will be interviewed:

- Doug Hall, Executive Director, County Commissioners Association
- Donald Cunningham, Jr. Lehigh County Representative
- Jim Eckert, former Clinton County Commissioner and Centre County Business Manager, currently is Senator Corman's Aide.

The Administrative Committee also is considering interviewing Rich Marcinkevage and Rick Vilello from Lock Haven City government, Solid Waste Authority Manager, Susque-View Director and a representative from Greene County. The Committee is also considering a questionnaire for the local Townships and Boroughs to complete for their suggestions. The Committee suggested that the May 24 meeting be used to review the public meetings' information and the meetings of June 7, 14 and 21 will be used to review all information collected and discussed various options in order to make a decision on the findings of the Study Commission.

### **Communication:**

Ms. Day reported that the budget information regarding the 10% savings performed by the various departments will be available for the next meeting. Ms. Conrad, Chief Clerk was on vacation this week.

### **Old Business:**

Chairman Harger thanked those individuals who were interviewed at the meeting on April 19, 2006 for their participation. Dr. McQuaid asked if follow-up questions can be asked of individuals who have already been interviewed. Chairman Harger noted that additional questions can be asked of any individual interviewee.

## **New and Continuing Business:**

### **Interviews:**

Mr. Tom Bossert, Clinton County Commissioner and Mr. Charles Ankney, Clinton County Sheriff was present at the meeting to be interviewed on their job functions.

### **Commissioner:**

Chairman Harger introduced Mr. Tom Bossert, Clinton County Commissioner.

Mr. Bossert stated that the Study Commission has taken on a tremendous task and thanked all of them for their efforts. He would like to speak philosophically on the County government instead of answering the same questions. He reported that he has no additional suggestions to add to the other interviews that had taken place.

Mr. Bossert stated the main task of County Commissioners is to meet the health, safety and welfare of the community they serve. He stated 50% of his time is spent reading and writing and 50% attending meetings and discussions. He maintains an open door policy.

In response to why he ran for County Commissioner, Mr. Bossert stated it was a challenge for him, that he wants to maintain the quality of life in Clinton County and he likes the responsiveness of our County government to meet the needs of its citizens. He stated the voters also need to be responsible as citizens of the County.

Mr. Bossert stated the Row Officers are task corrective in providing efficient services according to the County Code. He believes this current government is lean in providing their services. Mr. Bossert feels that communication between the Commissioners and Row Officers/Department Heads is sufficient and that tasks are being completely appropriately.

The Commission asked why GIS is not up and running on the website. Mr. Bossert responded that the server is not adequate to meet the needs for the GIS. The County is waiting for a State program to become available in the next couple of month to provide the monies needed to update the server.

Mr. Bossert feels the Planning Commission Department's lack of staff is hampering their effectiveness. The County needs to take advantage of the State monies offered in the Wilds Programs.

Mr. Bossert stated that the 10% change in each department's budget was achieved by a combination of an increase in revenues and/or a decrease in expenses. If a department increased their revenue by 10% than that department did not need to take a 10% reduction or a 5% revenue increased dictated a 5% decrease in expenses.

Mr. Bossert stated the County renegotiated archaic contracts including escalating fees, the debt on the murder trials has been paid and the tax increase all helped to turn around the County's finances. He stated this County has too much State-owned land which hampers growth. The County needs to help develop entrepreneurs to take advantage of the tourism associated with the State land.

Mr. Bossert feels that elected officials are the best form of government. He stated you lose control of government when you get too much bureaucracy. Mr. Bossert feels that tax caps do not work. He stated the current form of government is the best.

Mr. Bossert stated the Commissioner would welcome any recommendations from the Study Commission. The Commission asked if there was an ordinance form mechanism to put before the voters the question of hiring a CFO for the County. Mr. Bossert stated that a petition for referendum could be put before the Commissioners. It was noted that the Commissioners do not need to honor the petition.

Mr. Bossert feels a regional police force would not work in Clinton County but that the municipalities would need to start the process.

Mr. Bossert stated that the current financial consultant is sufficient for the County's needs. The group has extensive banking and government experience.

Mr. Bossert stated the challenges facing Clinton County are:

- Job growth.
- Infrastructure development.
- Reimbursement difficulties regarding State mandates
- Providing tourism entrepreneurial opportunities

#### Sheriff:

Chairman Harger introduced Mr. Charles Ankney, Clinton County Sheriff.

The Sheriff's Department handles mortgage foreclosures, serving of court papers, Garden Building and Courthouse security and transporting of prisoners to and from the Prison for court appearances and medical reasons. He stated

background checks are performed in-house. This department is governed by the statutes of law which fully define the powers and duties of Sheriff Departments. Mr. Ankney stated the Sheriff's Department can performed traffic stops and breaches of peace but they have no investigative powers. The fees associated with the serving of court papers are set by the legislature.

Mr. Ankney stated he is a member of the Prison Board which oversees finances, budget and personnel issues. The Warden oversees the daily functions of the Prison. Central booking may cut down on the cost of transporting inmates. Mr. Ankney stated he has little daily contact with the County Commissioners most of his department's interaction is with the Court System.

Mr. Ankney stated that each department has their own solicitor. If there is a dispute between departments; each department's solicitor handles the situation. If a citizen is suing the any County Department then the Commissioner's solicitor handles the situation. The PEL noted that this is common practice.

Mr. Ankney feels that a regional police force would be too expensive for Clinton County.

#### PEL Response:

The PEL stated that home rule can give a County residual power and flexibility in dealing with State funding. Also under home rule a County is free from specific salary requirements, specific processes in the way functions are performed and limitations on taxes.

The PEL stated the Commission needs to be informed of the positives and negatives associated with a tax cap.

The PEL is fulfilling their responsibility in making sure the Study Commission is fully equipped and feels comfortable to make a decision on County government.

#### Public Comment:

It was noted that the Commission website still states that their meetings are the first and third Wednesday of the month.

The Commission was asked to look not only to the past but future benefits of a full time CFO; there are other methods to achieve financial control.

It was suggested that possibly the public would be allowed to comment at the beginning of the meeting instead of the end that way more of the public would

have a chance to speak.

**Comments from Members:**

Dr. McQuaid noted that the Commission also needs to take into account the demographic studies that report Clinton County is not growing that we are losing citizens and how we maintain even the status quo. She also stated that the future leaders of Clinton County will be of a different caliber than in the past.

The Commission noted that the public can bring questions with them to the meeting and see that a Commission Member has the information prior to the meeting. It was also noted that the public will have a chance to speak at the two public hearings in May.

The Commission Members did discuss the length and flow of the meetings.

Mr. Harger stated that Mr. Robinson and he are meeting with Mr. Rolley at the Express to discuss the options available in advertising for the public meetings.

Ms. Houser stated that there are two studies available for review at City Hall regarding the issue of regional police.

**Adjournment:**

**Mr. O'Connor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 p.m. Ms. Houser seconded the motion.**

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Deb Day, Secretary  
Clinton County Government Study Commission

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