

MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

The meeting of the Local Government Commission was called to order by Senator John Eichelberger, Jr., at 8:50 a.m. in 14 East Wing–Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with the following individuals present:

MEMBERS

Senator John H. Eichelberger, Jr., Chairman
Senator Thomas J. McGarrigle
Senator Scott E. Hutchinson
Senator John N. Wozniak
Senator John P. Blake
Representative Chris Ross
Representative Mauree Gingrich
Representative Kate Harper
Representative Mary Jo Daley

STAFF

Philip H. Klotz, Executive Director
David A. Greene, Assistant Director-Legal Counsel
Danette H. Magee, Research Associate
Kris Gazsi, Associate Legal Counsel
Karen S. Bear, Secretary

GUESTS

Lee Derr, Senator Eichelberger's Office
Justin Leventry, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Nathan Akers, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Jonathan Hendrickson, Senator Teplitz's Office
Rob Gaertner, House Local Government Committee (R)
Ashley Sheaffer, House Local Government Committee (R)
John Fulton, House Local Government Committee (D)
Amy Sturges, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Karey Molnar, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Joshua Eisner, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Ed Troxell, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Joe Regan, Fraternal Order of Police

As the first order of business, the Members discussed the minutes of the April 13, 2016, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Ross and a second by Senator Hutchinson. The financial report for the month of April 2016 was presented, and a detailed explanation was given by the Executive Director. The financial report was unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Ross and a second by Representative Gingrich.

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At last month's business meeting, Senator Teplitz requested that the Commission introduce amendatory language that would clarify residency requirements for active military service members. Current language fails to address the disruption of residency due to active military service. Senator Teplitz sought legislation that would provide for active military personnel to have what is deemed to be sustained residence during deployment or active duty for the purpose of satisfying preconditions for election or appointment to fill a vacancy in a local elected office. Proposed language was provided to the Commission Members for each of the municipal codes as well as suggested language for Title 53. The Executive Director had requested that the pertinent stakeholders, municipal associations, and Commission Members review the preliminary language and forward any comments to Commission staff prior to the May business meeting. At today's meeting, the Members reviewed the proposed language that would amend Title 53 (Municipalities Generally), Chapter 11, Subchapter D of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes as Kris Gazsi, Associate Legal Counsel, reported that the amendatory language was supported by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, the Pennsylvania Municipal League, the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and the majority and minority Executive Directors of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committees. After a lengthy discussion, the Members unanimously decided on a motion by Representative Harper and a second by Representative Ross to introduce the language into the Senate of Pennsylvania and the House of Representatives.

The Members were provided copies of an outline that revealed a new proposed legislative strategy procedure for all Commission sponsored legislation. Included in the strategy is an eight item check list to be completed on every Commission legislative proposal prior to the Commission's introduction of the bill. Once a bill has been introduced, there are eight strategies that may be utilized for fostering a Commission bill through the legislative process. Commission Members reinforced the need for increased diligence and advocacy for Commission legislation not only by Commission Members, but also by proponents of the legislation. The Executive Director commented that in prior sessions the Commission has had an admirable rate of success in getting legislation passed, and he would strive to maintain its rate of achievement. The Members reviewed the suggestions and concurred unanimously to utilize the new methodology for all Commission sponsored legislation.

The Director announced that Commission Research Associate Danette Magee was bestowed a Special Appreciation Award by the Assessors' Association of Pennsylvania (AAP) at the AAP conference held in Harrisburg earlier this month. Ms. Magee was recognized for her invaluable knowledge, active participation and devotion to the local, county and statewide assessment profession. The Members congratulated Ms. Magee on receiving the award.

As the last order of business, the Director reminded the Members that the June monthly business meeting will be Wednesday, June 15, 2016, at 8:45 a.m. in Room 14 East Wing-Main Capitol Building.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____

May 23, 2016