

**COMMISSIONERS' MEETING: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2024, 1:00 P.M.**

Location: Commissioners Meeting Room, Basement.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Commissioner Kessling called the meeting to order.

**MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION:**

Commissioner Kessling called for a moment of silent prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:**

Commissioner Kessling requested that those participating in the meeting please stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Commissioner Kessling, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Burke, and Chief Clerk Socie.

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Jon Guyer (Commissioners), Lindsay Dempsey and Brandon Meek (Finance), A.C. Stichel (Controller), Cris Fredrickson (Public Safety-EMA), Tricia Johnson (Social Services), Brian Walters and Melena Koegler (Human Resources), Shannon Tucker (CYF), Carol Dannenberg (Holidaysburg Community Watchdog), Kay Stephens (Altoona Mirror), and Nate Taylor (Public Access Channel).

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Chief Clerk Socie confirmed there were two (2) Executive Session held since the last meeting on Tuesday, October 29.

The first meeting was held on Thursday, October 31 at 1:00 p.m. with Commissioner Kessling, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Burke, Chief Clerk Socie, Human Resources Director Melena Koegler, and Finance Director Lindsay Dempsey regarding one (1) bargaining CBA.

The second meeting was held on Thursday, October 31 at approximately 2:50 p.m. with Commissioner Kessling, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Burke, Chief Clerk Socie, and Human Resources Director Melena Koegler regarding one personnel issue.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Kay Stevens, Altoona Mirror News Reporter, stated she would like to hear the Commissioners comment on how the Elections ran.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENT:**

Commissioner Kessling called for Commissioners Comment.

Commissioner Burke stated that she is grateful for our county employees that helped with the ballots. There were employees from 10 different departments that helped process mail-in ballots and several other groups that offered to help. There was so much work done that the other groups did not need to come in, but she is very appreciative of their offer. For taking people out of their normal roles and expecting so much from them in such a high-pressured situation, everyone worked hard and got done quicker than expected. She is grateful for everyone that was willing to take time out of their normal schedule, changing their schedules in some cases, and some working overnight in order to get this done. This was important in order to get the counting done in a timely manner and to report the results as expected. Everyone worked as a team, and she appreciates every single person who took time away from their duties to help.

Commissioner Kessling added that the county faced challenges this election. This was the first presidential election that he participated in. The fact that we received a bomb threat and everyone had to stop everything they were doing, evacuate from the building, and were not allowed back in the building until the building was cleared; everyone probably doesn't understand the monumental tasks that occurred flawlessly. They were able to move everything to a secondary site and execute that move flawlessly. The Board of Commissioners wishes to thank the Holidaysburg and Allegheny Police Departments that responded immediately, along with Pennsylvania State Police and the Blair County Sheriff's Department. The sheriff's officer, "Canine Rick," who is a bomb dog, cleared staff vehicles so the staff could go to the convention center and then cleared the entire building. Once the building was cleared, staff was able to move the entire operation back to the Elections Office, where they then picked up where they left off. To do an election without a bomb threat is a monumental undertaking, and the fact that we got done counting as quickly as we did is a testament to our people. It is amazing. He said he has been involved with planning and exercises, and he was pleased with how smoothly this went for never having done this before. It was Teamwork. Everyone did what they needed to do without complaint. To all the staff members out there who switched their shifts to accommodate the elections office and all the people that stayed late to continue to ensure the count was done in a timely manner... "My hat is off to them!" The Board is extremely appreciative for everything that everyone did. "Thank You So Much For Everything!"

Commissioner Webster echoed Commissioner Burke and Commissioner Kessling's statements. The thing she found the most outstanding was the camaraderie that existed between all these different people from different departments that normally do not work together. She and Commissioner Burke have worked the elections for the past four years and this was certainly different from the rest. It was a highly contested race and there were people with different views and positions all in the same building but no body became political, there was no complaining, nor was there infighting. There were people coming to do "watch" and everything went amazingly flawless, especially in light of the bomb threat and the work that it caused. It was an outstanding example of our county people pulling together and working hard. She is proud of everybody and thanks everyone that participated for their hard work and dedication. The camaraderie was a great thing and she hopes that extends into the future. November 13 is World Kindness day and she thought the behavior of everyone working on the election was very kind and helpful to each other and was a good example of Kindness Week.

**PROCLAMATION:**  
Commissioner Webster read the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION  
2024 WORLD KINDNESS DAY

Whereas, bullying and harassment can happen to children and adults alike whether it's at school, work, online, or in the community; and  
Whereas, kindness – the quality of being friendly, considerate, and generous can go a long way to making our schools, neighborhoods, communities, and our world healthier; and  
Whereas, the Healthy Blair County Coalition and our community partners have come together to promote kindness among our children, youth, and adults; and  
Whereas, by encouraging and recognizing the profound impact of acts of kindness, all members of our community will be made aware of the importance of being kind to others; and  
Whereas, World Kindness Day is an international holiday that was formed in 1998 to promote kindness throughout the world and is observed annually on November 13.

