

MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

The reorganizational meeting of the Local Government Commission was called to order by Senator Joseph B. Scarnati, III, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, at 8:45 a.m. in Room 302 Irvis Office Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with the following individuals present:

Senator Joseph B. Scarnati, III, Presiding Officer

MEMBERS

Senator John H. Eichelberger, Jr., Chair

Senator Thomas J. McGarrigle

Senator Scott E. Hutchinson

Senator Judith L. Schwank

Representative Kate Harper

Representative Warren Kampf

Representative Robert Freeman

Representative Mary Jo Daley

STAFF

Philip H. Klotz, Executive Director

David A. Greene, Assistant Director-Legal Counsel

Wanda L. Snader, Associate Legal Counsel

Danette H. Magee, Research Associate

Karen S. Bear, Secretary

GUESTS

Shelly Brown, Senator Scarnati's Office

Justin Leventry, Senator Hutchinson's Office

William Casey, Senator Schwank's Office

Rob Gaertner, House Local Government Committee (R)

John Fulton, House Local Government Committee (D)

Sean Sanderson, Department of Community and Economic Development

Renee Reynolds, State Tax Equalization Board

Lisa Schaefer, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

Joshua Eisner, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

Amy Sturges, Pennsylvania Municipal League

Karey Molnar, Pennsylvania Municipal League

Ed Troxell, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs

Ron Grutza, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs

Holly Fishel, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

The President Pro Tempore of the Senate opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of the Commission. Representative Harper nominated Senator Eichelberger for Chair, and Representative Freeman seconded the nomination. Senator Scarnati moved that nominations for the position of Chair be closed. This motion carried and Senator Eichelberger was elected Chair of the Commission by a unanimous vote. Senator Scarnati then opened the floor for

nominations for the position of First Vice-Chair of the Commission. Senator Eichelberger nominated Representative Harper for the position of First Vice-Chair, and Representative Kampf seconded the nomination. Senator Scarnati moved that nominations for the position of First Vice-Chair be closed. This motion carried and Representative Harper was elected unanimously as First Vice-Chair of the Local Government Commission. Senator Scarnati then moved that nominations for the position of Second Vice-Chair be opened. Senator Eichelberger nominated Senator Blake for the position of Second Vice-Chair, and Representative Kampf seconded the nomination. Senator Scarnati moved that nominations for the position of Second Vice-Chair be closed. This motion carried and Senator Blake was elected Second Vice-Chair by a unanimous vote.

At this point in the meeting, Senator Eichelberger assumed the chair and the business meeting of the Local Government Commission convened at 8:50 a.m.

As the first order of business, the Members discussed the minutes of the March 22, 2017, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator McGarrigle and a second by Representative Harper. The financial report for the month of March 2017 was presented, and a detailed explanation was given by the Executive Director. The financial report was unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Harper and a second by Representative Kampf. Representative Harper queried as to how long the Commission could feasibly operate if no appropriation was granted to the Commission in the 2017-2018 fiscal year budget. The Director responded that by his calculations the Commission would be able to conduct business until March 2018 if no appropriation was received.

At this point in the meeting, Chairman Eichelberger welcomed new Commission Member Senator Judith L. Schwank. Senator Schwank, who was a former Berks County Commissioner, replaces Commission Member Senator John N. Wozniak who retired at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 legislative session.

The Commission's initial proposed 2017-2018 legislative package was presented to the Members for their review. Ten Commission-sponsored bills were signed into law by the Governor in the 2015-2016 legislative session. Three of the remaining bills were again presented to the Members for possible reintroduction. A short discussion among the Members occurred after each bill was briefly explained by the Executive Director. It was unanimously decided by the Members that those three bills would be reintroduced into both the Senate and House chambers. A brief description of each of the bills is as follows:

- a. Would amend 53 Pa.C.S. to provide for military leave and residency qualifications for municipal office.**
- b. Would amend Act 78 of 1979 to provide for award of a contract for services when no bids are received.**
- c. Would amend the Sewage Facilities Act to provide for adjustment of the permit-exempt on-lot septic system siting inspection fee cap.**

Four new proposed bills were also presented to the Members for consideration as part of the Commission's 2017-2018 legislative package. Three of the bills are a result of the Commission's ongoing Assessment Reform Task Force, and one bill is the product of an inquiry from the Department of Community and Economic Development. Discussions among the Members ensued

after each bill was explained by Commission Research Associate Danette Magee and Commission Associate Legal Counsel Wanda Snader. A brief description and status of each of the suggested bills is as follows:

- a. Would amend the Real Estate Appraisers Certification Act to add two Certified Pennsylvania Evaluators to the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers. The Members unanimously agreed to introduce this bill into both the Senate and House chambers.
- b. Would amend the Assessors Certification Act to provide for a basic course of study, certification and continuing education of revaluation company personnel. Commission staff was instructed to consult the various stakeholders for feedback and present the proposed amendment to the Members at the next business meeting.
- c. Would amend the Community and Economic Development Enhancement Act, Chapter 15 (State Tax Equalization Board), to provide for determination of the common level ratio based on up to three years of sales data. Commission staff was instructed to change the effective date, vet the bill with the various stakeholders and present the proposed amendment to the Members at the next business meeting.
- d. Would amend 53 Pa.C.S. to provide for initial apportionment of home rule or optional plan municipality, without a mayor, dividing into wards. Commission staff was instructed to draft the legislation for introduction into both the Senate and House chambers.

The Director reminded the Members that the Commission will utilize its new private cosponsorship memoranda program to circulate Commission-sponsored legislation this session. The program is consistent with the systems used by the Senate and House chambers for the introduction of bills.

Since several Commission Members needed to attend additionally scheduled Senate and House committee meetings, the Chairman announced that the remaining two items on the agenda would be addressed at the Commission’s Wednesday, May 10, 2017, business meeting in Room 14 East Wing-Main Capitol Building.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____
April 27, 2017