

## **MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, November 16, 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**  
**Representative Chris Ross**  
**Representative Mauree Gingrich**  
**Representative Kate Harper**  
**Representative Robert Freeman**

### **STAFF**

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

### **GUESTS**

**Lee Derr, Senator Eichelberger's Office**  
**Justin Leventry, Senator Hutchinson's Office**  
**Nathan Akers, Senator Hutchinson's Office**  
**Rob Gaertner, House Local Government Committee (R)**  
**Sean Sanderson, Department of Community and Economic Development**  
**Lisa Schaefer, County Commissioners Association of PA**  
**Karey Molnar, Pennsylvania Municipal League**  
**Ron Grutza, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs**

As the first order of business, the Members discussed the minutes of the October 19, 2016, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Freeman and a second by Representative Ross. The financial report for the month of October 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 McGarrigle.

The Commission Assessment Reform Task Force was the next item on the agenda for discussion. The Director reported that House Resolution (HR) 1053 passed the House (183-5) and was reported to the Senate Local Government Committee where it will remain until the end of the legislative session. HR 153 is a concurrent resolution that would have established a task force to implement recommendations related to the efficiency, transparency, modernization and fairness of the property assessment process in this Commonwealth. The Director stated that the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) and the Assessors' Association of Pennsylvania (AAP) have both indicated a desire to continue the effort with the leadership of the Commission. CCAP and AAP have been hosting working groups since 2009 to address needed

reforms relating to data collection and generation by the State Tax Equalization Board within the Department of Community and Economic Development, as well as other assessment-related issues. The ongoing working group has completed revising sales validation codes and has begun the development of uniform standards for county reassessment contracting and the development of a self-evaluation tool for counties to use to help determine when a reassessment is warranted. One of the suggestions made by the Director was to continue with the task force since the Commission's enabling legislation provides the Commission with the authority to conduct task forces if desired. After a lengthy discussion by the Members, it was unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Harper and a second by Representative Freeman to authorize the Commission to establish the task force as outlined in HR 1053 and to be comprised of the following individuals:

- One appointee of the Governor from each of the following departments:
  - Department of Community and Economic Development.
  - Department of Revenue.
- Four representatives from the Local Government Commission, appointed by the chairperson of the Commission:
  - One from the majority caucus of the Senate.
  - One from the minority caucus of the Senate.
  - One from the majority caucus of the House of Representatives.
  - One from the minority caucus of the House of Representatives.
- Staff of the Local Government Commission, as designated by the Executive Director of the Commission, including any contract consultants as budgeted for, and authorized by, the Commission.
- Staff of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), as designated by the Executive Director of CCAP.
- Representative(s) of the Assessors' Association of Pennsylvania (AAP), as designated by the Executive Director of AAP.
- Staff of the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, as designated by the Executive Director of the Committee.
- Staff of the State Tax Equalization Board, as designated by the Executive Director of the Board.

The Members agreed with the Director that the task force ought to meet in January prior to the Commission's January 25, 2017, business meeting.

An update on the Commission's 2015-2016 legislative package was presented to the Members for their final review. During the legislative session, the Commission introduced 26 bills. The Executive Director stated that 10 bills introduced by the Commission were enacted and 11 bills passed at least one chamber. The Commission's 38 percent passage rate for the 2015-2016 legislative session is greater than the previous three sessions. When the Commission receives all of its Member appointments for the 2017-2018 legislative session, the Commission's legislative package will be introduced.

The Members unanimously approved a motion by Representative Freeman, which was seconded by Representative Ross, to approve the renewal of the janitorial services contract with

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**Klass Act Kleaning & Maintenance, Inc.** The term of the contract commences on January 1, 2017, and ends on December 31, 2017. The \$6,833 yearly contract includes a 1 percent increase in compensation from the previous contract.

The Director reported that he contacted Dave Reddecliff, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, who had met with Donetta D’Innocenzo, Chief Clerk of the Senate, and the Department of General Services (DGS) to ascertain the possibility of the Commission obtaining vacant office space in the Capitol Complex, particularly the Irvis Office Building. Based on Mr. Reddecliff’s findings, he indicated that concerns regarding (1) planning for use of the space, (2) a Capital Budget appropriation to renovate the space, and (3) the time element, with respect to the end of our initial three-year lease period, makes relocating into Irvis not possible at this point. Aside from Irvis, Mr. Reddecliff and Ms. D’Innocenzo also concluded that no one location has sufficient space to accommodate the entire Commission staff. The Members remarked that it would be more fiscally responsible for the Legislature to provide complimentary office space to the Commission in the Capitol Complex as opposed to appropriating funds to the Commission for the expense of leasing office space in another building. Representative Ross voiced concern that the Commission’s request for space was not being treated with sufficient urgency, and suggested that Commission Members and staff maintain consistent inquiries into the availability of space. Senator Eichelberger noted that he would continue to make inquiries and attempt to raise the issue with Members of Senate leadership. The Director stated that he would continue his quest for office space in the Capitol Complex. Subsequently, on a motion by Senator McGarrigle and a second by Representative Ross, the Members unanimously approved the first one-year renewal option provided in the lease agreement. The lease agreement is a five year lease that includes an initial three year period and two one-year renewal options.

As the last order of business, the Commission Members unanimously approved on a motion by Senator McGarrigle and a second by Representative Freeman to cancel the December 14, 2016, business meeting. Senator Eichelberger and Representative Harper then thanked the retiring Commission Members--Representative Ross, Representative Gingrich and Senator Wozniak--for their many years of service to the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

ATTESTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
November 17, 2016