

Clinton County Government Study Commission Meeting
September 13, 2006
Minutes

Call To Order:

Chairman Dan Harger called the Commission to order at 7:08 p.m. at the Clinton County Education and Resource 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. Terry O'Connor, and Dr. Robert Wise arrived at 7:13 p.m.

Absent were: Ms. June Houser, Ms. Coreena Meyer, Mr. Ernie Renninger, Mr. Les Robinson

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

Approve Agenda:

Mr. Novosel made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Harger seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took a roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the September 13, 2006 Agenda was approved unanimously.

Meeting Minutes of September 6, 2006:

Dr. McQuaid made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 6, 2006 as presented. Mr. Novosel seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took roll call vote whereby the motion to approve the September 6, 2006 minutes as presented was approved unanimously.

Reports:

Invoice Review:

Treasurer O'Connor presented invoices for approval for the following expenses:

\$365.50 - Coploff, Ryan & Welch

\$ 22.35 - Supplies used at the Resource Center

\$ 17.75 - HP ink cartridge
\$148.48 - Travel reimbursement Lehigh County - Ms. Day
\$554.08 - Total

Dr. McQuaid made a motion to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$554.08. Mr. Hanna seconded the motion. Ms. Gardner took a roll call vote whereby the motion to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$554.08 was approved unanimously.

Treasurer O'Connor reported that the Commission will be scheduling budget hearings with the County Commissioners for the last week of September.

Communication:

Lancaster County:

Ms. Day reported that a representative from Lancaster County contacted her about the history of our Study Commission. Lancaster County is starting the process to put the question on the ballot for a study commission for their county government. She directed them to our website and to the PEL.

Old Business:

Nothing to report at this time.

New and Continuing Business:

The Commission members and PEL discussed many different options for the form of government. Highlights are:

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- Talent to draw from in County for an elected professional.
- Need for true checks and balances.
- An elected professional has veto power and an appointed professional does not.
- Cannot avoid political pressures and personality conflicts.
- Elected professional's power can be diluted.
- Government needs to be as transparent as possible, effective, efficient and accountable.
- Accountability can be lost with appointed professionals; Elected professional is accountable to the general public.
- Appointed professional can be fired; must be meet certain qualifications.
- Elected professional is locked in for a certain number of years; is not required to be qualified.
- All decisions need to tie-back to reasons for changing the government including but not limited to: separation of powers and lack of representation.
- Volunteerism is a strength in Clinton County.

- Elected professional can hire qualified staff.
- County need future growth with affordable government.
- Representation by district, at large or by both options; number of representatives.
- Standards the government must meet: responsiveness, citizen access, equal representation, professionalism, efficient, clear budget procedures, separation of powers, focused leadership

Dr. McQuaid suggested that the Commission have an open discussion with Lock Haven City Council members, City Manager and the Mayor. The Commission will see if any of the individuals can attend the September 20, 2006 meeting.

Ms. Day reported that The Express is sponsoring an opinion poll on their website. The first question is "Does Clinton County government need to change?" At this time a high percentage feel a change is needed. A future question will be "Should a professional manager/executive be elected or appointed?"

The PEL noted that even though the form of government decision is an important decision there is not an infinite amount of time to make this decision. The decision needs to be made in the next several weeks. Straw votes will be a tool that is utilized in this process. The Commission needs to run each decision to be made through the models to see which model fits Clinton County to fix the problems.

Public Comment:

Three items the Commission needs to be aware of in the discussions:

- Assumption that popularity and ability are exclusive of each other.
- Checks and balances.
- Professional manager up against political realities.

Adjournment:

Dr. McQuaid made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. Ms. Day seconded the motion.

Deb Day, Secretary
Clinton County Government Study Commission

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