

**Clinton County Government Study Commission  
December 7, 2005  
Minutes**

**Call To Order**

Chairman Dan Harger called the Commission to order at 7:00 PM in the third floor meeting room of the Clinton County Court House. Following the Pledge to the Flag roll was taken. Present were Ms. Day, Mr. Hanna, Mr. Harger, Ms. Houser, Ms. McQuaid, Ms. Meyer, Mr. Novosel, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Renninger and Mr. Robinson. Absent was Dr. Wise. June Houser agreed to record minutes for tonight's meeting, as an individual had not been hired on a permanent basis. Also in attendance were members of the local media and interested citizens.

**Minutes**

Ms. McQuaid requested that the pages of the minutes be numbered and that the name of the organization also be recorded on each page.

Also noted were suggestions received that the Secretary initial each page of the minutes, that the minutes be placed in a permanent binder and kept in a central location, such as the County Commissioners' Office, available for public review.

*With the exception of a few typos, the minutes of the November 30, 2005 meeting were unanimously passed on a motion by Mr. Robinson, seconded by Mr. O'Connor.*

**Unfinished Business from Previous Meeting**

**Clerical Assistant**

Ms. Day indicated that Ms. Haywood was unable to attend tonight's meeting to assist in the recording of minutes and that it was imperative that the Commission advertise immediately for a paid position. Ms. Day read an advertisement which she had prepared to be placed in The Express.

*It was unanimously agreed to authorize Ms. Day to proceed with the advertisement for a clerical assistant. The motion was made by Ms. Meyer with a second by Ms. McQuaid.*

Mr. O'Connor advised that he had recently spoken with Gerald Cross of The PA Economy League and among other issues he had discussed clerical assistance. Mr. Cross had advised that the Commission should expect to pay someone between 4-6,000 dollars. Ms. Meyer was uncomfortable with establishing a salary but felt that an hourly wage should be more appropriate.

*Ms. Meyer then made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Houser to establish the salary at \$9.00/hour. The motion passed with 7 Yeas and 3 Nays. The Nays being Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Renninger and Mr. Robinson.*

It was felt that the Administrative Committee was the appropriate vehicle for reviewing applications, interviewing and hiring for the position.

#### Appointment of an Alternate

Prior to any further discussion on appointment of an Alternate to the Commission, Ms. McQuaid pointed out that the issue had been decided at the November 30, 2005 meeting, as indicated in the minutes of that meeting.

Mr. O'Connor quoted Mr. Cross of the PEL regarding alternates, *However, Mr. Renninger moved that the Commission "let subject matter lie" until a vacancy occurs. This was seconded by Ms. Meyer. The motion passed with 7 Yeas and 3 Nays. The Nays being Mr. Harger, Mr. Renninger and Mr. Robinson.*

#### New Business

##### Potential New Meeting Sites

Mr. Robinson expressed some displeasure with the current arrangement provided in the third floor meeting room at the Court House. As it is Commission members must arrange seating prior to a meeting and the general acoustics do not lend itself to a satisfactory discussion. Further, although the building is unlocked prior to the meeting beginning, the doors are locked from the outside around 7:30PM, which does not accommodate any late arrivals. Ms. McQuaid suggested that another location may be more amenable to public participation.

*Mr. Harger then appointed Mr. Robinson and Ms. Day to work with the Chairman to investigate future alternative meeting sites.*

##### By-Laws Committee

Mr. Harger noted that it would be appropriate to establish By-Laws for the Commission. *He appointed Ms. McQuaid Chair of the committee, who then asked Mr. Hanna to assist her.* A preliminary report will be given at the December 21, 2005 meeting.

## DCED

*Mr. Harger appointed Mr. Hanna to invite a representative of the Department of Economic and Community Development to attend a future meeting to assist the Commission in an understanding of the challenge before it.*

## Sunshine Law

*Ms. McQuaid agreed to prepare an outline of the current Sunshine Law, as it would affect the Commission, at the request of Mr. Harger.*

## **Special Committee Reports**

### Finance Committee

Mr. O'Connor spoke on the need to establish a "chain of command" for the paying of invoices on supplies and services expensed by the Commission.

*After discussion, it was determined that all invoices would be sent to the Commission c/o of the Garden Building, Lock Haven. A "mailbox" has been created there to receive all mail and information also requested of County Government. Any invoices would then be presented to the Treasurer, currently Mr. O'Connor, at the next regular meeting. After his review and recommendation to the Commission, invoices would then be submitted to County Clerk for payment out of the Commission line item established in the 2006 County Budget.*

Mr. O'Connor then mentioned additional discussions with Mr. Cross of PEL regarding E&O insurance for Commission members and legal counsel. These items would be discussed this evening later in the agenda.

## **Announcements/Other Business**

Ms. Meyer had recently spoken with the Chief Clerk of Northumberland County and indicated that there was a willingness on their part to share the proposal and budget from their recent government study. Also members of their Study Commission would be willing to meet with members of our Commission to exchange information regarding their time spent studying county government.

Mr. Robinson informed the Commission that he recently spoke with Craig P. Miller, Esq. of Lock Haven regarding legal advice. Mr. Miller volunteered to provide some advice pro bono for the Commission. However, he would not be comfortable offering any written legal opinions.

*It was determined that the issue of Legal Counsel would be re-visited in January 2006 and perhaps then RFP (Request for Proposals) would be requested from the legal community in Clinton County.*

Mr. Harger then opened the discussion on the 2006 County Budget which had been provided members by the Board of Commissioners. He advanced the opinion that the Commission should have additional details regarding operational expense and suggested further that we ask for job descriptions of county positions, a list of all county facilities and the operational cost of each as well as expenses of mandates imposed and the cost of those mandates.

*Mr. Harger then, at Ms. Meyer's suggestion, requested that Commission members prepare their own list of concerns and questions related to county government and bring it to the December 21, 2005 meeting. A compilation of those lists will then be developed and forwarded to the County for response. It is hoped that this would save time and would assist in determining direction.*

Mr. Robinson suggested Commission members review the 2006 budget and determine where their personal interest might lay. Perhaps certain interested members could then interview those department heads of that area of interest and provide a report to the full Commission regarding purpose, budgetary needs and expenses. Ms. Meyer agreed that it would eliminating putting department heads on "the hot seat", if they were asked to attend a full Commission meeting. She said further, that it would lead to a more honest discussion.

Mr. Renninger suggested that the Commission contact local municipal governments and asked to be included in a future meeting agendas to inform as to the Commission's mission and provide an opportunity for more local input as well as receive concerns regarding county government and its response to local government's needs. *Mr. Renninger then volunteered to coordinate that effort. Mr. O'Connor offered his assistance regarding Western Clinton County.*

*Ms. Day asked that Commission Members advise her of any topic that they may wish to have placed on meeting agendas.*

**Public Comment**

Mr. Joel Long, in attendance, requested that all expenses related to the Commission study be recorded, as he was interested as a tax payer, to know exactly what was being spent by county government to provide the study and report.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM on a motion by Mr. Robinson, which was seconded by Mr. Hanna.

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Deb Day, Secretary  
Clinton County Government Study Commission