Easton, Pennsylvania

A regular meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Margaret L. Ferraro, President; Glenn A. Geissinger, Vice-President; Mathew M. Benol; Kenneth M. Kraft; Lamont G. McClure, Jr.; Scott Parsons; Hayden Phillips; Seth Vaughn; Robert F. Werner; Frank E. Flisser, Clerk to Council, and Philip D. Lauer, Solicitor to Council.

Prayer

Mr. Geissinger led County Council in prayer to open the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Ferraro led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. McClure made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the March 20, 2014 meeting shall be approved.

Mr. Parsons seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by voice acclamation.

Courtesy of the Floor

As no one signed up for Courtesy of the Floor, Mrs. Ferraro asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to offer comments.

There were no respondents.
Recognition of the County of Northampton Sheriff’s Department

Mrs. Ferraro stated on November 15, 2013, ten Deputy Sheriffs administered life saving measures to save the life of a person stricken with a heart attack outside of Courtroom No. 5.

Acting Sheriff Chris Ziegler advised he was present to honor members of the Sheriff’s Department for their action during an incident that took place last November involving Mr. Richard Schaedler. He further advised each member of the Sheriff’s Department was required to attend a 19 week training academy when they are first hired and after that, they were required to attend updated training.

Acting Sheriff Ziegler stated they also received emergency care training that consisted of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid, oxygen administration and use of the automated external defibrillator. He further stated through County Council’s approved funding for this required training, they were here tonight to celebrate a success story.

Acting Sheriff Ziegler called forward Mr. Schaedler, as well as Sergeant Jeffrey Heller, Sergeant Timothy Hornbaker, Deputy Brian Budraitis, Deputy Elaine Feliciano, Deputy Gretchen Kramer, Deputy Scott Kuehner, Deputy Jeffrey Schuler, Deputy Ethan Segreaves, Deputy Mark Surber and Deputy James Underwood to be recognized.

Acting Sheriff Ziegler advised each member of the Sheriff’s Department present received a Letter of Commendation for the actions they took to save the life of Mr. Schaedler.

Mrs. Ferraro read the proclamation that was presented by County Executive John A. Brown to them in appreciation for their heroic efforts.

Lehigh-Northampton Transportation Authority — Armand Greco, Executive Director

Mrs. Ferraro stated Mr. Armand Greco, Executive Director of Lehigh-Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), was present to provide an update on its operation.

Mr. Greco advised Mr. Owen O’Neal, Planning Director, and Mr. Fred Williams, Treasurer, were also present. He then gave a PowerPoint presentation (see Attachment #1).
Mr. Greco stated LANta utilized a fleet of 83 buses to service their fixed routes; had bus stops within ¾ miles of 485,000 residents and utilized 108 paratransit vans for door-to-door service that catered to seniors and persons with disabilities throughout the area.

Mr. Greco advised since 1997, their ridership increased by 60%, noting in 2013, they carried approximately 5 million passengers on their fixed route and more than 400,000 on their door to door service route. He further advised 50% of their riders used their system for work, 12% used it for school and the remaining riders used it for personal needs. He noted approximately 2,000 seniors used their system every day because it allowed them to maintain independence and to access the services they required.

Mr. Greco stated approximately 42% of their operating expenditures was for the use of private contractors for operational services, maintenance tasks, information technology and printing services, sign production and installation, security and janitorial services.

Mr. Greco advised the second page of Attachment #1 provided some numbers for their operation now and in the future. He further advised they were substantially driven by available funds and requirements from the Federal and State governments.

Mr. Greco stated the top portion of this page reflected a five year projection of where they felt operating and capital subsidies would go from Northampton County.

Mr. Greco advised for operating subsidies, Pennsylvania Act 89 had a clause that said local entities should match State dollars at a level of 15% and if they did not, it should grow by 5% a year in order to maintain the level of State dollars available. He further advised each County currently put in approximately 3% of that match.

Mr. Greco stated they received a number of grants from a variety of areas for capital expenses. He further stated 80% of a capital project was paid for with Federal program dollars and the remaining 20% was paid for by State dollars with the County providing 3.3% of that.

Mr. Greco advised the percentage of operating expenses each County would provide under this scenario was approximately 6% and the capital side was approximately .5%.
Mr. Greco stated the third page listed the individuals who were involved in the agency as employees or board members. He further stated the last page were comments received from businesses around the area that recognized the importance of their services.

