

OCTOBER 13, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Formally approved at October 27, 2020 meeting

FULL BOARD PRESENT; Also present: Norma Bird, Treasurer; Kristin McLaughlin, SEDA-COG; Susan Kauwell, Prothonotary; Sandra Johnston, Ronald Johnston, Jim Holdren, Darlene Holdren, Beth Burleigh, Geraldine Gibbons, Tom Benfer, Michael Benfer, Larry Bieber, Andrea Lamay, Lloyd Bunch, Public; Julie LaBella, Talen Energy; David D’Onofrio, Montour Solar One; Geri Gibbons, Press Enterprise; Rick Dandes, The Daily Item.

Mr. Holdren 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. Hartman moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Mr. Finn seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Finn moved to accept the Treasurer’s report as presented. Mr. Hartman seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

General Account Disbursements	\$638,107.09
General Account Receipts	\$157,810.94
General Account Checking .60%	\$1,411,471.77
Capital Reserve Fund .29%	\$9,884.57
Operating Reserve .29%	\$188,386.97
Total Checking	\$1,609,703.41
Act 13 Highway-Bridge .28%	\$223,458.24
Act 44 .33%	\$106,120.48
Act 89 .29%	\$135,390.56
Children and Youth Checking .32%	\$262,046.34
Facilities Fund .10%	\$673,993.39
Flood Mitigation .33%	\$2,813.55
Hazardous Material Account Checking .33%	\$13,149.37
Human & Community Services Checking .33%	\$100,337.29
Improvement Fund Checking .33%	\$15,311.72
Liquid Fuels Checking .33%	\$193,809.50
Offender Supervision Account Checking .33%	\$54,832.21
Storm Water Ordinance Escrow	\$35,836.05
Uniform 911 Surcharge .33%	\$785,342.16

Mr. Holdren asked for public comment, asking those who wanted to speak on solar

Mr. Holdren recessed the meeting to convene the 2020 CDBG Final Public Hearing then turned over proceedings to Ms. McLaughlin, who said \$318,889.00 - \$219,378.00 for Montour and \$99,511.00 for Danville Borough – has been allocated. The County has selected projects as follows: Danville Area Community Center bridge entrance reconstruction, \$90,000.00; Jane E. DeLong Memorial Hall electrical modernization, \$89,078.00; administration, \$40,300.00. Danville Borough funds will use \$82,411.00 of its funding for a fire truck for the Danville Fire Department and \$17,100.00 for

administration. There being no public comment, the hearing was adjourned and the meeting reconvened.

Under old business, Mr. Hartman announced the Bridge 15 reconstruction project in Anthony Township is complete with a ribbon-cutting scheduled for later this date.

Under new business, Mr. Holdren moved to approve a CARES Act block grant allocation to reimburse eligible costs of \$31,359.94 to Montour County. Mr. Finn seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Holdren moved to approve a CARES Act block grant allocation of \$2,007.00 to Montour County for administrative expenses. Mr. Hartman seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Hartman moved to approve a CARES Act Block Grant Nonprofit award of \$15,000.00 to the Montour-DeLong Community Fair. Mr. Finn seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Holdren moved to approve Resolution R-10-13-20 to submit the 2020 CDBG Block Grant application and associated documents as follows: Resolution R-10-15-20 appointing Holly Brandon as Section 504 compliance officer and establishing a grievance procedure; Resolution R-10-14-20 Plan Readoption Resolution; Resolution R-10-16-20 authorizing SEDA-COG to act as the County's agent; reauthorizing a complaint procedure, financial management plan, procurement policy and Section 504 grievance procedure. Mr. Hartman seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Finn moved to approve a Professional and Administrative Services Agreement with SEDA-COG to administer a \$446,827.00 grant award on behalf of Derry Township under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to acquire and demolish several flood-prone properties. Mr. Hartman seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Holdren moved to approve a Professional and Technical Services Agreement with SEDA-COG for Phase IV of the Housing Rehabilitation Program at a cost of \$30,000.00 for administration and technical management and a per-unit cost for other services. Mr. Finn seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Finn moved to approve a technical services agreement with Zito Business for telephone services at a monthly cost of \$909.00 for services and one-time cost of \$1,060.00 for equipment. Mr. Hartman seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Hartman moved to approve purchase of service agreements on behalf of Children & Youth Services as follows: Montour County Juvenile Probation, Michelle Getkin and Adelphoi Village. Mr. Finn seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Finn moved to improve intermittent Family Medical Leave Act leave for Todd Leffler, Prison Lieutenant, from November 17 through January 13. Mr. Hartman seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Holdren then opened the meeting for public comment concerning solar farming. Mr. Holdren said the County is in the preliminary stage of the process and has contracted an attorney with expertise in this area to help develop an ordinance update which will include safeguards such as setbacks, landscaping, chemical usage and restoration of land. The process will be slow and methodical. The County is responsible for zoning in

