

APRIL 14, 2015 MINUTES
Formally approved April 28, 2015 meeting

FULL BOARD PRESENT; Also present: Jesse Kline, Treasurer; Walt Peters, 911/EMA Director; Marlene Gunther, Mahoning Township Tax Collector; Fred Gaffney, ColumbiaMontour Chamber of Commerce; Bob Garrett, Dave Herbert, Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce; Oren Helbok, The Exchange; Dan Knorr, Danville Borough Administrator of Governmental Affairs; Dan Hartman, Public; Janelle Pratt, Victim Witness Coordinator; Kelsey McAllister, Victim Witness Office Intern; Karen Blackledge, The Danville News.

Mr. Finn asked those so inclined to rise for a prayer led by Solicitor Robert L. Marks. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison. The meeting was then opened.

Mr. Gerst moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Ward moved to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Mr. Gerst seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

General Account Disbursements	\$337,166.83
General Account Receipts	\$731,703.01
General Account Checking .15%	\$1,331,691.80
Capital Reserve Fund .10%	\$29,617.75
Operating Reserve .10%	\$77,809.08
General MMA	\$0.00
Total Checking, MMAs	\$1,439,118.63
Act 13 Highway-Bridge .10%	\$87,340.88
Act 44 .12%	\$10,670.20
Act 78 Checking .15%	\$8,696.63
Children and Youth Checking .15%	\$363,903.60
Flood Mitigation .15%	\$1,839.22
Hazardous Material Account Checking .15%	\$18,527.60
Human & Community Services Checking .15%	\$59,504.28
Improvement Fund Checking .15%	\$9,920.70
Liquid Fuels Checking .15%	\$266,522.70
Medical Assistance Transportation .15%	\$39,422.66
Offender Supervision Account Checking .15%	\$53,422.76
Storm Water Ordinance Escrow	\$31,298.55
Transit Fund Account Checking .15%	\$64,634.94
Wireless 911 .15%	\$158,607.28

Mr. Finn called for public comment. Mr. Knorr updated the Board on the sewer

construction project, noting the first phase will start in May on Spring Street. Commissioner Finn expressed disappointment over the Borough's response to the County's concerns over ornamental trees in front of the Courthouse that are pushing up decorative bricks and creating a potential trip hazard. Mr. Knorr said he would take Commissioners' concerns to the Street Department.

Mr. Garrett reported the Chamber met with UGI on the gas line/power plant projects and noted that Mr. Herbert and Mr. Gaffney both testified about the projects before the Federal Regulatory Commission.

Mr. Gaffney told the Board the Chamber drafted a letter to legislators that a comprehensive update is needed for 911 funding. Mr. Gerst said from his perspective, the issue appears to be an urban/rural problem, stating a legislator from Delaware County is holding up funding changes in committee. Legislation would raise mobile device fees from \$1.00 to \$1.65, but to properly fund 911 services the fee needs to be raised to \$2.00, he said.

Mr. Finn said even with consolidation of 911 services – such as current efforts between Montour and Columbia Counties – the situation of inadequate funding will only worsen. He suggested the Legislature treat counties like a utility in this matter, noting phone companies can't survive on rates from the 1990s, but counties are expected to do just that. Counties want neither to reduce 911 services nor raise taxes.

Mr. Ward said people don't realize how important 911 services are until they need them. He pointed out that everyone has a phone but not everyone owns property, so an adequate fee on devices is a fair way to fund 911 services. Mr. Finn said counties are at a crisis point and encouraged the public to contact their legislators.

Mr. Peters said there may be funding available for 911 regionalization costs. Current estimates set Columbia County's share of regionalizing at \$762,000.00 with Montour's at \$182,000.00. By contrast, should Montour stay on its own, immediate upgrades would cost \$800,000.00, and that does not include radio systems.

Mr. Helbok reported on the success of the recent Destination Blues festival, noting expanded venues this year, including a Gospel Blues performance at a church. Going forward, organizers are looking to apply for a National Endowment for the Arts grant to bring musicians into schools to conduct workshops. Mr. Helbok said individual events throughout the year may be planned to tie into the annual festival, which organizers would like to be more of a community event.