In response to Mr. Vaughn’s question as to what changed from year to year to justify the increases in their operating expense projections, Mr. Greco advised some of the bigger costs were manpower, fuel and insurance.

In answer to Mr. Phillips’ question as to whether they projected their revenue from ridership, Mr. Greco stated they did. He further stated their revenue was increasing from year to year, but that was based on ridership and fare adjustments.

In response to Mr. Phillips’ question as to what percentage of their expenses was covered by their ridership revenue, Mr. Greco advised it was approximately 25-30%.

In answer to Mr. Phillips’ question as to what their ridership rate was, Mr. Greco stated they had approximately 28 rides per service hour.

In response to Mr. Phillips’ question as to what was the cost of service per trip, Mr. Greco advised it was approximately $3.50.

Mr. McClure stated he parked at the North Street Garage in Bethlehem so he saw a lot of people from all over the Lehigh Valley using the buses to go to work in the morning and told Mr. Greco to keep up the good work.

Mr. Werner advised he was looking forward to the opening of the Easton Intermodal this summer and he wished them the best in the future.

In answer to Mr. McClure’s question as to whether he thought his funding dollars would shrink due to the interest in rails and other modes of transportation, Mr. Greco stated he felt there was a strong effort to keep the balance between the different modes of transportation. He further stated more people used buses than any other mode of transportation so there was a lot of interest in making sure this part of the industry survived.

Mr. Greco advised rail was valuable in many areas, but it was an expensive option, which was the main problem in implementing such a program. He further advised he believed as
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an industry, they were working hard to keep all modes of transportation in the right place.

County Executive's Report

Mr. Brown stated tomorrow at 3:00 p.m., there will be a dedication ceremony for the Human Services Building. He further stated he would like to thank Mr. Thomas Harp, Director of Administration, for all his work in getting the building up and running.

Mr. Brown advised that while Mr. Richard Young, Director of Public Works, was reviewing the bridge projects, he noticed that Bridge 120 was slated for 80% funding from the Federal government and 20% from the County. He further advised Mr. Young discovered due to changes in the transportation bill, that funding shifted to 80% Federal funding and 20% State. He noted that would give back $335,000 to the County to be used for other bridges.

Mr. Brown stated there were no longer any hot water issues in the main building at Gracedale, but it was still being monitored. He further stated problems still existed in the Tower, but they were changing the valves in an effort to remedy the situation.

Mr. Brown advised they were going to be working on some areas of the parking lot at Gracedale that had developed some deep ruts.

Mr. Brown stated he met with Mr. Robert Mateff, Director of Emergency Management Services, to discuss executing a continuity of government plan relating to preparation for natural disasters. He further stated Mr. Mateff was voted to assume the chairperson role for the Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Counterterrorism Task Force.

Mr. Brown advised he wanted to thank Acting Sheriff Zieger for bringing forth his deputies for acknowledgement for the work they did. He further advised from time to time, he planned to bring forth employees for recognition when their work exceeded their standard work.

In response to Mr. Benol's concern pertaining to the lumber that was left uncovered on the roof because of the recent rains, Mr. Brown stated he would look into the matter.
In answer to Mr. Kraft's question as to whether he was going to cancel the Sahl Communications contract, Mr. Brown advised the 30-day cancellation notice had been issued.

In response to Mr. Kraft's comment that he felt the contract was not valid so no County funds should have been expended, Mr. Brown stated it was his assumption that the contract was valid and the withdrawal had nothing to do with the opinions as to whether it was a legal contract.

In answer to Mr. Kraft's question as to who was going to reimburse the County if the contract was deemed illegal, Mr. Brown advised he would leave that for the Solicitor and Procurement Offices to determine.

Consideration of the Resolution Rescinding Resolution No. 28-2014 - Contingency Transfer Resolution

Mrs. Ferraro stated subsequent to the adoption of the resolution allocating funding for the Northampton County Easter Egg Hunt, County Council was informed by Mr. Doran Hamann, Acting Director of Fiscal Affairs, that funding was allocated in the Department of Administration's 2014 budget, therefore, County Council's Contingency funding was not necessary so it was being rescinded.

In response to Mr. McClure's question as to whether this funding had its own line item in the budget, Mr. Flisser advised it was part of a line item, but he could not remember what that was at this time.

