

MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 8, 2014

The meeting of the Local Government Commission was called to order by Senator John Eichelberger, Jr., at 11:30 a.m. in Room 14 East Wing-Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with the following individuals present:

MEMBERS

**Senator John H. Eichelberger, Jr., Chairman
Senator Robert D. Robbins
Senator Edwin B. Erickson
Senator John N. Wozniak
Senator John P. Blake
Representative Chris Ross
Representative Mauree Gingrich
Representative Robert L. Freeman
Representative Mary Jo Daley (via telephone)**

STAFF

**Michael P. Gasbarre, Executive Director
Philip H. Klotz, Assistant Director
David A. Greene, Legal Counsel
Kristopher Gazsi, Associate Legal Counsel
Karen S. Bear, Secretary**

GUESTS

**Lee Derr, Senator Eichelberger's Office
Chris Yniquez, Senator Robbins' Office
Kyle Mullins, Senator Blake's Office
Larry West, Senator Blake's Office
Katie Yost, Intern in Representative Gingrich's Office
Lisa Schaeffer, County Commissioners Association of PA**

As the first order of business, the Members discussed the minutes of the June 11, 2014, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Erickson and a second by Representative Ross. The Executive Director stated that he recently received a packet of information from the Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension in response to the March 19, 2014, request from Representative Mark Mustio who seeks an amendment to the Borough Code as it relates to the decisions by borough councils and shade tree commissions. The information was forwarded to the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs for its input. Work on Representative Mustio's request will be done during the summer with the anticipated introduction of legislation in the 2015-2016 legislative session.

The Director also reported that he has yet to receive any cost information from the Department of General Services (DGS) regarding the warehouse lease contract for fiscal year 2014-15. At last month's meeting, the Executive Director stated that he had received a signed contract by DGS with the request that it be signed and returned. The contract for the storage of municipal code books was absent the cost amount. When contacted regarding the missing information, DGS affirmed that the contract is boilerplate and that it requires all State Agencies to sign the contract prior to the cost determination. The Members had unanimously agreed to disallow the signing of the contract until a specific amount is presented. The Members reiterated their policy regarding the DGS contract at today's meeting.

The financial report for the month of June 2014 was presented, and a detailed explanation was given by the Executive Director. It was noted that the Commission had to expend monies for payroll from its nonlapsing 2013-2014 Fiscal Year appropriation since the 2014-2015 Commonwealth budget has yet to be signed into law. The fiscal year began on July 1, 2014. The financial report was unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Ross and a second by Senator Erickson.

The Members were given an update by Assistant Director Philip Klotz regarding the ongoing County Code recodification. A working group consisting of representatives from the

various county row offices, the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Local Government Commission have been meeting regularly to update and modernize the County Code. It is projected that the recodification will take four to five years to thoroughly examine and revise the 30 articles contained in the Code. Upon completion, the County Code will govern counties 2A through 8th class of counties. Currently, the County Code applies only to the 3rd through 8th class of counties.

The Executive Director announced that the Commission’s significantly utilized *Legislator’s Municipal Deskbook* has been removed from its website. Some of the articles were outdated and needed to be modernized. The *Deskbook* should be completed and returned to the website by the end of summer.

Commission staff will also be working on the Commission’s 5-year report during the summer. At Representative Ross’ behest in 2004, the Commission has been releasing 5-year reports to all Members of the General Assembly. The report contains all of the Commission’s activities and all prospective projects. The General Assembly will receive the Commission’s 2014 draft report in the fall.

The Director announced that the Commission’s next monthly business is scheduled for Wednesday, September 24, 2014. The meeting will be held in 14 East Wing-Main Capitol Building and commence at 8:45 a.m. Commission Members’ Capitol and district offices will be notified accordingly.

As the last order of business, the Director reported that House Bill 1773, Printer’s Number 3802, passed the House of Representatives (156-42) and was marked to be moved to third consideration in the Senate. House Bill 1773 comprehensively amends the Municipalities Financial Recovery Act (Act 47 of 1987), which provides procedures and options to assist financially distressed municipalities and to help them return to fiscal stability. Representative Ross noted his displeasure with the recent article published in the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors’ (PSATS) July 2014 issue of *Township News*. The Commission Members agreed the article entitled *Helping Distressed Municipalities Proposed Changes to Act 47 Fail to Address Causes of Financial Distress* contained inaccuracies and erroneous information regarding House Bill 1773. Representative Ross, along with all Commission Members, requested Commission staff to promptly prepare letters to the members of PSATS’ Executive Board and Executive Committee clarifying and correcting the misinterpretations expressed in the article. The letters will be forwarded to all Commission Members for their review and signature.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____
July 9, 2014