

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM BUSINESS MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

The meeting of the Local Government Commission (Commission) was called to order by Senator Scott E. Hutchinson at 9:00 a.m. in Room 515 Irvis Office Building with the following Commission Members, staff and guests participating in-person and remotely:

MEMBERS

**Senator Scott E. Hutchinson, Chair
Senator Judy Ward
Senator Cris Dush
Senator Judith L. Schwank
Senator Timothy P. Kearney
Representative R. Lee James
Representative Jerry Knowles
Representative Robert Freeman**

STAFF

**David A. Greene, Executive Director
Kristopher J. Gazsi, Assistant Director
Martin A. Toth, Associate Legal Counsel
Julia Frey, Research Analyst
Jaren Bittinger, Research Analyst
Karen S. Bear, Executive Assistant
Sonya I. Ebersole, Fiscal Administrator**

GUESTS

**Representative Donna Bullock
Matthew Deegan, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Nathan Akers, Senator Judy Ward's Office
Matt Maniskas, Senator Schwank's Office
Sam Arnold, Senator Kearney's Office
Bre Medevich, Representative Freeman's Office
Derek Clepper, Senate General Counsel Office (R)
Mary Yoder, Senate Local Government Committee (R)
Lindsay Ewing, House Local Government Committee (R)
Jon Castelli, House Local Government Committee (D)
Tim Scott, House Urban Affairs Committee (D)
Melissa Gates, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Frank Mazza, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Amy Sturges, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Kaitlin Errickson, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Ed Troxell, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Ron Grutza, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Tammy Shearer, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
Joe Gerdes, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors**

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George Bivens, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
Dave Piuri, Pennsylvania Fraternal Order of Police
Larry Gerrity, Pennsylvania Fraternal Order of Police
Barb Huesken, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association
Clint Cullison, Greenlee Partners
Becca Zelner, Greenlee Partners

The Executive Director made a statement that the in-person and virtual meeting was being recorded and conducted with both Member and Commission staff participation. On Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 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 agenda was posted on the Commission's website, www.lgc.state.pa.us, on Monday, November 14, 2022, and outside of the Commission's office located at 506 Irvis Office Building. 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.

Prior to the meeting at 8:45 a.m., the Members resolved themselves into executive session to discuss the annual review and retention of the Executive Director, David A. Greene. On a motion by Representative Freeman, and a second by Senator Dush, the Members unanimously approved to retain the Executive Director for calendar year 2023 and to award Mr. Greene with a merit and cost-of-living adjustment increase of six percent. The Members applauded the Executive Director's accomplishments and thanked him for his continued service to the Members of the General Assembly.

The Members welcomed Representative Donna Bullock to today's meeting. Representative Bullock appeared to discuss legislation related to a pilot program being proposed on the issue of tangled real estate titles in Philadelphia. Representative Bullock explained that more than 10,000 homes in Philadelphia have unclear owners and are caught in what is called a tangled title. This often happens when a person is living in a house that is still in the name of a deceased loved one, like a parent or grandparent. Tangled titles threaten to keep people from qualifying for home repair assistance or taking out a loan, leaving them vulnerable for deed theft, and prevent them from selling or even keeping their house. The proposed legislation would provide an abbreviated affidavit process for establishing title. In addition to the proposal under discussion, Philadelphia Representatives Bullock, Chris Rabb, and Joe Hohenstein introduced two bills during the 2021-2022 legislative session focused on tangled title issues in order to implement a Small Estate Primary Residence Affidavit Pilot Program in the County of Philadelphia. The first bill would establish the Unclear Title Grant Fund and appropriate monies to provide grants to a public legal aid entity to cover the administrative, legal, and other costs associated with resolving a tangled title. This program would also advertise that assistance is available to solve these complex issues. The second bill would waive the probate fee for low-income heirs, which is based on the value of the estate having a value of less than \$150,000. After the fifth year of the program, Representative Bullock's proposed legislation directs the Local Government Commission to conduct a study and submit its findings within one year to the General Assembly as to recommendations on the continuation, expansion, or termination of the pilot program. Representative Bullock answered the Members questions and thanked them for the opportunity to address the Commission. The

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Members discussed expanding the scope of the legislation to include other municipal classes and advised her to work with the municipal associations, namely the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, to further her legislative endeavor. The Executive Director stated that he would keep the Members apprised of any movement of the legislation during the 2023-2024 legislative session.

The Executive Director submitted to the Members for their review, a proposed contract for a paid research analyst internship position through the College of Arts and Sciences of Shippensburg University. The agreement defines the scope of the internship contract between the individual and the Commission. The intern will be supervised jointly by the Commission staff and the College of Arts and Sciences of Shippensburg University. In addition to any academic credit hours awarded under the Shippensburg University agreement, the Commission will compensate the intern at the rate of \$15 an hour, which is consistent with internship contracts established by the four caucuses. It is anticipated that the Commission will retain the services of a research analyst intern during the University's spring semester commencing the end of January 2023. The Members agreed unanimously on a motion by Senator Dush and a second by Senator Ward to approve the Commission paid internship contract and the Executive Director's pursuit of obtaining a research analyst intern for 2023.

The Members reviewed the minutes of the October 19, 2022, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Representative James and a second by Representative Freeman. The financial reports for the month of October 2022 were presented, and an explanation was given by the Executive Director. The financial reports were unanimously approved on a motion by Representative James and a second by Representative Freeman.

A reminder was given by the Executive Director as to the invitation tendered to the Members and staff by the Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials (PSAECO) to PSAECO's annual luncheon at the West Shore Country Club on Thursday, November 17. Any Members and staff who wish to attend are welcome.

Office closing dates for 2023 were presented to the Members for their information. The dates are those delineated in the Commission's Personnel Policy. A list of Commission meeting dates for 2023 will be established when the Senate and House session calendars for the next legislative session are released.

The Executive Director announced that Senate Bill 807, Printer's Number 989, was signed into law by the Governor as Act 154 of 2022. The Commission sponsored bill was prime sponsored by Senator Judy Wards and amends Title 57 (Notaries Public) by eliminating a fee and further providing for the registration of notary signatures. During the 2021-2022 legislative session, the Commission had five bills that were enacted. Commission staff will assess its legislative package for the 2023-2024 legislative session and present the results to the Members when the Commission's Membership has been established for the new legislative session.

The Chairman encouraged all Members who wish to remain as a Member of the Commission to express interest to their respective caucus leaders. All Members thanked Representative Jerry Knowles for his service to the Commission and extended their best wishes to him upon his retirement.

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The next business meeting scheduled for Wednesday, December 14, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 515 Irvis Office Building has been cancelled.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

**ATTESTED: _____
November 30, 2022**