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 (via telephone); Mathew M. Benol; Kenneth M. Kraft; Scott Parsons; Hayden Phillips; Seth Vaughn; Robert P. Werner; Frank E. Flisser, Clerk to Council, and Philip D. Lauer, Solicitor to Council. Absent was Lamont G. McClure, Jr.

Prayer

Mrs. Ferraro 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. Kraft made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the January 9, 2014 meeting shall be approved.

Mr. Phillips seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by voice acclamation.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Daniel Spengler, Allen Township - stated there had been some discussions with regards to returning the office of Sheriff to an elected position as it was when Northampton County had Commissioners. He further stated he felt this was not a good idea because it should be a professional position. He noted if it was an elected position, the Sheriff would not have to follow the safe guards that were built into the civil service rules of hiring and he did not think the County could afford to take that risk.
Mr. Spengler advised there were certain offices in the County that he felt should not be political. He further advised perhaps a solution would be to make this appointment during the even years and not when there was an election, which would allow the County Executive to see what kind of job the Sheriff was doing.

Consideration of the County Executive’s Nominees to Department Director Positions: a. Department of Human Services; b. Department of Community and Economic Development

Department of Human Services

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:

R. 5-2014 RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that Allison E. Frantz shall be confirmed in her appointment as Director of the Department of Human Services, salary range Group VI, $87,838 to $124,975, effective January 23, 2014. The salary shall be at Step 3-C, $95,921 of the salary range.

Mr. Werner stated the Personnel Committee met yesterday wherein the nominees spoke and answered questions.

Mr. Vaughn advised he was going to be the Chairperson of the Human Services Committee so he wanted to know what Ms. Frantz’s vision was for the department.

Ms. Frantz stated she felt in Human Services it was extremely important that the financial component had an equal partnership with the program component. She further stated when there were quality perspectives with a fiscal overlay, the clients received the best service while being fiscally responsible and her vision was to do just that in all the divisions.

Mr. Werner advised he appreciated the County Executive’s privilege of offering well qualified nominees to County Council and respected the information provided by them yesterday. However, he was going to vote against this appointment because he had a concern with the ability of this candidate to begin working from day one with expertise in the arenas she was going to be involved in. He further advised this position should not be viewed as on-the-job training at the salary range and high
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stakes involved, therefore, County Council would be prudent to take a hard look at the appointee.

Mr. Werner stated he felt this way because there was little discussion regarding Gracedale and Ms. Frantz indicated the largest number of employees she supervised was eight. He further stated the Department of Human Services touched the lives of more than 18,000 individuals and it was imperative the individual had fundamental knowledge of nursing home operations especially since it encompassed a large part of the County’s budget.

Mr. Werner advised the Department of Human Services had approximately 992 positions, of which 887 were full time. He further advised Gracedale had a total of 883 employees, of which 557 were full time.

Mr. Werner stated he would respectively suggest County Council take a harder look at the appointee to make sure the individual being brought in at this salary range was capable of handling those types of operations.

Mr. Parsons advised the only concern he had in appointing this individual was Ms. Frantz did not show experience in management and her pay grade was in the middle of the salary range.

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


The resolution was adopted by a vote of 5-3.

Department of Community and Economic Development

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:

R. 6-2014 RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that Diane D. Donaher shall be confirmed in her appointment as Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development, salary range Group V, $80,113 to $114,039,
effective January 23, 2014. The salary shall be at Step 2-B, $83,718 of the salary range.

Mr. Werner stated although he appreciated the positions, background and non-profit abilities of Ms. Donaher, he did not feel she had the expertise to manage the millions of dollars in land, buildings and assets in the County, especially considering the new promises from the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation and million dollar recruitment strategies that have not occurred yet.

Mr. Werner advised she did not have a strong enough demographic background of the Lehigh Valley and as the County was trying to gain economic development, he felt it needed someone with a stronger background so he would not be able to support this appointment.

Mr. Kraft stated Ms. Donaher appeared to be very strong in community development, but not in economic development, noting it had been more than ten years since she worked for the City of Bethlehem Department of Economic Development.

Mr. Werner advised the County Executive had indicated that community and economic development was a priority for him, but by presenting this nomination for which the County was going to spend a half a million dollars in four years, he hoped County Council would do the fiscally responsible thing for the taxpayers and appoint someone who was a real power house in community and economic development and knew everyone involved in economic development.

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

The vote: Kraft, "no"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "yes"; Werner, "no"; Vaughn, "yes"; Benol, "yes"; Ferraro, "yes" and Geissinger, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by the vote of 5-2.

