

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

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

The meeting of the Local Government Commission (Commission) was called to order by Senator Scott Hutchinson at 9:04 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 Cris Dush
Senator Rosemary M. Brown
Senator Timothy P. Kearney
Senator Carolyn T. Comitta
Representative Robert Freeman
Representative R. Lee James
Representative Dan Moul

STAFF

David A. Greene, Executive Director
Kristopher J. Gazsi, Assistant Director
Martin A. Toth, Associate Legal Counsel
Julia Frey, Research Analyst
Jaren N. Bittinger, Research Analyst
Karen S. Bear, Executive Assistant
Ethan Rosenberry, Intern

GUESTS

Matthew Deegan, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Sam Arnold, Senator Kearney's Office
Emily Eyster, Senator Comitta's Office
Teresa Leitner, Representative James' Office
Mary Yoder, Senate Local Government Committee (R)
Jon Castelli, House Local Government Committee (D)
Joshua Walker, House Local Government Committee (R)
Lindsay Ewing, House Local Government Committee (R)
Terri Wills, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
Eric Jespersen, Pennsylvania State Geospatial Coordinating Board
Frank Mazza, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Sophie Eyer, 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
Logan Stover, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
A.C. Stickel, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
Joe Gerdes, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

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**Brian Rengert, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
Barbara Huesken, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association
Emme Reiser, Pennsylvania Association of Realtors
Donna Gentile, Carbon County Recorder of Deeds
Dawn Blauch, Lebanon County Recorder of Deeds
Clint Cullison, Greenlee Partners
Ryan Stevens, Duane Morris Government Strategies
Sherri Chippo, Small Business Advocate**

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 Monday, March 11, 2024, 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, March 18, 2024, 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.

The Members reviewed the minutes of the December 13, 2023, business meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Brown and a second by Senator Kearney. The financial reports for the months of December 2023, January 2024, and February 2024 were presented, and an explanation was given by the Executive Director. The financial reports were unanimously approved on a motion by Representative Freeman and a second by Representative James.

An update was given by the Executive Director as to the various studies and research reports currently allocated to Commission staff.

1. Act 34 of 2023 directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Joint State Government Committee and the Local Government Commission, to study 911 communications, with a report deadline of December 30, 2024. The study shall include:
 - a. determining any efficiencies that can be gained in the current 911 system or potential efficiencies that can be gained with a different 911 system;
 - b. reviewing operations in other states; the amount of funding that the other states provide through all funding sources, including the state funding per capita; and the makeup of the local share;
 - c. options for the consolidation of county 911 systems, including the option of regional task forces proposed by the agency;
 - d. options to allow 911 system employees to work from home;
 - e. the use of artificial intelligence and other innovative technology for the operation of a 911 system and 988 suicide and crisis lifeline, including recommended standards;
 - f. the integration of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline into the 911 system, including protocols to support the effective communication and coordination of responders, law enforcement and fire and ambulance services, during a behavioral health crisis;
 - g. the integration of Pennsylvania State Police dispatch into the 911 system;
 - h. standards and procedures which should be followed when a behavioral health crisis

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- is routed to 988 as an alternative to law enforcement, including consideration of cultural or linguistic barriers and policies established by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and
- i. the use of automatic alarms and call stacking, including recommended standards.
 2. Act 38 of 2023 directs the Commission to study expanding automated speed enforcement on highways and streets owned by municipalities, with a deadline of two years after passage of the Act to submit a report to the General Assembly and provide findings and recommendations on the expansion of automated speed enforcement on highways and streets owned by municipalities. Assuming that the bill is signed into law by the end of this year, the required report would be due in December 2025.
 3. A Member, on behalf of the Statewide Blight Reform Task Force, has requested the Commission to study the current status of property maintenance code enforcement in the Commonwealth. This study *is currently being undertaken*. Surveys have been collected from both municipal officials and property owners and developers to gather information on the current status. Additionally, the Commission has conducted comparative research of code enforcement in other states. The study is now in its final reporting stages.
 4. A Member has requested the Commission's assistance in researching issues regarding regionalized municipal police departments and increasing the threshold of officers above which a municipality must follow the civil service commission when hiring. The Member has requested a deadline of summer, 2024.

In addition to the above current projects, the Assessor's Association of Pennsylvania has plans to revisit the work done during the Commission's 2016 Assessment Reform Taskforce and continue its work, including nationwide research on cyclical reassessments. Commission staff participated in planning meetings in January and February, which served to set the groundwork for the evaluation of cyclical reassessments. However, the extent and expected deadlines for Commission work has yet to be fully determined.

The Chairman regrettably announced that Commission Research Analyst Jaren Bittinger has tendered his resignation. Mr. Bittinger, who interned with the Commission in 2019, started with the Commission on April 14, 2022. Commission Members thanked Mr. Bittinger for his service to the Commission and wished him well in his future endeavors. Mr. Bittinger's last day with the Commission is Thursday, March 28, 2024. The Executive Director thanked Mr. Bittinger for his loyal service to the Commission and the General Assembly.

The Executive Director introduced Commission intern, Ethan Rosenberry. Mr. Rosenberry, who is a third-year student at Shippensburg University studying political science, has been assisting the research staff with legislative inquiries and performing research duties on the Commission's publications, the *Quarterly Legal Update* and the *Legislator's Municipal Deskbook*.

The Executive Director stated that he and Assistant Director Kris Gazsi are having ongoing discussions with stakeholders on the issue of specific plans and will provide an update to the Members at a future meeting. As was discussed at the December 13, 2023, business meeting, proposed legislation recommended by the State Planning Board would amend the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) by extending and expanding authorizations to adopt and implement specific plans beyond multi-municipal comprehensive plans. This would allow a

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municipality to adopt and implement a detailed plan for development that is consistent with and an extension of a municipal comprehensive plan.

Representative Moul offered his best wishes to Ed Troxell of the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) on his upcoming retirement on March 22, 2024. Mr. Troxell has served PSAB for 24 years, most recently as the PSAB’s Director of Government Affairs. Mr. Troxell thanked the Commission Members and staff for the many years of camaraderie and collaboration.

As the last order of business, the Director announced that the next Commission business meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. At that meeting, an executive session may be called to discuss personnel issues.

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 a.m.

**ATTESTED: _____
April 29, 2024**