Easton, Pennsylvania

September 5, 2019

A regular meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Ronald R. Heckman, President; Lori Vargo Heffner, Vice President; John Cusick; Matthew H. Dietz; Margaret L. Ferraro; Kevin Lott; William B. McGee; Robert F. Werner; Tara M. Zrinski; Linda M. Zembo, Clerk to Council and Christopher T. Spadoni, Solicitor to Council.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. McGee led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes – August 15, 2019

Ms. Zrinski made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the August 15, 2019 meeting shall be approved.

Ms. Vargo Heffner seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by voice acclamation.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Chris Moren, 621 Broad Street, Tatamy, PA – stated he was the Mayor of Tatamy Borough and wanted to discuss the P3 Bridge Project and the issues his borough was facing. He further stated the contractor demolished a third of their bridge in April that left them high and dry after being promised it would be done in six weeks.

Mayor Moren advised it was obvious the bridge would not get done by the end of the year, but at this point he would like someone to help get the job site secured. He suggested County Council revisit this project and bring the 33 bridges back under County ownership.

In answer to Mr. Heckman’s question as to whether he had addressed the General Purpose Authority, Mayor Moren stated he was going to their next meeting.
Presentation by Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC)

Ms. Tina Smith, Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development, advised herself, Mr. Michael Emili, Director of the Department of Public Works; Mr. Bryan Cope, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, and Ms. Maria Bentzoni, Farmland Preservation Administrator, met with LVPC to discuss the Northampton Future LV Comments and Suggestions in detail. She further advised the plan being reviewed tonight was in draft form so the changes they discussed would not be reflected in it.

Ms. Becky Bradley introduced Mr. Matt Assad, Managing Editor; Mr. Peter Barnard, Director of Community Planning; Tracy Oscavich, Director of Development, and Geoffrey Reese, Director of Environmental Planning.

Ms. Bradley stated Future LV was a regional plan that was a defining document for them. She further stated they talked with the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS), which was a separate board and the Federally-designated metropolitan planning organization for this region, about how they could give each other some standing as it related to tying some transportation and land use decisions together because if there was a development that did not work and it adversely affected the transportation system and vice-a-versa there would be issues.

Ms. Bradley advised they felt this would be a good opportunity to create one vision for the Lehigh Valley and tie some transportation funding to it.

Mr. Assad stated over the last two years they had 170 public meetings attended by more than 800 people and met with 209 stakeholder organizations. He further stated they provided a 31 question survey to every zip code in the Lehigh Valley and received 1100 responses.

Mr. Assad advised the survey showed natural resources, roads and bridges, farmland, emergency services and sewer and water were among the top priorities. He further advised it also showed that parks, trails and recreation activities were what people liked most about living in the Lehigh Valley and second was natural lands and farmlands.

Mr. Assad stated the Lehigh Valley was one of the fastest growing regions in Pennsylvania and when this plan ended it was estimated there would be approximately 837,000 new residents.
He further stated the central theme of this plan was to manage that growth while preserving all the things people loved.

Ms. Bradley advised they wanted to organize the plans of both LVPC and LVTS for people to understand so they set forth five main goals, 24 total policies and a series of actions around them. She further advised they also wanted it so other specific plans, such as the hazard mitigation plan, could plug in. She noted a goal was what they wanted to accomplish, a policy was why they wanted it accomplished and the action was how it was going to be achieved.

Ms. Bradley stated people wanted a balance between growth, preservation and mobility, which all relied on access, cost, diversified transportation and the incorporation of new technology. She further stated there have been more flooding events, which tied into the climate change conservation, so consideration had to be given as to how they would support the emergency management providers and municipal governments in their storm water efforts.

Ms. Bradley advised housing costs were increasing so they had to look at how to accommodate the next generation in a fair and equal manner. She further advised health was a new theme for the plan and they had to look at how they could support a healthier community overall, which tied into culture, funding and finance. She noted they were also looking at technology and how to support local government activities.

Ms. Bradley stated they could not put everything on one map so they divided it up into a series of five maps according to their priority. She further stated they included natural resources; farmland preservation; parks, outdoor recreation, open space and scenic resources; transportation plan and then the general land use plan.