Consideration of the Solicitor’s Office Reorganization

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:
R. 7-2014 RESOLVED, by County Council of Northampton County that the two (2) full-time positions of Assistant County Solicitor, pay grade CE-IV, salary range $66,638 to $94,812, shall be eliminated effective January 27, 2014.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the two (2) part-time positions of Assistant County Solicitor, pay grade RS-08, salary $42,537, shall be created effective January 27, 2014.

Mr. Parsons stated during the last two years, the County Solicitor had come before County Council requesting more help so it could reduce the amount of litigation being done by outside contractors and a position of full time Assistant Solicitor was approved. He further stated his concern was that the County was going to find itself in the previous position of outsourcing a lot of its legal work and in a year, they were going to be back requesting positions so he could not support it.

Mr. Kraft advised he spoke with County Solicitor Victor Scomillio who felt some of the work could be done through technology, but indicated he would hold him accountable if there was an increase in outsourcing legal fees again.

Mr. Benol stated he found Mr. Scomillio’s approach refreshing in taking a look at his department and stepping into the modern age of technology and hoped other departments would do the same. He further stated he felt Mr. Scomillio had a good handle on what he was doing with these positions, but he would agree with Mr. Kraft in holding him accountable if there was an overabundance of outsourcing funds required.

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


The resolution was adopted by a vote of 6-2.

Mr. Benol left the meeting at this time.
Confirmation of Appointments

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:

R. 8-2014 RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that the following individuals shall be confirmed in their appointments/re-appointments as indicated hereafter:

ELECTION COMMISSION

Appointment:  
Republican Party  
Joshua Weinstein  
170 Augusta Terrace  
Easton PA 18042

Term to Expire: 12/31/15

Re-appointments:  
Republican Party  
Mary K. Diggs  
926 Merrivale Road  
Bethlehem PA 18017

Terms to Expire: 12/31/15

Joan Rosenthal  
3315 Harmor Lane  
Bethlehem PA 18017

Democratic Party  
Marques S. Grundy  
1103 West Berwick Street  
Easton PA 18042

George H. Treisner, Jr.  
236 East Ettwein Street  
Bethlehem PA 18018-4137

GENERAL PURPOSE AUTHORITY

Re-appointment:  
Mark Schiavone  
1002 Walnut Street  
Bangor PA 18013

Term to Expire: 12/31/18
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HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Re-appointments:
J. Michael Dowd
25 Chestnut Ridge Circle
Easton PA 18042

Mark Schiavone
1002 Walnut Street
Bangor PA 18013

HOSPITAL AUTHORITY

Appointment:
John A. Brown
County Executive
500 South 7th Street
Bangor PA 18013

LEHIGH VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

Appointments:
Youth Workforce Department
Lin Erickson
3564 Bethman Road
Easton PA 18045

Youth Workforce Department
Kevin Lott
319 Durham Street
Hellertown PA 18055

MENTAL HEALTH, EARLY INTERVENTION & DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS ADVISORY BOARD

Appointment:
Michael W. Kaufmann, M.D.
3479 Bingen Road
Bethlehem PA 18015

Terms to Expire: 12/31/18

Terms to Expire: 12/31/18

Terms to Expire: N/A

Term to Expire: 1/23/17
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NORTHAMPTON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Re-appointment: Term to Expire: 2/9/19
Karen L. Whitehill
787 South Delps Road
Bath PA 18014

RETIREMENT BOARD

Appointments: Terms to Expire: 12/31/15
John A. Brown
County Executive
500 South 7th Street
Bangor PA 18013

Glenn A. Geissinger
County Council Member
1701 Rolling Meadow Drive
Pen Argyl PA 18072

Mr. Kraft advised there was a question on the appointment of Mr. George Treisner to the Election Commission and asked Mr. Scomillio to reveal his findings.

Mr. Scomillio stated he was asked to determine the situation regarding the potential filings or lack of filings by Mr. Treisner with Voters Registration. He further stated earlier today, he met with the personnel at Voters Registration and was informed they did not find any records filed by this appointee, but there were records filed by the candidate in question himself wherein there were fines levied and paid.

Mr. Scomillio advised there was no record of Mr. Treisner being the treasurer of the committee. He further advised whether there were dealings with the candidate in his filings or statements to the committee that was another issue so he did not see a problem with this appointment.

In answer to Mr. Phillips’ question as to what the other issue may be, Mr. Scomillio stated he was not fully apprised of all the background on this candidate and what he had publicized or not publicized. He further stated the personnel at Voters
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Registration informed him there may have been some signage where there was reference to it being paid for by a political action committee. He noted he was not aware of a political action committee formed and this appointee being on that committee.

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

The vote: Geissinger, "yes"; Kraft, "yes"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "yes"; Werner, "yes"; Vaughn, "yes" and Ferraro, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 7-0.

