

MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

The meeting of the Local Government Commission was called to order by Senator Robert D. Robbins at 9:30 a.m. in Room 14 East Wing-Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with the following individuals present:

MEMBERS

**Senator Robert D. Robbins, Chairman
Senator Edwin B. Erickson
Senator John H. Eichelberger, Jr.
Senator John P. Blake
Representative Chris Ross
Representative Mauree Gingrich
Representative Robert L. Freeman
Representative Steven J. Santarsiero**

STAFF

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

GUESTS

**Chris Yniguez, Senator Robbins' Office
Lee Derr, Senator Eichelberger's Office
Luc Miron, Senator Blake's Office
Christine Goldbeck, House Republican Research Office
Wanda Snader, House Republican Research Office
Fred Reddig, Department of Community & Economic Development
Pete Zug, Department of Community & Economic Development
Jonathan Henderson, Department of Community & Economic Development**

As the first order of business, the Members discussed the minutes of the October 17, 2012, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Erickson and a second by Representative Gingrich. The financial report for the month of October 2012 was presented, and relevant portions thereof were explained by the Executive Director. The financial report was unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Eichelberger and a second by Representative Santarsiero.

The Members unanimously approved a motion by Representative Gingrich, which was seconded by Representative Freeman, to approve the renewal of the janitorial services contract with Klass Act Kleaning & Maintenance, Inc. The term of the contract commences on January 1, 2013, and will end on December 31, 2013. The contract reflects an increase of \$8.17 per month.

Copies of a letter received by Chairman Robbins from Secretary Sheri Phillips of the Department of General Services (DGS) regarding potential office space in the Capitol Complex were provided to the Members for their perusal. The letter dated October 16, 2012, stated that DGS does not have any unclaimed office space in the Capitol Complex, outside of the Forum Building. DGS is not assigning space in the Forum Building due to significant, necessary infrastructure improvements and the difficulty to cost effectively heat and cool the building. The Members discussed a few alternatives and agreed to address the situation again next session.

Representatives from the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Center for Local Government Services were present to discuss with the Commission its perspective and insight regarding Act 47. Enacted in 1987, Act 47 is the Municipalities Financial Recovery Act that provides options and procedures to address financially distressed municipalities. The Act resulted from the work of a task force formed by the Commission in 1985 to study problems associated with distressed municipalities and to formulate a legislative proposal to alleviate those problems.

Senator Blake noted that Act 47 has proved to be insufficiently effective in putting some distressed municipalities back on firm financial footing, and that any reexamination of the Act requires a multifaceted approach including an examination of pension issues, tax-exempt property, personnel costs, and regionalization of services. He also indicated that because the respective local government committee chairs and chair of the House Urban Affairs Committee are represented on the Commission, its involvement would be beneficial.

Representative Ross also emphasized a multifaceted approach, and urged participation of all relevant stakeholders in any review of the Act. He noted that further action should be taken when the General Assembly has reorganized and the composition of the relevant committees and the commission has been determined.

Fred Reddig, on behalf of the DCED, discussed the viability of distressed municipalities and post-retirement benefits that burden many municipalities. He agreed that DCED would be willing to participate in any further examination of the Act. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Members unanimously agreed to revisit the topic at the beginning of the new 2013-2014 legislative session, with the goal of Commission participation in the reformation of an Act 47 task force.

As the last order of business, the Director announced that the December 12, 2012, monthly business meeting will commence at 4:00 p.m. in the Commission's offices located in the Forum Place Building, 555 Walnut Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The meeting agenda and pertinent information will be sent the Members' homes prior to the December 12 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____

November 19, 2012