Mr. Reese advised Policy 1.1 was for the management of growth and development to enhance cities and boroughs, strengthen suburbs and preserve rural areas and open space. He further advised Policy 1.2 dealt with the direct growth by establishing a network of mixed-use centers and mixed-transportation corridors.

Mr. Reese stated Policy 1.3 was the maintaining or retention of regional character by preserving natural, historical, cultural, scenic and agricultural assets. He
further stated Policy 1.4 was to encourage an efficient development process that was responsive to regional needs.

Mr. Reese stated the General Land Use Plan was a culmination of this and was required by Pennsylvania Municipality Planning Code. He further advised they heard significant commentary on the draft of this map and LVPC was working through those comments and creating a revised map that better represented the priorities they heard.

Mr. Barnard advised their second major goal was to have a connected mixed-transportation region. He further advised the central idea of this tied into Policy 2.1, which was to develop a mixed-transportation network to support a more compact development pattern, optimize roadway capacity and encourage alternative travel options.

Mr. Barnard stated this was built around a new idea that was called Centers and Corridors, noting a Center was an economic area that already existed. He further stated those areas were divided into Historic Centers, Post-War Centers and Emerging Centers.

Mr. Barnard advised a Historic Center was an area that already had a lot of mixed use and was developed pre-automobile so it was very walkable; Post-War Centers were areas largely developed post World War II and were mostly for commercial and retail use, but a lot of them were tied into the transportation network; Emerging Centers were post-recession areas that had a mix of both Historic and Post-War features.

Mr. Barnard stated to look at how these were all connected they established a network of Corridors. He further stated the first set of Corridors was Regional Highways, which were the major highways; Express Bus, which was a rapid transit line that was the Federally approved Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) plan to connect Easton and Bethlehem to Allentown and Whitehall; Major Corridors, which were areas that already had LANTA service, but they were looking at ways to expand the options in those areas to support them going forward; Commuter Trails, which was where they wanted to look at ways to use the regional trails to interconnect economic centers and residential neighborhoods to make them accessible through healthy alternative modes of transportation.
Mr. Barnard advised Policy 2.2 was to provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently while capitalizing on existing infrastructure. He further advised Policy 2.3 was to encourage enhanced transit connections to improve mobility and job access.

Ms. Bradley stated there were some key renderings throughout the plan that could be viewed on LVPC’s website. She further stated these renderings provided visions on how to retrofit the road system to accommodate all the different types of uses.

Ms. Bradley advised they were looking to create Corridors that would support the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved bus/rapid transit plan that LANTA had. She further advised the FTA required them to prove enhanced bus/bus rapid transit before they could move toward a fixed guideway system or light rail system.

Mr. Barnard stated Policy 2.4 was to strengthen freight mobility to minimize quality of life impacts to residents. He further stated this tied the transportation and land use pieces together, as well as supporting expansion of technology to optimize transportation numbers and ensure the highest and best use of available funds to meet the regional transportation needs.

Mr. Reese advised Policy 3.1 was to conserve and manage natural lands and water resources for environmental and recreational benefits. He further advised Policy 3.2 was to minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Mr. Reese stated the Natural Resources Plan was an evaluation of various natural resources within the two Counties and organized in terms of their importance for economic and aesthetic purposes. He further stated if an area was defined as a high priority natural resources area, it would be the recommendation to move forward with preserving them.

Mr. Reese advised Priority 3.3 was to preserve farmland to maintain rural character and provide open space. He further advised Priority 3.4 was to reduce climate change impacts through mitigation and adaption.
Mr. Reese stated the one thing they were striving to do with the Farmland Preservation Plan was to support thoroughly farmland preservation efforts by the Counties and identify the high and medium preservation priorities. He noted Climate Change was a very key issue for LVPC and the Lehigh Valley due to its implications on natural resources and infrastructure.

Ms. Oscavich advised Policy 4.1 was to enhance growth by rooting economic development strategies in the unique competitive advantages of the region and Policy 4.2 was to continue diversification of the regional economy to strengthen economic resilience.