County Executive’s Report

Mr. John A. Brown, County Executive, advised he wanted to thank County Council for their support on the appointments of Ms. Frantz and Ms. Donaher. He further advised he recognized the concerns of County Council and felt everyone had concerns about the operation of the County going forward, but he wanted to assure everyone that his intention was to make sure these appointments worked well and provided the services and efficiencies the County needed overall.

Mr. Brown stated his agenda for 2014 was to learn how to operate this County in a cost effective way and as the year progressed, he would present his plans in how he felt it could be done to County Council for its support.

Mr. Brown advised taxes had to be kept as low as possible without sacrificing the core operations of the County. He further advised they had to ensure that services were delivered safely and efficiently because sacrificing services was not the way to operate the County. He noted the economy had to be strengthened by bringing jobs and new businesses to the area and the communities had to be strengthened overall.

Mr. Brown stated he was asking each department head to review their operations with regard to the use of technology as the Solicitor had done. He further stated the County had to manage and control its costs and he planned to look into the figures and bring their recommendations to County Council.

Mr. Brown advised the County had to work regionally, noting there were organizations and groups out there interested in making sure the County was working well, the economy was
growing, jobs were increasing and a high level of services were continually provided.

Mr. Brown stated he has been meeting with department heads to lay out his vision and his expectations for them to operate efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Brown advised Gracedale was a very important part of this County in a number of ways. He further advised he was looking at a strategy plan to hold the current management company more accountable while continuing to provide a high level of service to the residents.

Consideration of the Revised Human Services Pay Scales

Mr. Kraft stated in order to match the State’s maximums and be reimbursed for positions in the Human Services Administrative and PSSU pay scales, which were changed effective July 1, 2013 and January 1, 2014, County Council had to approve them.

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:

R. 9-2014  WHEREAS, the Northampton County Council adopted resolution #61-2013 which adopted pay scale for certain full-time County employees, including the 2013 Department of Human Services Civil Service (Non-Union) Administrative Staff Pay Scale and the 2013 PSSU Employees Pay Scale (Union); and

WHEREAS, the Northampton County Council adopted resolution #107-2013 which adopted pay scale for certain full-time County employees, including the 2014 Department of Human Services Civil Service (Non-Union) Administrative Staff Pay Scale and the 2014 PSSU Employees Pay Scale (Union); and

WHEREAS, on January 14, 2014, the Department of Human Resources indicated that due to changes in State maximum allowable salaries, it became necessary to revise the 2013 and 2014 Human Services Civil Service (Non-Union) Administrative Staff Pay Scale and the PSSU Employees Pay Scale (Union).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that the 2013 and 2014 pay scales for Human Services Civil Service (Non-Union) Administrative Staff and PSSU (Union) shall be revised to read as indicated on the attached document (refer to Exhibit "A"). The 2013 and 2014 revisions shall be retroactive to July 1, 2013 and January 1, 2014, respectively.
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As there were no questions or comments, Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote.

The vote: Kraft, "yes"; Vaughn, "yes"; Ferraro, "yes"; Geissinger, "yes"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "yes" and Werner, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 7-0.

Consideration of the Resolution Correcting Resolution No.105-2013

Mr. Kraft advised this resolution was being presented to change the title and salary range of a position that was approved previously by County Council.

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:

R. 10-2014 RESOLVED, By the Northampton County Council that resolution #105-2013 shall be amended as indicated hereafter (sections marked with strikethrough have been deleted, sections marked with bold underline have been added):

a. one (1) part-time position of Park Attendant Security (1.00 FTE), pay grade CS-16 RU-06, salary range $18,172 to $26,642 $25,855.

b. two (2) full-time positions of Groundskeeper (2.00 FTE), pay grade RU-15, salary range $27,502 to $39,130.

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

The vote: Kraft, "yes"; Ferraro, "yes"; Vaughn, "yes"; Werner, "yes"; Phillips, "yes"; Parsons, "yes" and Geissinger, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 7-0.

Bridge Pilot Program

Mr. Werner stated he wanted to thank Mr. Carl McGloughlin - Transportation Project Manager, Borton-Lawson; Mr. Tom Kohler -
Bridges and Mr. Steven DeSalva - Director, Northampton County Department of Public Works; State Representative Robert Freeman; State Senator Lisa Boscola and Mr. Benoi, who reached out to United States Representative Charles Dent and others who were involved in following up on the Bridge Pilot Program, which was part of Act 89, the new Transportation Funding Law. He further stated if everything went well, by the mid part of this year there would be $188 million available for bridges to be worked on by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). He noted the County was talking about obtaining $28 million for its bridges and if it became part of this program, some of those costs could be deferred.

Mrs. Ferraro commended Mr. Werner for his research and finding this program and asked what he felt the County’s chances were.

