

Warren County Commissioners Public Meeting
March 13, 2024, 12:00 p.m.
Jackson Courtroom

Commissioner Kenneth Klakamp called the Public Hearing to order with Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin and Commissioner Daniel Glotz present.

Staff Present: Pamela Matve, Chief Clerk, Jolean Ishman, Finance Administrator, Phil Gilbert, Director of Tax Claim, Brenda Franklin, Director of Veteran's Affairs, Kord Kinney, Solicitor Nathaniel Schmidt, Lenore Glotz and Francis Waweru of the Public Defender's Office.

Citizens Present: Josh Cotton (WTO), Kelly Stroup, Annah Bule, Stephanie Smith, Katharine Smith, Denise Whipp, Ed Sekerak, Joe Whipp, Lillian Yoder, Susan Stout, Greg Burkett, Jane Dunshie, Nokomis Stanton, and Hialeah Stanton

Announcements: Commissioner Kenneth Klakamp announced that this meeting is being recorded.

Executive meetings held since the last meeting: None

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: Greg Burkett, Pleasant Drive, stated that he wants to say that his neighborhood is underserved, there is no cell service. He encouraged the Commissioners to push forward on broadband as much as they can.

He then stated that he attends the Broadband Authority meetings, and there is no representation from Warren County.

Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin stated that she is on the board of the Broadband Authority meeting and takes part in their calls. There is a challenge with the prevailing wage that the vendors are facing. The Commissioners have a meeting with University of Pittsburgh on some suggestions.

Greg then asked, at one time there was talk of hiring a consultant, but the public has not heard anything. Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin said yes, we did hire a consultant, but we have put a pause on their services till we see which direction broadband is taking, we do not want to duplicate efforts.

Commissioner Kenneth Klakamp stated that vendors have applied for grant funding by have not heard of any awards at this time.

Sunshine: Susan Stout thanked the Commissioners for passing a proclamation on Sunshine Week. She then alerted everyone to their event at the Library on March 14, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., put on by the League of Women Voters.

Deed and Mortgage fee: Denise Whipp stated that on the agenda for today, there is a resolution to approve adding a \$15 fee to deeds and mortgages. This is just the easy way to get funding, it does not directly benefit the homeowner. Everyone is affected by blight, and everyone should be taxed.

Ed Sekerak stated that Lawrence County has collected these fees and has spent zero. These fees can only be used for demolition, not operations of the authority. Have they gone out to find other sources of funding? Erie County has gotten funding from the gaming funds.

Commissioner Daniel Glotz stated that this has been looked at by the group. We have used CDBG funding when we can, as there are strings attached. The Commissioners have earmarked a minimal amount of money each year to the RDA to cover operational costs such as legal fees and insurance. Many counties across Pennsylvania adopted this fee when it first started, and it has helped to remediate blight. He stated that there are properties in the pipeline coming to the RDA that will need to be demolished, but they have no funds to do so.

Ed Sekerak stated that he is not opposed to demolition, but this is not just deeds, its mortgages too.

Commissioner Daniel Glotz stated that in 1990 there was a fee placed on both deeds and mortgages to help fund the housing trust fund; there was no pushback then, and this only helps moderate to low-income families.

Denise Whipp stated that the municipalities need to take out a bond and pass the cost onto their residents to take care of blight in their municipalities.

Ed Sekerak stated that Lawrence County uses other organizations to secure funding and feels that this group needs to do the same. Ed then asked for the names of the properties coming down the pipeline.

Commissioner Daniel Glotz said he will not say until the RDA gets the property.

Someone asked if the money will go to just the county or will it be shared with the City's RDA. To which Commissioner Daniel Glotz stated it will be shared, those properties in the city, the funds will go to the City, anything outside the city will go to the county.

Ed Sekerak then asked if there is an agreement with the City to which Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin stated that we will follow any rules of Act 152, but the City is on board with this program.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes from the February 28, 2024, public meeting: No corrections or additions to be made.

Finance Report: Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin stated that Lisa is unavailable to attend and the report is in the packet for review.

HR Report: this is in your packets for review

Department Monthly Reports: Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin thanked the department heads for submitting these reports on a monthly basis. She then went through and highlighted some items in the department heads.

Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin stated that we are starting to have one department head come to the first meeting of the month to speak about their department.

Brenda Franklin, Director of Veteran's Affairs stated that they have processed 31 applications for benefits in January and 33 in February. The \$10,000 grant that is awarded will cover out reach items such as a laptop and printer so that it can be taken to the Fair, nursing homes, and in home visits they do when necessary.

Brenda stated they are busy preparing for Memorial Day and reaching out to the cemeteries to make sure they have enough flags.

In the last month, her office has brought in \$1,463,325.94 to the veterans. They see an average of 15-25 veterans daily to discuss benefits.

She talked about an event she would like to put together for those who were in the war but not welcomed home appropriately.

Proclamation(s): Honoring 4H Members and Volunteers, Sunshine Week, and Public Defense Week

A motion was made by Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin, seconded by Commissioner Daniel Glotz to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Reappointment to the Hospital Authority Board: A motion was made by Commissioner Daniel Glotz, seconded by Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin to reappoint Ann Ferguson to the Hospital Authority Board for another five-year term. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution #3264 Adopting Act 152 Collection fee of Deeds and Mortgages: A motion was made by Commissioner Daniel Glotz, seconded by Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin to approve Resolution 3264 for the \$15 fee allowed by Act 152 for deeds and mortgages effective April 1, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Veteran's Trust Fund Agreement: A motion was made by Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin, seconded by Commissioner Daniel Glotz to approve the Veteran's Trust Fund Agreement in the amount of \$10,000.00. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin stated that she has given her update on broadband earlier in the meeting.

Jane Dunshie again thanked the commissioners for adopting the Sunshine proclamation and again invited everyone to LWV Sunshine Week event.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Commissioner Daniel Glotz, seconded by Commissioner Tricia D. Durbin to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela J. Matve

Pamela J. Matve
Chief Clerk



Approved:

Daniel Glotz

Daniel Glotz
Warren County Commissioner