Ms. Oscavich stated the shopping mall at Whitehall Mall at MacArthur Road and Grape Street, Whitehall Township was a Post-War Center that had existing public infrastructure, but really big private investments were located there so they had to look at how it could look in the future with the change in dynamics of the retail environment.

Ms. Oscavich advised Policy 4.3 was to improve equity by encouraging the creation of living wage jobs, the development of a well-trained workforce and the removal of barriers to employment and Policy 4.4 was to support agriculture and open space as essential components of the regional economy and identity.

Mr. Reese stated they also looked at farming as a business because farming is manufacturing so they provided information throughout the document in terms of economic impact and benefit of agriculture.

Ms. Bradley advised this was one of the key ideas that came from talking with members of the public, farmers and farmland preservation professionals because farmers wanted to be taken seriously from a public policy perspective as businesses and be considered as business people.

Ms. Oscavich stated Policy 4.5 was to provide a wide variety of attainable housing in locations that maximize social and economic opportunities for everyone and Policy 4.6 was to promote the fiscal health and sustainability of municipalities.

Mr. Reese advised they had to look at expanding housing options in suburban areas to attract younger adults that could not afford large suburban homes and for older adults that wanted to stay in the community.
Mr. Barnard stated Policy 5.1 was to promote safe and secure community design and emergency management and Policy 5.2 was to increase social and economic access to daily needs for all people.

Mr. Reese advised they were looking at creating a fully complete and functional multi-use trail as green infrastructure was an important part of reducing environmental impacts from storm water and development. He further advised they had to look at how trails could create opportunities to connect heritage, natural areas and recreational areas, as well as healthy commuting options by providing safe routes between neighborhoods and regional destination.

Mr. Barnard stated Policy 5.3 was to create community spaces that promote physical and mental health and Policy 5.4 was to promote development that complemented the unique history, environment, culture and needs of the Lehigh Valley.

Mr. Reese advised the Parks, Outdoor Recreation, Open Space and Scenic Plan was a generalized plan showing regional assets; details of which were associated with the Northampton County Livable Landscapes Plan adopted a few years ago.

Mr. Barnard stated the Historic Corridor Revitalization Concept was a place that had a lot of economic vitality and life, but did not necessarily show it so they had to look at making sure they were enhancing and strengthening that community and bringing it to full life while also incorporating things like good transit infrastructure, strong sidewalks and bicycle and pedestrian areas.

Mr. Barnard advised this was a regional plan so it was going to take regional partnerships to implement it. He further advised it was a vision that would build off the success the Lehigh Valley had in terms of adapting to changes in its economy before.

Ms. Bradley stated there was a Call to Action section and emphasized it took many partners to deliver and grow a vision and make it a reality. She further stated LVPC and LVTS have talked about some after action work that could support the implementation of all these goals, policies and actions.

Mr. Barnard advised an important piece of implementing this plan was the fact they reviewed all subdivision and development plans against the Comprehensive Plan, as well as a number of
other pieces as required by the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code.

Ms. Bradley stated the public review and comment period was opened through September 23, 2019 and anyone could send comments to Planning@LVPC.org. She further stated all of the comments were logged and they were going to be responding to them through a formal public comment document and there would be a work session on September 19, 2019 where they would be looking at some of the comments and make suggestive edits to the draft plan and then they would meet again in October.

Ms. Bradley advised LVTS had very specific Federal rules and requirements for portions of the plan and they have been meeting quite a bit lately as they were looking at reorganizing the transportation list. She further advised the plan had to be adopted by LVTS on October 2, 2019 in order to keep transportation funding going to projects that were in the construction process now.

Ms. Bradley stated once LVTS adopted the plan, it had to go to the Federal government to decide if they wanted to accept it and that should occur between October and November. She further stated after the Federal government signed off on it the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) had to incorporate it into their plan so funding could eventually flow to projects.

As far as the County’s planning responsibilities in this was concerned, Ms. Bradley advised they were reviewing comments and editing the draft plan. She further advised the Environment and Comprehensive Planning Committees met at the end of every month with the next one being on September 24, 2019.