Now, therefore, the Blair County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaim November 13, 2024 Blair County Kindness Day and encourages all citizens to participate in spreading kindness and practice respect, compassion, and consideration for all others at all times.

BLAIR COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
David Kessling, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sherry Socie, Chief Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Webster, Vice President

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Laura O. Burke, Secretary

Motioned by Commissioner Webster, seconded by Commissioner Kessling, and unanimously approved to accept the Proclamation as prepared.

**Resolution 516-2024:**

c. Payment of the following four-4 Warrant Lists:

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
11/04/2024	241104SS	658,999.54
11/04/2024	241104WW	337,929.48
11/08/2024	241108AA	259,047.43
11/04/2024	241104CY	30,917.45

- Which includes payment to Hollidaysburg Borough in the amount of \$103.50.
- Which includes payment to Thomas & Chandra Jandora in the amount of \$1,550.00.

d. Ratification of the following two-2 Warrant Lists:

EFFECTIVE DATE	WARRANT NUMBER	AMOUNT
10/31/2024	241031HR	10,469.76
10/28/2024	241028FS	1,881.84

c. Ratification of Total Payroll for the paycheck dated 11/1/2024 in the total amount of \$924,830.49

d. **Hollidaysburg Borough:** Requesting approval for the Borough of Hollidaysburg's Winterfest Committee for the use of the Courthouse Courtyard on November 29, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. as the location for Santa and his chair at no cost to the county.

e. **2024 Budget Transfer:** To cover vehicle repair costs:

From	\$	To
01103HW-44730 Highway	\$1,170.00	113201-44830 CYF

f. **2024 Budget Transfer:** To cover vehicle repair costs:

From	\$	To
01160-44160 Court Administration	\$325.00	01160DC-44700 Judge Consiglio
01160-44160 Court Administration	\$350.00	01160WK-44700 Judge Kagarise

g. **Resignations:** Cocola, Bethany, FT, Corporal, Sheriff, \$17.96/hr., effective 11/1/2024. Matthews, Robert, FT, Corrections Officer, Prison, \$21.53/hr., effective 10/23/2024. Groce, Kathryn, FT, Telecommunicator Trainee, 911 Center, \$13.88/hr., effective 10/23/2024. Socie, Sherry, FT, Chief Clerk, Commissioners, \$2,965.30 biweekly, effective 11/27/2024.

Chief Clerk Socie noted a correction on item f. which should read "To cover charges from Xerox."

Commissioner Burke noted her abstentions on the payments to Hollidaysburg Borough and Thomas and Chandra Jandora .

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and approved to adopt Resolution 516-2024 with the abstentions as noted.

**STAFF REPORTS & SPECIAL BUSINESS:**

**Blair Planning Commission:**

Commissioner Kessling requested approval of the Memorandum of Understanding to transition Sherry Socie from the Blair County Commissioners Office to Blair Planning Commission and cover the costs of benefits in the amount of \$2,710.22.

Commissioner Kessling added that he would like to thank Blair Planning for entering this Memorandum of Understanding and he is grateful to them.

**Resolution 517-2024:** Approving the Memorandum of Understanding to transition Sherry Socie, Chief Clerk/County Administrator from the Blair County Commissioners Office to Blair Planning Commission and cover the costs of benefits in the amount of \$2,710.22.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt resolution 517-2024.

**Social Services:**

Tricia Johnson requested approval of the Submission of a FY 24/25 Pennsylvania Housing Affordability & Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) Grant Application to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) for the FY 24/25 Housing Assistance Program in the amount of \$50,000.00.

**Resolution 518-2024:** Approving the Submission of a FY 24/25 Pennsylvania Housing Affordability & Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) Grant Application to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) for the FY 24/25 Housing Assistance Program in the amount of \$50,000.00.

Motion by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Burke, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 518-2024.

**Public Safety - EMA:**

Cris Fredrickson requested approval of the electronic submission of the calendar year 2025 Mosquito-Borne Disease Control (MBDC) Grant Application to the Pennsylvania Department of Protection (DEP), in the total amount of \$53,929.00, for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Commissioner Kessling asked if the number of cases is dropping.

Ms. Fredrickson responded that testing showed fourteen (14) positive mosquitos and one (1) positive bird in Blair County this year. So, the number of tested cases are dropping.

**Resolution 519-2024:** Approving the electronic submission of the calendar year 2025 Mosquito-Borne Disease Control (MBDC) Grant Application to the Pennsylvania Department of Protection (DEP), in the total amount of \$53,929.00, for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 519-2024.

**Human Services:**

Melena Koezler requested approval of payment for defense counsel fees, mediation fees, and settlement pursuant to a Full and Final Release Agreement between the County of Blair and an inactive employee for a mediated litigation.

**Resolution 520-2024:** Approving the payment for defense counsel fees, mediation fees, and settlement pursuant to a Full and Final Release Agreement between the County of Blair and an inactive employee for a mediated litigation.

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution 520-2024.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Commissioners:**  
none.

**Adjourn:**

Motioned by Commissioner Kessling, seconded by Commissioner Webster, and unanimously approved to adjourn today's meeting.

  
Sherry Socie, Chief Clerk