Anthony, Liberty, Mayberry townships and Washingtonville Borough. All other municipalities have their own zoning, such as the Northern Montour COG.

Sandy Johnston said she lives across from fields where solar panels may go and expressed concern that farmland would be lost. She also said people are already working the fields and may be trying to “go in the back door.”

Mr. Finn said hopefully no one would do anything at this point against the County zoning ordinance. However, owners do have a right to work their own land.

Julie LaBella, who identified herself as a representative from Talen available to answer questions, said crews were surveying land and testing the grounds, which she described as normal surveying work.

David D’Onofrio presented himself at the meeting as a representative of Montour Solar One.

Jim Holdren said he lives 65 feet away from property that may be developed by Talen and is concerned about potential well contamination and declining property values. He noted he sees how Talen currently takes care of its property with only two to three workers spraying Roundup. Mr. Holdren said he trusts Commissioners will do the right thing for citizens.

Chairman Holdren said a provision for well testing could be part of the ordinance update. Mr. Holdren asked the County to consider “chipping in” on well tests.

Beth Burleigh brought up the point of actual benefit to the County and community from solar farms. She said potentially developers could partner with the community on lower electric rates but hasn’t seen anything positive yet.

She also expressed worry over impact to the Amish community. Their livelihood depends on agriculture and if there is no land for future generations to purchase and expand operations, they would move away. She said she is concerned that food production would go down and impact the agricultural community. Ms. Burleigh also objected to the term solar farms. In her eyes, she considers them industrial parks.

She questioned the effects solar panels could have on plants, reptiles and animals and if herpetologists and the Fish and Game Commission will be consulted. She also expressed worry that Talen might not honor its agreement with MARC to maintain the Montour Preserve.

Mr. Finn said the Board is willing to sit down with Amish community leaders to talk about their concerns. As for Talen, Mr. Finn assured those assembled that based on past experience with the company, Commissioners will not allow Talen “to do to our community now what they did then.”

Darlene Holdren said she was worried about health issues related to what chemicals will be in the panels.

On a question from Mr. Finn, Mr. D’Onofrio said it hasn’t been decided what company will be used for purchase of the panels, but the information will be shared once those details are fleshed out. He gave an assurance that they will be “tier one, the highest quality.”

Andrea Lamay blamed Gov. Wolf’s push for the Regional Greenhouse Initiative and asked Commissioners if they were getting pressure from the Governor on solar farms. She said everyone wants economic development and financial security, but residents

want to enjoy the peace they have, stating “This place is more than just land to us.” She also called for a referendum.

Mr. Finn said if the group is considering a referendum, they would be best served by hiring an attorney to make sure it is done correctly. As for any perceived pressure from the Governor’s Office, he made it clear that the Board does not “submit to pressure from above. We’re here to do work for everybody.”

Michael Benfer suggested the County supersede other townships with their own zoning/planning. The Board explained the County cannot supersede another jurisdiction but will attempt to coordinate efforts.

With no further comment, Mr. Hartman moved to pay the following bills: General Account, \$194,855.35; Children & Youth, \$32,540.47; Liquid Fuels, \$86.32; Human and Community Service, \$1,021.75; Facilities, \$480,599.07; Uniform 911, \$0; Other Funds, \$847,435.79; CARES Block Grant, \$48,366.94. Mr. Finn seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Holly A. Brandon, Chief Clerk