Ms. Bradley stated the Transportation Committee of LVPC would be meeting on September 26, 2019, followed by a meeting of the full commission. She further stated they planned to present the final document to the full commission by the end of October and to County Council for consideration some time in November.

In response to Mr. McGee’s question as to where they were with the comments that were submitted by the Administration, Ms. Bradley advised they met with Mr. Cope, Ms. Bertzoni, Mr. Emili and Ms. Smith yesterday and it was agreed to make the changes and bring them to LVPC, LVTS and the other appropriate bodies.
Mr. McGee stated the census was going to play an important role when going from buses to passenger rail so he wanted to know if there was a certain number that had to be obtained.

Ms. Bradley advised they had to be certain to meet the threshold for enhanced bus and in order to do that there had to have more people. She further advised they knew they had more people than being counted so that was why the 2020 census was so important not only for transportation funding, but also road and bridge funding.

In answer to Ms. Zrinski’s question as to why this plan was for 25 years and not ten, Ms. Bradley stated they were required to make it at least 20 years when including the transportation piece. She further stated they were a long range planning agency and this would allow them be prepared for the future.

In response to Ms. Zrinski’s question as to how this plan was going to help municipalities that were bombarded with curative amendments, Ms. Bradley advised this plan could serve as a basis for them and give them strength to amend their zoning because their plans were to be consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. She further advised under State law they had to show areas for growth that were not already developed.

In answer to Ms. Zrinski’s question as to how would they optimize roadway capacity and encourage alternative travel options in an area like Bath Borough, Ms. Bradley stated about a year and a half ago they did a multi-modal transportation study. She further stated they did not designate any major direction of truck movements through Bath on purpose because that kept transportation in areas that had a lot of transportation already.

Ms. Bradley advised Bath Borough had a few other issues because it was an intersection of five State roads and the Pennsylvania legislature voted to allow tractor trailers on every road in the Commonwealth last year. She further advised unless Bath Borough and/or PennDOT went through a complicated engineering study that would limit trucks from those roads they would have to allow the trucks on every road.

Ms. Bradley stated the Lehigh Valley Area Freight Study that was just drafted in partnership with all the municipal governments, both Counties, Airport Authority, LVPC and PennDOT identified some of those problems so they hoped they would be able to apply a variety of grants to solve some of the problems.
Mr. Lott advised this area was the fastest growing freight corridor in the country and it took about 5000-7000 cars to do the damage to a road and/or bridge that one truck did. He further advised a third of the State funding was lost over the next four years because the State used interstate highways when they decided who was going to receive the cuts.

Mr. Lott stated there were Counties that had no growth that were not receiving any cuts because they had an interstate highway going through them. He further stated they gave this area economic development funding, but it was not going to support it with infrastructure.

Mr. Lott advised he understood this was a regional plan, but it was tough to be regional when Northampton County was receiving less than half the funding to do projects so he hoped when the plan was finalized things were changed.

Ms. Bradley stated LVTS was holding meetings and reviewing the list so she did not think that list was going to stay the same. She further stated they were going back and forth to see how they could bring more of the unfunded items for Northampton County onto the funded list.

Ms. Bradley advised the short range could not change that much because PennDOT spent money on most of the projects in the current long range transportation plan so if they did not move forward on them, they would have to pay that money back. She further advised she felt they could get a lot things in the medium or long range funding that were not there now.

Mr. Werner asked with all the infrastructure problems that were occurring with the warehouses was there a way to get corporate structures behind these warehouses to pay to resolve some of the issues for the local communities.

Ms. Bradley advised they talked about it with the Freight Advisory Committee, but the municipal governments had the final say in negotiating when development came in so if they were not negotiating for more improvements that was on them; however, they were limited on what they could negotiate for. She further advised PennDOT was in the same position as the municipal governments.

In response to Ms. Vargo Heffner’s question as to how they determined when the bridges were going to be done, Ms. Bradley stated if it was still receiving funding and the bills were not
finalized, it was required by Federal law to go into the plan. She further stated this list did not result in checks going out, but they just had to be on the list in order to be considered.