Mrs. Ferraro introduced the following resolution:

R. 30-2014  WHEREAS, County Council adopted Resolution No. 28-2014 allocated funding for the Northampton County Easter Egg Hunt;

WHEREAS, it was subsequently determined that the necessary funding was contained in the budget of the Department of Administration.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Resolution No. 28-2014 is hereby rescinded.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote.
Introduction of the Gracedale Basement Ordinance

Mrs. Ferraro stated at the request of the County Executive, a utility easement ordinance was drafted for a County-owned piece of property located at the Gracedale campus. She further stated the review of the ordinance would be held at the Finance Committee meeting on April 23, 2014 with the public hearing, debate and possible vote scheduled for the April 24, 2014 meeting.

Messrs. Vaughn and Geissinger introduced the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF AN EASEMENT ON NORTHAMPTON COUNTY-OWNED REAL PROPERTY IN THE TOWNSHIP OF UPPER NAZARETH, COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON, PENNSYLVANIA TO UGI UTILITIES, INC.

WHEREAS, Northampton County Home Rule Charter Article 602 (a)(6) provides that the Northampton County Council shall enact an ordinance for any act which "conveys or leases or authorizes the conveyance or lease of any real property of the County."; and

WHEREAS, UGI Utilities, Inc. has requested an easement across County-owned land in the Township of Upper Nazareth, Northampton County, Pennsylvania.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED by the Northampton County Council that it does hereby agree to grant, in consideration of Twenty-Seven Thousand and Forty-Nine Dollars ($27,049.00), an easement, on Northampton County-owned lands located in the Township of Upper Nazareth, County of Northampton, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (being part of the property described in a deed dated September 30, 1971 and recorded in the Northampton County Recorder of Deeds Office in and for Northampton County on October 20, 1971 in Deed Book Volume 412, Page 285, being part of the property further described Tax Identifier Number: J7 14 3 PKB 0432C), to UGI Utilities, Inc. according to the terms and conditions of the
easement agreement (a copy of which is attached and labeled as Attachment "A").

In answer to Mr. McClure's question as to how the purchase price for the easement was arrived at, Mr. Scott Seagraves, Engineer with UGI, advised it was based on the square footage.

In response to Mr. McClure's question as to whether this was how it was normally done and were appraisals ever gotten by the owner of the properties, Mr. Seagraves stated it was their normal practice and there have been times when the property owner obtained their own appraisals, but not usually.

Consideration of Workers Memorial Day Resolution

Mrs. Ferraro advised at the request of Mr. McClure, a resolution was prepared recognizing April 27, 2014 as Workers Memorial Day.

Mr. McClure introduced the following resolution:

R. 31-2014  WHEREAS, every year tens of thousands of American workers are killed by workplace injuries and occupational disease; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands more are permanently disabled; and

WHEREAS, millions are injured or made ill; and

WHEREAS, concerned Americans are determined to prevent these tragedies by:

• Observing Workers Memorial Day on April 27, 2014, as a day to remember these victims of workplace injuries and disease;

• Renewing our efforts to seek stronger safety and health protections, better standards and enforcement and fair and just compensation; and

• Rededicating ourselves to improving safety and health in every American workplace.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Northampton County Council does hereby recognize and proclaim April 27, 2014 as Workers Memorial Day, a day to remember those workers killed, injured and/or disabled on the job.

In answer to Mr. Benol’s question as to how was this day acknowledged, Mr. McClure stated there was a ceremony at Rose Garden Park in Bethlehem for individuals who have lost a loved one at work in the Lehigh Valley.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote.


The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Borton Lawson

Mr. Phillips advised Borton Lawson was requested to provide a 40 minute presentation with regard to the status of the bridge project at a County Council meeting.

In response to Mr. McClure’s question as to whether the County was using any other consultants in addition to Borton Lawson, Mr. Brown stated he did not know, but he would obtain that information for him.

Economic Development Committee Report

Mrs. Ferraro advised the Economic Development Committee met earlier this evening and an extensive report was given by Dr. David DeRemer, Chair of the Housing Authority. She further advised he spoke about the Cooperative Agreement with the Northampton and Lehigh Counties and how they were combining some of the work done for efficiency and cost.
Mrs. Ferraro stated Ms. Lynn Prior, Director of Buy Fresh Buy Local - Greater Lehigh Valley, spoke on the farming community, local produce that was available and how buying local boosted the County's economy.

Adjournment

Mr. Kraft made a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Ferraro seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously by acclamation.

Frank E. Flisser
Clerk to Council