Mr. Werner advised he was very optimistic because of his talks with Harrisburg; Mr. Doug Hill of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania and Mr. Scott Christie, PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration. He further advised Mr. McGloughlin and Mr. DeSalva were working on a data base to present to the committees to show what bridges were in close proximity and in need of repairs so they could be bundled together.

**Capital Projects and Operations Committee Report**

Mr. Phillips stated he was putting together a mission statement and planned to report to County Council on a quarterly basis the status of all the projects.

Mr. Brown advised he knew receiving the status and costs of capital projects in a timely fashion had been a challenge for County Council. He further advised he spent the last three months working with Mr. DeSalva going over how they could improve that going forward. He noted he also spoke with Mr. Al Jordan, Xerox Director of Information Services, as to what software the County should be using and they have adopted a Microsoft Project. He further noted they have brought in some outside resources to determine where the County was with every capital project and creating a website wherein a member of County Council could find out the status of any project at any time.
Mr. DeSalva provided a handout regarding the status of some of the County's projects (see Attachment #1).

With regard to the emergency generators at Gracedale, Mr. DeSalva stated the Request for Proposals (RFP), which he felt was one of the most important stages of a project because that was when the expertise was provided to design the project correctly, were due on January 27, 2014. He further stated after they were received, they would be reviewed and a selection would be made as expeditiously as possible so a bid specification could be put together and put out to obtain a qualified contractor.

When Mr. Werner asked if the flooding problem in the Boiler House where the generators would be placed was addressed, Mr. DeSalva advised the Boiler Room was not getting a new generator. He further advised the Boiler House had three brand new boilers and an existing emergency generator, which was at risk when the nearby creek flooded the area.

Mr. DeSalva stated the bond included storm water management remediation for that area and the RFP was currently being developed. He further stated when that was fully developed, it would go out to get designs from engineers. He noted a feasibility study was already done which gave an estimate of $300,000 and they had a preliminary concept of how they were going to approach the problem.

In response to Mr. Werner's question as to whether the State inspection was done at Gracedale, Mr. DeSalva advised an inspection was done and there were some issues that were being addressed.

Mr. Werner asked if there had been any discussions with regard to incorporating the generators in the Guaranteed Energy Savings Act (GESA) or tagging into the peak power programs to save money.

Mr. DeSalva stated they were going through the conventional RFP process for design to create a bid package for construction. He further stated he did talk to two energy savings companies to see if they could develop, compatible to the County's current system, a proposal that would work in a GESA agreement, but he did not think the County's system allowed it.
Mr. DeSalva advised for the past GESA, the County copied off the State, but the State did not have that same program any longer. He further advised he hoped the energy savings companies could do the investigative work and inform the County as to how it should proceed with the paperwork and process to conform to the requirements of the Administrative Code in order to go through GESA.

In answer to Mr. Werner's question with regard to the status of the computer room, Mr. DeSalva stated it was expected to be completed by the end of June 2014, with the majority of the work done by May.

In response to Mr. Werner's question as to the status of the elevator at Gracedale, Mr. DeSalva advised it was moving along and it was anticipated to be completed by the end of April 2014. He further advised he always held a lot more than the value of the work as incentive to make sure the project was completed properly and totally.

In answer to Mr. Kraft's question as to whether he put a 10% retention of monies for a year stipulation in a contract to make sure a project got completed, Mr. DeSalva stated the State law allowed a 10% retention up until the project was 50% complete and then only 5% could be retained. He further stated he waited until the second to last payment and sometimes retained more than 5% depending on the work that was done to ensure accurate completion, noting the contractors usually did an excellent job, but were slow on completing the punch list items.

In response to Mr. Kraft's question as to whether the computer room had to go through a design phase before it was bid, Mr. DeSalva advised it was being done by a sole source company that had already been qualified by the State.

In answer to Mr. Kraft's question as to why this project was not made part of the GESA projects, Mr. DeSalva stated there were a lot of other projects that were of higher priority and it would not have provided enough energy savings.
Open Space Committee Report

Mr. Parsons advised the Open Space Committee would be meeting as soon as he obtains a date from Mr. Geissinger because there were some municipal parks projects and possibly an open space project to be presented.

Agricultural Extension Liaison Report

Mr. Parsons stated two years ago, the Penn State Agricultural Extension was reorganized State-wide so they did not meet at all last year. He further stated this year they had four Advisory Board meetings scheduled and he was looking forward to working with them.

County Council Solicitor’s Report

Mr. Lauer advised he had sent his opinion regarding a question Mr. Geissinger raised with regard to terms of the members of the various authorities, boards and commissions.

Mr. Lauer stated Judge Leonard Zito had entered an Order finding in favor of County Council in the litigation of County Council versus the County Executive pertaining to the transportation contract at Gracedale.

Adjournment

Mr. Kraft made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Parsons seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously by acclamation.

Frank E. Flisser
Clerk to Council

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