

LIVESTREAM BUSINESS MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

The livestream meeting of the Local Government Commission (Commission) was called to order by Senator Scott E. Hutchinson at 9:05 a.m. with the following Commission Members, staff and guests participating remotely:

MEMBERS

Senator Scott E. Hutchinson, Chair
Senator Judy Ward
Senator Cris Dush
Representative R. Lee James
Representative Dan Moul
Representative Jerry Knowles
Representative Christina D. Sappey

STAFF

David A. Greene, Executive Director
Kristopher J. Gazsi, Assistant Director
Danette H. Magee, Senior Research Analyst
Julia E. Frey, Research Analyst
Karen S. Bear, Executive Assistant
Sonya I. Ebersole, Fiscal Administrator

GUESTS

Justin Leventry, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Matt Maniskas, Senator Schwank's Office
Sam Arnold, Senator Kearney's Office
Bre Medevich, Representative Freeman's Office
Shamyra Watkins, Senator Hughes' Office
Mary Yoder, Senate Local Government Committee (R)
Rob Gaertner, House Local Government Committee (R)
Kyle Schaeffer, House Local Government Committee (R)
Jon Castelli, House Local Government Committee (D)
Tim Scott, House Urban Affairs Committee (D)
Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Jonathan Johnson, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Andrew Sheaf, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
Melissa Gates, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Ashley White, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Amy Sturges, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Kaitlin Errickson, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Ed Troxell, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Eric Feder, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
Joe Gerdes, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
Beth Brelje, Epoch Times

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The recorded livestream meeting was conducted with both Member and Commission staff participation. On Wednesday, July 7, 2021, notice of the meeting was posted on the committee meeting pages of the Senate of Pennsylvania and the House of Representatives through the Legislative Data Processing Center. The meeting information was posted on the Commission's website, www.lgc.state.pa.us, on Wednesday, July 14, 2021, prior to the meeting. Any questions on agenda items for consideration by the Commission were addressed during the meeting. After adjournment, the recording of the meeting will be posted on the Commission's website at www.lgc.state.pa.us.

The Members discussed the minutes of the June 16, 2021, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Sappey and a second by Representative Knowles. The financial reports for the month of June 2021 were presented, and an explanation was given by the Executive Director. The Executive Director also reported that the Commission was flat funded for the fiscal year 2021-2022, and he anticipates that the amount appropriated will be sufficient for the Commission's annual operation. The financial reports were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Ward and a second by Representative James.

The Executive Director welcomed to the meeting Kyle Kopko and Jonathan Johnson, Executive Director and Senior Policy Analyst, respectively, of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania (Center). The Commission and the Center propose to conduct a short demographic survey of elected municipal officials to gather information that will help the Commission and the Center better understand the individuals who serve as elected municipal officials and why they choose to serve their communities. The proposed questionnaire and draft letters to the municipal associations and elected officials were provided to the Members for their review. The letters and the survey will be disseminated via electronic mail to all elected municipal officials from the membership lists from the Pennsylvania Municipal League, the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors. The 29-question survey is slated to be sent to municipal officials July 16 with responses due by July 31. The Executive Director emphasized that the responses would be kept strictly confidential. In the past, the Center conducted similar surveys of local government officials in rural municipalities with populations below 2,500. This year the Center and the Commission partnered to expand the survey to include municipal officials from all municipal corporation classifications. After a brief discussion, the Members unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Dush and a second by Representative Sappey to approve the draft letters and survey for distribution to all elected municipal officials. The results will be revealed at the Commission's Symposium to be conducted on Thursday, October 21, 2021. Representative Knowles, Chairman of the House Local Government Committee, announced that he and Senator Dush, Chairman of the Senate Local Government Committee, plan to conduct a joint hearing to gather feedback from local governments as to possible lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and to determine best practices. Representative Knowles and Senator Dush both stated that they are eager to review the results from the survey.

Mr. Johnson excitedly announced that the federal Office of Management and Budget has backed away from a plan to change the way it defines metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties. The proposal would have raised the minimum core-city size for a metropolitan statistical area from 50,000 to 100,000 residents. The change would have reclassified 251 currently metropolitan counties as nonmetropolitan, based on current population figures. The affected counties contain a

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combined population of about 18 million. The change would have raised the nation's nonmetropolitan population from about 46 million to 64 million.

The Executive Director announced that Assistant Director Kris Gazsi will be speaking at the Commission's inaugural Legislative Lunch and Learn Series on August 25, 2021. Mr. Gazsi's presentation is entitled, *Basics of Municipal Financial Recovery: The Structure of Act 47*. The forum is for legislative attorneys, legislators, and staff to learn about and collaborate on issues related to municipal law. Lunch and Learn seminars are free to attend and are approved for 1 hour of continuing legal education (CLE) credit.

Commission Research Analyst Julia Frey has received 16 proposals to be presented at the Commission's Symposium slated for Thursday, October 21, 2021. It is anticipated that there will be at least three roundtable discussions that preliminarily include topics relating to finance, technology, and intergovernmental cooperation. The Executive Director will keep the Members updated as the planning for the seminar progresses.

The Commission has received 11 resumes for the associate legal counsel position vacancy created by the retirement of Commission Senior Legal Counsel Wanda Dehan in November 2020. The Executive Director stated that legislative or municipal government experience is preferred for the entry level position. Interviews will be conducted in mid-August with the resumes of the final three candidates presented to the Members at the September 29 business meeting.

As the last order of business, the Executive Director announced that the next Commission business meeting will be conducted on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. Consistent with past practice, the members unanimously agreed to forego an August business meeting.

Prior to adjournment, Representative Moul inquired as to whether there is a statewide organization that helps small municipalities with employee background checks. After a brief conversation among the meeting participants, the Executive Director stated that he and Mr. Gazsi would do some research on the matter and schedule a meeting with Representative Moul to further discuss the issue.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____
August 25, 2021