In answer to Ms. Vargo Heffner’s question as to how they could assure equity for Northampton County, Ms. Bradley advised they went to every municipal government and did an open call for projects and some responded, but others did not. She further advised the Federal government also indicated if the draft plan was not out by early August then projects in the pipeline for funding would not be funded including ones that were currently in construction so they had to put a draft plan out as a starting place for LVTS.

Mr. Heckman stated everyone knew where the Lehigh Valley was now so there was no need to market it. He further stated municipalities had the ability to put more provisions in their zoning and building codes.

County Executive Report

Mr. McClure advised 200 fellow citizens petitioned the Commonwealth Department of State to re-examine the Express XL Voting Machine and it was recertified.

Mr. McClure stated Gracedale received three stars. He further stated the census was at 662, noting the average census at a nursing home in Pennsylvania was 109 and in the country it was 89.

Mr. McClure advised the groundbreaking for the Forensic Center was September 12, 2019.

Mr. McClure stated there were cells in the Jail that were capable of holding 35 individuals, but were not being used because the locks did not work. He further stated the locks have been fixed and being used for Work Release individuals in an effort to get the census down at the West Easton facility.

Mr. McClure advised the 200th farm would be preserved on October 9, 2019.

With regard to the LVPC draft plan, Mr. McClure stated he had been advocating for Northampton County’s interest in the planning aspect of the document and with respect to transportation funding. He further stated they were working
closely with LVPC.

Consideration of a Resolution Amending Resolution No. 92-2019

Mr. Dietz introduced the following resolution:

R. 93-2019  RESOLVED, By the Northampton County Council that resolution No. 92-2019 shall be amended as indicated hereafter (sections marked with strikeout have been deleted and sections marked with bold underline have been added):

Number 92-2019

WHEREAS, the Northampton County Council adopted resolution #164-2018, which adopted pay scales for certain full time County employees, including the Court-Appointed Professional Employees; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that the 2019 pay scale for Court-Appointed Professional Employees who are no longer represented by AFSCME Local 1040, shall be retroactive to July 28 January 27, 2019 (as referenced in Exhibit "A") and shall be approved this 15th day of August 2019.

Mr. Lott made a point of order and questioned whether that resolution had to be presented by someone who was a yes vote at the last meeting.

Mr. Spadoni advised Resolution No. 164-2018 adopted pay scales for certain full time employees, including Court-Appointed Professional employees. He further advised Resolution No. 92-2019 was adopted by a 5-3 vote, but prior to that a motion was made to amend the date from July to January that failed by a 4-4 vote.

Mr. Spadoni stated Section 604. Resolutions (a) (a) Acts Required. The County Council shall adopt a resolution for any act which it intends to express its consensus or for any act required by law to be a resolution and (b) Introduction. Any member shall have the power to introduce a proposed resolution at any meeting of the County Council.

Mr. Spadoni advised Section 604. Resolutions (d) Procedure. The Clerk of Council shall distribute a copy of the proposed resolution to each member. A resolution may be amended or
adopted at the same meeting at which it is introduced. He further advised in order to rescind the resolution a person on the prevailing side would have to make that motion and second by anyone.

In conclusion, Mr. Spadoni stated this resolution to amend was appropriate.

In response to Mr. McGee’s comment that he asked the Clerk to Council see if a resolution was passed and then County Council went back and changed the outcome, Mrs. Zembo stated she was asked if a resolution was adopted after a motion to amend it failed and then was later amended. She further stated she could not find where they had occurred, but any County Council member could amend any resolution at any time.

Mr. McGee advised this appeared to be unchartered waters and someone could pick the last few resolutions they did not like and talk about them forever at every meeting. He further advised Ms. Zembo was a little more specific because his question was when did County Council ever go back and change the outcome of a resolution that passed with another resolution.

Mr. Lott stated the motion was voted down and Roberts Rules of Order indicated someone on the prevailing side must bring it back up. He further stated this was nothing more than bringing that amendment back up and acknowledged he and the Solicitor disagreed on this issue.

