

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

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

The meeting of the Local Government Commission (Commission) was called to order by Senator Scott Hutchinson at 8:45 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 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
Rex Burman, Research Analyst
Karen S. Bear, Executive Assistant
Sonya I. Ebersole, Fiscal Administrator**

GUESTS

**Justin Leventry, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Sam Arnold, Senator Kearney's Office
Emily Eyster, Senator Comitta's Office
Ryan Carpenter, Representative Freeman's Office
Grace Tanner, House Fellow, Representative Freeman's Office
Mike Hays, Representative Ciresi's Office
Mary Yoder, Senate Local Government Committee (R)
Jon Castelli, House Local Government Committee (D)
Joshua Walker, House Local Government Committee (R)
Amy Sturges, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Kaitlin Errickson, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Ron Grutza, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Logan Stover, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
A.C. Stickel, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
Tammy Shearer, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
Laura Dickson, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
Shelley Whitcomb Sowers, PA State Association of Elected County Officials
Joe Gerdes, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
Brian Rengert, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
Sarah Seamans, Chief Assessor of Susquehanna County
Amy Huntington, Exeter Borough Manager
Barbara Huesken, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association**

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

Page 2 – June 12, 2024

Clint Cullison, 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, June 4, revised 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, June 10, 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 Director introduced new Commission Research Analyst Rex Burman at today's meeting. Mr. Burman, who commenced his tenure with the Commission on May 20, is a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy and recently received his graduate degree from Villanova University. Mr. Burman thanked the Commission Members for the opportunity to work with the General Assembly and remarked that he is looking forward to all future research projects.

The Members reviewed the minutes of the March 20, 2024, and the May 8, 2024, business meetings, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Dush and a second by Representative Freeman. The financial reports for the months of March, April, and May 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 Senator Kearney.

Commission personnel policy amendments were presented to the Members for their review. The Director recommended that the Commission fine-tune essential job requirements, incentivize tenure, and broaden the potential pool of candidates with skills relevant to the mission of the Commission. Specifically, the senior research analyst and research analyst positions would be modified to accomplish the following:

- Reduce the term of on-the-job experience necessary to be qualified for promotion to Senior Research Analyst.
- Integrate internship organization and management responsibilities into the SRA position.
- Re-prioritize and modify base-line Research Analyst competencies, including articulation of knowledge to be demonstrated by "preferred" candidates.
- More accurately specify minimum educational/vocational Research Analyst job requirements to more closely reflect the "hit-the-ground" obligations of LGC staff while maintaining flexibility to substitute advanced degrees at the time recruitment begins for such requirements.

After a brief discussion, the Members unanimously agreed on a motion by Senator Dush and a second by Senator Kearney, to revise the Commission's Personnel Policy requirements of the senior research analyst and research analyst positions. The modifications to the Commission Personnel Policy will take effect immediately.

Possible amendment to the Commission vacancy bills was the next item on the agenda for discussion. The Director explained that a Legislator expressed concern regarding how the

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

Page 3 – June 12, 2024

municipal vacancy board chairperson may potentially use the position as a mechanism to appoint themselves as a member of the governing body when a municipal vacancy occurs. The potential for a newly appointed vacancy board chair who recently lost a reelection bid to vote for themselves to fill a vacancy on the governing body is troublesome. The Director recommended that language be added to Commission vacancy bills--Senate Bill 1119, House Bill 2160, Senate Bill 1131 and House Bill 2165, which specifically states that the chairperson of the vacancy board shall not vote for themselves to fill any vacancy in any office. Senate Bill 1119 and House Bill 2160 are companion bills which provide for an expedited process to fill township vacancies under Section 530 of the act of June 24, 1931 (P.L. 1206, No. 331), otherwise known as the First Class Township Code. Senate Bill 1131 and House Bill 2165 are also companion bills that provide for an expedited process to fill borough vacancies under Section 901 of Title 8 (The Borough Code). After a brief discussion, the Members unanimously agreed on a motion by Representative Freeman and a second by Representative Moul to add the suggested language to the bills.

Research Analyst Julia Frey gave an update on the Commission's automated speed enforcement study. Act 38 of 2023 tasked the Local Government Commission with conducting "a study of expanding automated speed enforcement on highways and streets owned by municipalities" and submitting a report to the General Assembly no later than December 14, 2025, of the "findings and recommendations" of the research. The research will focus on the following main categories:

- a background analysis of automated speed enforcement programs in other states;
- an analysis of existing automated speed enforcement programs in Pennsylvania – Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia, and work zones on the Pennsylvania Turnpike;
- review of alternatives to automated speed enforcement;
- feasibility and considerations for expansion of automated speed enforcement on municipal streets and highways; and
- recommendations.

Ms. Frey also outlined the research schedule established to meet the deadline of December 14, 2025. The Director emphasized to the Members that this a factual study. After a brief discussion, the Members thanked Ms. Frey for her work on the project.

Senator Hutchinson welcomed the members of the Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials (PSAECO) to today's meeting and thanked them on behalf of the Commission Members and staff for the invitation to PSAECO's Legislative Day breakfast reception. A.C. Stickel, PSAECO President and County Controller for Blair County, expressed PSAECO's appreciation for the work the Members and staff do on behalf of the various associations that comprise PSAECO. Mr. Stickel applauded the passage of Act 14 of 2024, the consolidation of the County Code, as PSAECO worked closely with the Commission in supporting the legislation. PSAECO's primary purpose is to be a resource to the Legislature. The members of PSAECO are intimately knowledgeable about the day-to-day operation of county government and have an expert understanding of how to make the people's government more efficient.

Assistant Director Kris Gazsi announced that proposed legislation recommended by the State Planning Board and discussed at the December 13, 2023, business meeting, will be on the agenda again at a future meeting. Mr. Gazsi explained that he received valuable feedback from

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

Page 4 – June 12, 2024

interested stakeholders since the December meeting. A memo will be sent to the Commission members during the summer outlining the additional material. The bill would amend the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (PMPC) by extending and expanding authorizations to adopt and implement specific plans beyond multi-municipal comprehensive plans. This would allow a municipality to adopt and implement a detailed plan for development that is consistent with and an extension of a municipal comprehensive plan. The State Planning Board recommended the amendment noting that the change would cut down on the complexity of the permitting process by clearly defining what is expected of a development. The proposal was submitted to the members of the State Planning Board for feedback and distributed by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to other Commonwealth agencies for input to shape the language of the proposal.

As the last order of business, the Director announced that during the summer the Commission staff will be working on the 5-year Report to the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The Report will highlight the efforts of the Commission over the past five years to facilitate more efficient and effective local government in the Commonwealth. The previous Report was submitted to the General Assembly in 2019. Also, depending on the 2024-2025 Commission budget appropriation, the recruitment of an additional research analyst will begin.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 10, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 515 Irvis Office Building. At that meeting, the Members will review the 2024 resolutions adopted by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors and the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs at their annual conventions.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____
July 2, 2024