

**CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE MEETING
16 W. SCRIBNER AVE.
DUBOIS, PA 15801**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022 @ 12:00 P.M.

MINUTES

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Dick Whitaker called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members:

Shawn Arbaugh

Dan Kohlhepp

Kris Kruzalak – by phone

Joe Mitchell

Chris Nasuti

Kevin A. Salandra

Herm Suplizio

Ed Walsh

Dick Whitaker

Staff Present:

Kristen Dunn, Committee Recording Secretary

Bobbie Shaffer – City of DuBois Secretary

Christopher Gabriel, Solicitor

Others Present: See attached sign-in Sheet

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Dick Whitaker led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 9, 2022, MEETING

Motion by Ed Walsh, second by Shawn Arbaugh, to approve the Minutes of the March 9, 2022, meeting.

A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes

Joe Mitchell – yes

Herm Suplizio – yes

Dan Kohlhepp – yes

Chris Nasuti – yes

Ed Walsh – yes

Kris Kruzalak - yes

Kevin Salandra - yes

Dick Whitaker - yes

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Sub-Committee Updates

Police (by Kris Kruzalak) – We have been meeting weekly. Joe Mitchell is sitting in on the next meeting. I met with consultant Mike Miller in Harrisburg, and we are getting a game plan of more data which they need. We have also been looking at retirement of officers and replacements of officers.

Public Works (by Chis Nasuti) – We completed the assignments for the code reviews and gave them to Dan Kohlhepp. We toured both DuBois and Sandy Public Works facilities – went over garages, equipment, and vehicles, making an inventory to determine what equipment can be used by each department. We are working on department organization and job descriptions. Our goal is to have written responses on the department structure, job descriptions, facilities, and equipment recommendations at the April 13 meeting.

Finance (by Joe Mitchell) – We have assembled a preliminary budget putting both the Township and City's budgets together so we could have a comparable look. We have looked at both tax structures and Gerald Cross from PEL provided a document outlining potential revenue taxation possibilities. During the combination of budgets, we came up with a general line item if you put the departments together, where their budget would stand. I sat down with Fire and Police assisting them with their budgets and making sure both are using appropriate numbers from the old budgets in comparison with what they want for new budgets. I've talked with Public Works Department, and they are to give us some numbers. Only concern at this point is that we want to know our role as the finance committee – are we supposed to recommend a balanced budget to the 9-Member and the 10-Member, or are we to assemble what we're given by the committees and pass that up to the Board – letting the boards above us have the power to suggest tax increase, tax cuts, personnel increases or decreases. We feel our job is to assemble what is provided to us and let the boards above us come up with the appropriate financial decisions concerning the new municipality.

Codes / Zoning (by Dan Kohlhepp) – We have been doing ordinance comparisons still looking at similarities. Our goal continues to be organized, then analyze and then make suggestions. We unanimously agreed to use the 450-chapter model from DuBois. Then we have room to put Sandy Township into it for comparison.

Administration (by Shawn Arbaugh) – We've been looking at buildings – specifically where is admin and the police going to be. We have a preliminary drawing from an architect to show what that could look like with very general cost figures of re-doing the city building and we are discussing some other options. The subcommittee has also been looking at contract terms and how they impact the budget. We need to discuss what ideally we would like to see in the Union contracts.

Fire (by Herm Suplizio) – The next item on our agenda is locations for the stations. We believe we have locations in general areas, but they may not be exact. Next task is equipment and deployment. The subcommittee is putting down what the equipment list should tentatively be.

Dick Whitaker wanted to mention that the 10-person Board pointed out that when the fire department turns something in, they have everyone sign off on it. We are recommending that the subcommittee chairman's do a summation of what went on at their meetings and then send out to the subcommittee members to sign at the next meeting. And if there is a vote – how that vote went – 3-4, 4-3, 5-2, etc. Show the vote but sign off on just what happened or how the vote went – not who voted yes or know.

2. Consultant Update

Adam Shienvold from Eckert Seamans – The update is largely contained in the subcommittee updates because that is the bulk of the work we've been doing – working with each of the subcommittees – helping guide on various issues that arise and questions that come up on what can be done with respect to the consolidated municipalities. We are doing work on debt and financing issues that will apply directly on issues relating to public utilities and municipality authorities and the PEL team is working on the financial analysis. They are working with the Finance Committee on a consolidated budget forecast and any analysis that is necessary to get through this first phase of the consolidation process.

3. Preliminary Election Process

Shawn Arbaugh – The purpose of this agenda item is to seek your approval to move this on to the 10-member Board for determination and vote. The Administration subcommittee is recommending that we handle Council elections with four-year and two-year terms by having the three Council candidates that receive the highest votes fill the four-year terms and the next highest three Council candidate vote getters fill the two-year terms.

Motion made by Herm Suplizio to seek approval by the 10-member Board to handle Council elections of the four-year and two-year terms by having the three (3) Council candidates that receive the highest votes fill the four-year terms, and the next highest three (3) Council candidate vote getters fill the two-year terms. Second by Ed Walsh.

A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes

Dan Kohlhepp – yes

Kris Kruzelak - yes

Joe Mitchell – yes

Chris Nasuti – yes

Kevin Salandra - yes

Herm Suplizio – yes

Ed Walsh – yes

Dick Whitaker – yes

Motion carried.