Mr. Lott advised Ms. Ferraro made a statement about taking his union hat off and he did that, but the guy underneath was a union guy and he supported organized labor. He further advised the Administration managed a large workforce and there were many groups within it and he had to make it fair for the employees and taxpayers.

Mr. Lott stated the Administration offered all the unions an agreement and all, but two took the agreement. He further stated one decided to take a chance and decertified and the other went to arbitration and it turned out they did not do better than what was offered.

Mr. Lott asked if County Council was prepared every time a group of people gambled to go back and undo and undermine the County Executive’s ability to negotiate. He advised when an offer was put out there during negotiations and it was not taken the employees took a risk.
Mr. Lott asked if County Council was going to give the other bargaining units a second bite at the apple that was being given to these employees and he was shocked that County Council was being asked to double what the Administration offered.

Mrs. Ferraro advised last meeting was a unique situation because Mr. Dietz was not present to vote and in the Home Rule Charter is was the rule of five. She further advised these employees were not asking for the salary they might have received, but only for a retroactive date of January when they decertified.

Mrs. Ferraro stated the union got rid of them before a vote could be taken on whether to decertify. She further stated if they had stayed with Career Service for all those years, their salaries would be higher, but they were not asking for the salaries just to have the retroactive date of January.

Mrs. Ferraro advised the only reason she agreed with bringing this resolution back up was because she felt it was fair to recognize these employees as Career Service employees in January and not penalize them for leaving the union.

Mr. Lott stated a petition was started and received a third of the signatures required, but he did feel it was a mistake that the union did not allow a vote because everyone should have their say. He further stated this was about negotiations and being fair with the employees and undermining the County Executive’s ability to do his job.

Mrs. Ferraro remarked if they were allowed to vote, this matter would be null and void, but this is where it is and County Council should rectify a mistake.

Ms. Zrinski advised the union did not leave them as they had already stated they had intentions to leave the union several months before negotiations began because they thought they would get a better deal. She further advised she agreed this was undermining the County Executive’s ability to negotiate.

Mr. McGee stated County Council was going down a bad path because at every single County Council meeting they could revisit this resolution and that was not good government.
In answer to Mr. Lott's question as to whether the Administration had to follow a resolution if the procedure did not follow the Home Rule Charter, Mr. Spadoni advised County Council was supreme in budgetary and legislative matters. He further advised if something was done and the County Executive did not follow the legislation, there could be a Constitutional crisis.

In response to Mr. Lott's comment that the question pertained to County Council not following the Home Rule Charter, Mr. Spadoni stated then the Court would have to step in.

Mr. Dietz advised they were not questioning the amount they were going to receive only the fact they became Career Service employees in January and the increase was only being made retroactive to July.

Ms. Vargo Heffner stated no one was punishing anyone for making a choice to decertify from the union. She further stated two employees spoke at the last meeting and indicated they had informed the Administration they were probably going to do it and the implication was that they should fix it.

Ms. Vargo Heffner advised when the matter finally came to County Council in August and the July date was chosen she went with it. She further advised it was not to punish them, but to reward them for a mistake that was made and to go with the solution that was made by the Administration.

Ms. Vargo Heffner stated she was supporting the other employees that negotiated and arbitrated their contracts and the Career Service people who did not have a right to negotiate or arbitrate.

Ms. Vargo Heffner advised the issue was six months, but County Council could have waited until the budget hearings to make the correction.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mr. Heckman called for the vote.

The vote: Dietz, "yes"; Werner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Cusick, "yes"; Ferraro, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "no"; McGee, "no" and Vargo Heffner, "no".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 5-4.
Consideration of a Memorandum of Understanding for a Feasibility Study of Proposed Delaware Canal Waterway Authority Resolution

Mr. Werner introduced the following resolution:

R. 94-2019  WHEREAS, on August 30, 2019, County Council received a Memorandum of Understanding between County of Bucks, County of Northampton and Delaware Canal 21, a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation (see Attachment “A”), to do a feasibility study on the creation of a waterway management partnership for the Delaware Canal.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that the Memorandum of Understanding shall be approved this 5th day of September 2019.