Under old business, as advertised, this was the time and place to open bids for the Courthouse parking lot project. Mrs. Brandon reported bids received as follows: Don E. Bower Inc., \$62,253.00; Eastern Industries, \$59,150.00; Glenn O. Hawbaker, \$92,475.00; Mid-State Paving, \$51,970.00; Robert C. Young, \$57,390.00. Mr. Ward moved to award the contract to the low bidder, Mid-State Paving, pending review of the bid by the solicitor and engineer. Mr. Gerst seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mrs. Brandon reported bids were received as follows on two vehicles: 1985 Dodge Truck – Matthew Derr, \$275.00 and Frank Grindstaff, \$200.00; 2008 Ford Escape – Gary

Luzier, \$550.00 and Pete Rickert, \$350.00. Mr. Gerst moved to approve the high bid of \$275.00 for the Dodge Truck and \$550.00 for the Escape. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Under new business, Mr. Gerst moved to advertise the County's intent to adopt an ordinance to establish and join DRIVE, an economic development council of government, which will serve the greater Columbia and Montour Counties region. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor. Mr. Finn said, admittedly, the initiative's goals of attracting and retaining new business that would provide family sustaining jobs are lofty.

With Geisinger as the County's major employer, the County's eggs are all in one basket, he said, and although the County is fortunate to have Metso Minerals, PPL, Merck and US Gypsum, those businesses have downsized over the last several years. The two Boards of Commissioners have worked hand in hand with the Columbia Alliance for Economic Growth, the Greater Danville Area Industrial Development Corporation, and both counties' Industrial Development Authorities, Mr. Finn said. Montour will commit annual funding of \$50,000.00 for five years through its Tourism Funds. An additional \$20,000.00 in annual financial support will come from the IDC and Columbia Alliance over that same time period.

Mr. Ward admitted he was initially hesitant to support the initiative, but after attending a meeting of organizers, said he was very impressed with the leadership. Mr. Gerst said he feels the group will achieve success.

Mr. Finn addressed an issue with Postal Service mail delivery that resulted in a number of tax notices not being received by residents. The County contacted Rep. Lou Barletta's office, but to date there has been no resolution to the situation. In the interest of fairness, Commissioners considered adopting a resolution to extend the discount tax period through the end of May in the affected areas of Danville Borough, Mahoning and Valley townships. After consulting the solicitor, it was determined the County did have legal authority to do so, but the other taxing bodies involved would have to agree to the extension. Tax collectors expressed concern over the complexities the extension would present, including the loss of tax dollars to the taxing authorities, he said. Mahoning Township was in agreement to extend the discount period, but Danville Borough was not. Because the action would require unanimous agreement of all taxing bodies, the County could not pass the resolution. Mr. Finn did urge County residents to be sure they have their tax bills and to contact their tax collectors if they don't. A list of tax collectors and their phone numbers can be found on the County's website, www.montourco.org

Mrs. Gunther thanked the Board for looking into the situation and wanting to do the right thing by taxpayers.

Mr. Ward moved to approve a letter of support for Danville's Borough's grant application to the Department of Community and Economic Development for its Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program. The grant would be used to develop a master site plan for a downtown park adjacent to the municipal building. Mr. Gerst seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Ward moved to accept a proposal of \$155.00 per hour from Don E. Bower Inc. for a street sweeper rental to be used on County bridges. Mr. Gerst seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Gerst moved to affirm the promotion of William McKenna as a full-time Deputy Sheriff effective April 4 at a rate of \$13.20 per hour. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Gerst moved to promote Butch Foust to full-time Correctional Officer effective April 18, at an hourly rate of \$12.33. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Ward moved to approve a proclamation designating April 12 to 18 as Week of the Young Child in Montour County. Mr. Gerst seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Gerst moved to approve application of a Victim of Juvenile Offenders grant by the Office of Victim Witness for the period of July 1, 2015 through December 31, 2016. The grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency would provide \$7,746.00 to fund the office. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Gerst said he wanted to address a newspaper article concerning the Columbia County Republican Party's public support of Commissioner Rich Ridgway and a political newcomer, but not incumbent Commissioner Chairman Chris Young. Mr. Gerst said Mr. Young does an excellent job for Columbia County and the people who live there, and that the GOP leadership needs to take personal ills out of what they do.

Mr. Gerst moved to pay the following bills: General Account, \$230,414.66; Children & Youth, \$26,568.17; Transit, \$16,070.04; Liquid Fuels, \$46,419.74; Act 78, \$9,374.27; Human and Community Service, \$2,051.98. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Holly A. Brandon, Chief Clerk