

MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

The meeting of the Local Government Commission was called to order by Senator John Eichelberger, Jr., at 8:45 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 P. Blake
Representative Chris Ross
Representative Kate Harper
Representative Robert L. Freeman
Representative Mary Jo Daley

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
Luc Miron, Senator Blake's Office
Kyle Mullins, Senator Blake's Office
Rob Gaertner, House Republican Research Office
Jim Martin, PA District Attorneys Association
Greg Rowe, PA District Attorneys Association
Catharine Thurston, PA District Attorneys Association

As the first order of business, the Members discussed the minutes of the October 16, 2013, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Erickson and a second by Representative Ross. The financial report for the month of October 2013 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 Senator Erickson.

At the Commission's September 25, 2013, business meeting, a letter from the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association (PDAA) seeking legislation that would reform current law regarding district attorney succession was reviewed by the Members. Current law lacks uniformity as to how district attorney vacancies are filled in the different classes of counties. In counties of the fourth through eighth class, the first assistant ascends to the position of district attorney upon the district attorney's resignation, whereas in counties of the first through third class, the district attorney's replacement is chosen by the county board of judges. The Members requested that Commission staff revisit the legislation's applicability to home rule counties and in consultation with the Legislative Reference Bureau draft appropriate language and present it to the Members for review at a future business meeting.

The Members, at today's business meeting, were presented with draft legislation standardizing succession for district attorneys statewide and written commentary by David Greene, Commission Legal Counsel, outlining the considerations involved in the proposal, especially with home rule counties. After detailed explanations by Mr. Gasbarre and Mr. Greene, the Members unanimously agreed on a motion by Representative Ross and a second by Senator Erickson to introduce legislation into both the Senate of Pennsylvania and the House of Representatives that would standardize the succession of district attorneys in the first through third class of counties in a manner similar to that of

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counties of the fourth through eighth class. Commission staff was also directed to provide extensive commentary to the Members facilitating responses to issues involving the legislation.

Local Government Commission meeting dates for 2014 were presented to the Members for their approval. After briefly reviewing the dates, the Members voted unanimously to meet on the following dates: January 29, 2014, monthly business meeting; February 12, 2014, monthly business meeting; March 12, 2014, monthly business meeting; March 13, 2014, meeting with local government associations; April 9, 2014, monthly business meeting; May 14, 2014, monthly business meeting; June 11, 2014, monthly business meeting; June 12, 2014, meeting with local government associations; July 9, 2014, monthly business meeting; September 24, 2014, monthly business meeting; September 25, 2014, meeting with local government associations; October 8, 2014, monthly business meeting; November 12, 2014, monthly business meeting; December 10, 2014, monthly business meeting; and December 11, 2014, meeting with local government associations. Separately, office closing dates for 2014 were presented to the Members and unanimously approved.

The Commission's lease agreement at Forum Place building expires on June 30, 2014. It has been the desire of the Commission to relocate into a State office building, thereby freeing the Commission from monthly lease payments. Unfortunately, the Commission's past requests for available office space in State office buildings has not come to fruition. The Members were provided with copies of the Commission's current lease agreement, which became effective May 12, 2004. The Members authorized the Director to begin negotiations with the leasing entity for potential renewal of the lease agreement. Commission Members offered to aid the Executive Director in any scheduled discussions. Meanwhile, the Members recommended seeking proposals for other office space. The Director will keep everyone apprised of any developments.

As the last order of business, the Members were reminded of the Commission's upcoming December meeting dates: Wednesday, December 11, 2013, at 8:45 a.m., monthly business meeting; Wednesday, December 11, 2013, at 6:00 p.m., Annual Legislative Appreciation Dinner hosted by the Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials (PSAECO); and Thursday, December 12, 2013, at 11:00 a.m., quarterly meeting with PSAECO. All Members were urged to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____
November 14, 2013