As there were no questions or comments, Mr. Heckman called for the vote.


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

Consideration of a Resolution Approving the Financing by the General Purpose Authority of Certain Capital Projects for the Benefit of the Greater Valley Young Men’s Christian Association

Mr. McGee introduced the following resolution:

R. 95-2019

AND APPROPRIATE ACTION

WHEREAS, the Northampton County General Purpose Authority (Authority) is a municipality authority incorporated and existing under and governed by the provisions of the Municipality Authorities Act of May 2, 1945, P. L. 382 (1945 Act), which 1945 Act is codified and continued by Act No. 22, approved on June 19, 2001, 53 Pa.C.S.A. §5601 et seq., amended and supplemented (Authorities Act); and

WHEREAS, Greater Valley YMCA, a Pennsylvania not-for-profit corporation (Borrower) is requesting that the Authority finance a project (Project) consisting of, among other things, all or any of the following: (a) the design, acquisition, construction and installation of (i) a pool, new indoor recreation facility which may include (without limitation) a gymnasium and child care wing at the Borrower’s facilities located in the Borough of Pen Argyl, Northampton County, Pennsylvania (Slate Belt Branch); and (ii) certain other capital improvements to the Slate Belt Branch; (b) the acquisition and installation of related equipment, furnishings and fixtures and (c) the payment of certain costs and expenses related to issuance of the Note (hereinafter defined); and

WHEREAS, in order to finance the Project, the Authority will issue its Revenue Note (Greater Valley YMCA Project), Series of 2019 (the “Note”) on behalf of the Borrower; and

WHEREAS, the County of Northampton, Pennsylvania (County) approves the financing of the Project for the benefit of the Borrower and has determined that it is in the best interests of the people in the County and the area served by the Borrower and the Project and is desirable for the health, safety and welfare of the people in the County and in the area served by the Borrower and the Project to have the Project provided, and undertaken, by the Authority.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of the County of Northampton (Council), as follows:

1. In connection with the financing of the Project by the Authority, the Council hereby declares it to be desirable for the health, safety and welfare of the people of the County and in the area served by the Borrower and the Project, to have the Project provided by, and financed through, the Authority.
2. The approval granted hereby shall not, in any way, pledge or obligate the credit or taxing power of the County nor shall the County be liable for the payment of the principal of, or interest on, any obligations issued by the Authority in connection with the Project.

3. The County acknowledges that the Authority is entitled to rely upon, and will rely upon, the findings and determinations of the County as set forth in Paragraph 1 above.

4. This Resolution shall become effective immediately.

5. In the event that any provision, section, sentence, clause or part of this Resolution shall be held to be invalid, such invalidity shall not affect or impair any remaining provision, section, sentence or clause of this Resolution, it being the intent of the County that such remainder shall be and remain in full force and effect.

6. All resolutions or parts of resolutions inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

As there were no questions or comments, Mr. Heckman called for the vote.


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

Consideration of a Resolution Approving a Fiscal Year 2019 City Revitalization Block Grant to the City of Easton for the Karl Stirner Arts Trail Pedestrian Bridge

Mr. Werner introduced the following resolution:

R. 96-2019

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A FISCAL YEAR 2019 CITY REVITALIZATION BLOCK GRANT TO THE CITY OF EASTON FOR THE KARL STIRNER ARTS TRAIL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

WHEREAS, by Ordinance No. 321 of 1998, as amended by Ordinance No. 478 of 2007, Northampton County Council established the Northampton County Department of Community and
Economic Development (NCDCED) which is responsible, in part, for developing, implementing, and monitoring grants that enhance economic development and improve the quality of life in Northampton County; and

WHEREAS, the NCDCED received a proposal from the City of Easton for a $50,000 City Revitalization Block Grant (CRBG) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 in support of the City’s Karl Stirner Arts Trail Pedestrian Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the City of Easton made a presentation to the County Council Economic Development Committee at their September 5, 2019 meeting regarding the City’s proposal for FY 2019 CRBG funds; and

WHEREAS, the CRBG funds will be used to pay costs associated with the City’s construction of a pedestrian bridge over the Bushkill Creek that will connect the Simon Silk Mill Development with the Karl Stirner Arts Trail; and

WHEREAS, the proposal will, at minimum, match CRBG funds dollar for dollar with a combination of cash as well as in-kind services and expenses; and

WHEREAS, the CRBG proposal will be funded using the Northampton County Local Share Table Games Revenues.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Northampton:
1. The Northampton County Council hereby approves the City of Easton’s proposal not to exceed $50,000 that will be used to pay costs associated with the City’s Karl Stirner Arts Trail Pedestrian Bridge.