4. Parks and Recreation Subcommittee

Dick Whitaker stated that the topic of another subcommittee that is needed for Parks and Recreation has come up for discussion. The 10-member Board would like to proceed with it. Herm Suplizio and Shawn Arbaugh have put together committee members.

Shawn Arbaugh said they came up with a list of names which we are seeking approval for to

put on that subcommittee. Tasks are still needing developed. PEL has assisted us on giving some preliminary tasks. Today we are looking for approval for adding eight members to the Parks and Recreation Subcommittee. We have sent the list to everyone for review.

Herm Suplizio wanted to mention that the people on the list have all showed interest in the committee, and some already have a part in our system and/or experience with parks and recreation.

A Motion was made by Ed Walsh that we approve the Parks and Recreation Subcommittee consisting of Jim Pullman, Darren Bryan, Ryan Glass, Scott Frano, Jeff Baronick, Sam Mollica, Matt Checchio, and Mike Gray with Jim Pullman being the Chairperson. Second by Kevin Salandra. A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes

Dan Kohlhepp – no

Kris Kruzelak - yes

Joe Mitchell – yes

Chris Nasuti – no

Kevin Salandra - yes

Herm Suplizio – yes

Ed Walsh – yes

Dick Whitaker – yes

Motion carried.

Chris Gabriel stated that we will take the next week or 10 days and get them a preliminary list of tasks. The urgent item would be getting anything that has to do with anticipated spending, maintenance costs, promotions, etc. to the Finance Subcommittee for purposes of budgeting.

Joe Mitchell said there should be coordination between Parks and Recreation and Public Works because maintenance of the parks falls under their committee. That committee might have a potential revenue stream so a good thing for them to address is how the potential revenues could off-set maintenance costs.

There was a brief discussion regarding hunting and firearms in the new municipality. Ed Walsh explained that the Game Commission decides where you can hunt. Zack Lawhead from zoning mentioned that Third-Class City law does not allow a Third-Class City to write any ordinances governing use of firearms or anything like that.

Solicitor Chris Gabriel stated that there is Pennsylvania law that disallows any municipality from regulating firearms in a way that the state does not allow. Hunting is different and should be discussed further in order to put out an accurate answer to the public. In general, it is the Game Commission that regulates hunting, not the city.

Dana Smith asked if any consideration has been given to aquatic facilities? Will someone represent that on the subcommittee?

Shawn Arbaugh said that he and Herm Suplizio will be in on this subcommittee because there is no staff involved so we will help coach them thru some things such as that.

OPEN MEETING TO THE FLOOR

Melissa Keen stated that she feels it would be nice to recognize all the firemen, and police, which are already serving, or have served, in each individual department that we have now, to honor them, showing how many years they have served, and for which department.

Dave Lombardo asked about short-term rentals – this consolidation being an opportunity to bring residential back in to residential and not intermix with commercial. He also asked a question about the overall consolidation process – at what point does the public interact with the consolidation committees? Where is our place for input on subjects? And who makes the decisions.

Solicitor Chris Gabriel explained that the public has several chances to participate. All the contact information for the Chairperson of each subcommittee is on both the City and Township website links. If a member of the public has an interest in something going on at one of the subcommittee meetings, they are welcome to reach out to a chairperson of one of the subcommittees. Agendas and Minutes of this 9-Member Committee and the 10-Member Board are posted on the website. The second opportunity is that at both 9-Member Committee meetings and 10-Member Joint Board meetings there are two opportunities for public comment.

This Committee is supervising the work of the subcommittees. Subcommittee chairs are making recommendations at these meetings where you have opportunities for public comment. Those items are then passed to the 10-member Joint Board meetings which are held twice a Month on Monday nights, and like this committee, those meetings also give two opportunities for the public to comment. Both communities are also open and welcoming to public participation – outside the opportunities I have outlined, you can approach the managers and ask questions or give comments.

Consolidation is a process that is going to take from now until the beginning of 2026 and beyond. Right now consultants are tasked with writing a plan and they cannot write the plan until we tell them what we want in it, which is basically due this fall. After that there will be a three-year period working out details of particular topics.

Dave Lumbardo asked where is the critical point – so we, the public, do not miss out on an opportunity to speak up – where do you find this timeline?

Kevin Salandra stated that all the agendas are available to the public. Nothing gets voted on that is not on the agenda. If the public looks at the websites and agendas, and your topic comes up, you are going to want to be at that meeting.

Solicitor Chris Gabriel said the best thing to do for the public, which the press can help with, is let people know that if they have questions they should come to the meetings and mention it during the public comments. Dick Whitaker mentioned now that we know what you are interested in, you will be contacted when that comes up for discussion.

Melissa Keen commented that there are two websites that have agendas available 24 hours before each meeting. It is our responsibility to let the public know where this information is available.

CLOSE MEETING TO THE FLOOR

Chairman Dick Whitaker called for an Executive Session at 12:49 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 1:10 p.m.

ADJOURN

Herm Suplizio made a motion to adjourn. Shawn Arbaugh second. (Unanimous vote). The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen Dunn
Consolidation Committee Recording Secretary