

Clinton County Government Study Commission Meeting
May 17, 2006
Minutes

Call To Order:

Chairman Dan Harger called the Commission to order at 7:00 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, Mr. Daniel Harger, , Dr. Kathleen McQuaid, Mr. Richard Novosel, Mr. Ernie Renninger, Mr. Les Robinson and Dr. Robert Wise.

Excused were Ms. June Houser and Ms. Coreena Meyer.

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

Approve Agenda:

Mr. Hanna made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took a roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the May 17, 2006 Agenda was approved unanimously.

Meeting Minutes of May 10, 2006:

Mr. Robinson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 10, 2006 as presented. Dr. McQuaid seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the May 10, 2006 minutes was approved unanimously.

Reports:

Invoice Review:

Mr. O'Connor presented an invoice for mileage reimbursement to Deb Day for the Green County Visit totaling \$159.47.

Mr. Novosel made a motion to approve payment of the invoice totaling \$159.47. Mr. Harger seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve payment of the invoice was passed unanimously.

Budget Review:

Mr. O'Connor presented a budget report to the Commission Members reviewing the budget items and amounts sent in each category. The report does not include the invoices approved at the May 10 meeting. The Commission had expenditures totaling \$8, 475.14. Mr. O'Connor estimates at the end of May this total will be approximately \$11, 400.00. Mr. O'Connor will begin the process of estimating expenses for 07 in the event the Study Commission continues their work through 2007.

Public Comment:

No comments.

Communication:

Ms. Day presented a written report on the visit to Green County on May 11 by Ms. Houser, Mr. Harger, Mr. Novosel and herself.

Overall the contingent was received very well by Green County Representatives which included the Commissioners, Chief Clerk, Controller and Deputy Controller. The contingent felt the visit was very informative and the responses from Greene County were honest. They were free to ask any questions and visit any department. Some of the highpoints are as follows:

- Commissioner volunteered the quote of "You need a Controller."
- Controller's Office is more effective than the use of inhouse Auditors
- Merit System is used for raises.
- Major industry is coal.
- Economic Development monies are geared to infrastructure.
 - Performed several reassessments; saved money by using inhouse resources.
- No complaints on receiving State funding; has a strong legislator.
 - State Mandates: Reported if State does not fund or pulls funding the County refuses to fulfill the mandate.
- Departments share services such as secretarial duties.

- County does not have a landfill or golf course but does support several

- community swimming pools.
- County Home was sold in 1994.
- Stopped shared services with other Counties; feel better control running the services themselves.
- Operate a small prison; made \$500,000 in 05.
- Row Officers are paid a modest salary.
- \$24 million budget and 270 employees.
- Controller is an elected official.
- Budget Administrator following the day-to-day operations and run the MIS Department.
- GIS is up and running.
- Grand fathered into collecting all their taxes.
- Jury Commissioners are not needed and would like to see them eliminated.
- Modest offices.
- Social Services costs are run as cost recovery. Child support is collected inhouse.

Mr. Harger reported that Green County had looked at expanding the prison but when the Controller put the figures together, the numbers did not work. Greene County also stated that their prison is a training facility for COs that they lose them daily to the local State prisons.

It was noted that two of the Commissioners and the Controller are of the same political party which may or may not attribute to the excellent working relationship.

When asked about state-of-the-art technology, Greene County stated don't say state-of-the-art the takes money to keep up with the Jones. Greene County stated they have the technology they need to perform the duties required to keep the County running smoothly.

Mr. Robinson asked for Green County contact information which Ms. Day gave to him. He would like to talk to representatives about the refusing to perform mandates when the State monies are not available. Mr. Novosel reported Green County stated "let the State sue us."

Members asked if the cost of living was lower in Greene County since they were paying their Row Officers at lost less then Clinton County is paying theirs. It was noted that Greene County is located outside of Pittsburgh.

Old Business:

Nothing to report.

New and Continuing Business:

Talkback Session:

Commission Members who heard the session thought the PEL did a wonderful job. It was noted that the media is impatient for a decision which just is not available at this point.

Public Hearing Introductory Statement:

The PEL will clean up the introductory statement taking out the second paragraph and the paragraph on Greene and Elk Counties. PEL will email new copies to the Members. Chairman Harger will read the statement at the beginning of the hearings.

The Members were reminded of the two public hearings on May 22 at Ulmer Planetarium and May 23 at the Renovo Library both starting at 7:00 p.m. Chairman Harger will ask representatives from Leadership Clinton County to man the entrance; signing the public in and giving out 3 x 5 cards.

The Commission Meeting on May 24 will be used to debrief on the hearings and start inventorying the information we have available and what other information we may need to acquire.

Interviews:

The Commission discussed interviewing Lehigh and Northumberland County representatives. Ms. Day will try to schedule a visit to Lehigh and Northumberland Counties on the same day. She will report back at the next meeting.

It was noted that the whole Commission should hear the interview with Home Rule County Representatives since the whole home rule concept is an unknown to the Members.

Interviewing Donna Gority from Blair County has been put on hold at this point in time.

Comments from Members:

The Commission stated they would like to interview Jerry Rosamilia, Director of Social Service Programs for Clinton County.

The Commission noted that financial management is a problem in Clinton County. The Commission commented on why Clinton County is paying the

District Attorney a full time salary before the State money came through.

Adjournment:

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Dr. McQuaid seconded the motion.

Deb Day, Secretary
Clinton County Government Study Commission

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