2. That the County Executive of the County of Northampton is authorized to execute grant agreements with the applicants not to exceed the approved amount using Northampton County Local Share Table Games Revenues.

As there were no questions or comments, Mr. Heckman called for the vote.

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

Consideration of a Resolution Approving a Monroe County Local Share Account Grant to the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley Second Harvest Food Bank

Mr. McGee introduced the following resolution:

R. 97-2019

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that it does support the request for a Monroe County Local Share Account Grant of up to $100,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the purchase and installation of an additional 48,000 cubic feet freezer/cooler unit in the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley's Second Harvest Food Bank.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the applicant does hereby designate the Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development Tina Smith as the official to execute all documents and agreements between the County of Northampton and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested grant.

As there were no questions or comments, Mr. Heckman called for the vote.


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

Consideration of a Resolution Approving a Request by the City of Bethlehem to Change the Use of their Hotel Tax Grant Request

Mr. McGee introduced the following resolution:

R. 98-2019

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE REPROGRAMMING OF A 2018 HOTEL TAX GRANT TO THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM FOR THE BETHLEHEM WAYFINDING PROGRAM
WHEREAS, the City of Bethlehem was awarded a $50,000 2018 Hotel Tax Grant to manufacture and install wayfinding signage throughout the City of Bethlehem; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bethlehem in consultation with the Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development (NCDCED) determined the project is struggling to move forward due to working its way through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation permit process for additional wayfinding signs; and

WHEREAS, on September 5, 2019, the City of Bethlehem presented to the Northampton County Council Economic Development Committee a proposal to transfer funds from the Wayfinding Project to a separate phase of the project entitled, "Gateway Welcome Sculptures"; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bethlehem, with support from NCDCED, requests to reprogram $50,000 awarded from Hotel Tax Grant funds to support the creation and installation of pivotal welcome sculptures that attract and welcome tourists to South Bethlehem. This project is designed to improve the artistic characteristics of South Bethlehem and the Arts district.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that:

1. County Council approves the reprogramming request.
2. NCDCED is authorized to prepare any necessary amendments to existing agreements.

As there were no questions or comments, Mr. Heckman called for the vote.


The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.
Budget Hearing Meeting Schedule

Mr. Heckman advised a draft of the Budget Hearing meeting schedule was sent to County Council so he would like everyone to review it and let him know if there were any changes to be made.

Human Services Committee Report

Ms. Vargo Heffner stated Veterans Affairs Office reported on the different services they provided. She further stated they received reports from Trinity Pharmacy and Gracedale.

Farmland Preservation Board Liaison Report

Ms. Zrinski advised they discussed the LVPC Plan. She further advised the 200th farm would be preserved later this year and on the 30th anniversary of Farmland Preservation.

Ms. Zrinski stated Penn State Ag was hosting the Small Farm Dream on September 11, 2019, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at Gracedale for those individuals who wanted to open a small farm.

Ms. Zrinski advised 196 farms were currently preserved.

Mental Health, Early Intervention and Developmental Programs Advisory Board Liaison Report

Ms. Vargo Heffner stated Mental Health was working hard on their housing and forensic initiatives. She further stated Early Intervention was constantly getting referrals and they were starting a new program regarding opioid addictive babies.

Council Clerk Report

In answer to Mr. McGee’s request to explain an e-mail that was sent to County Council, Mrs. Zembo advised an e-mail that she received and forwarded to two individuals was reflected in Lehigh Valley Ramblings. She further advised it was a request for funding to be transferred from one organization to another, but as the funds were not available the issue was mute and was not reported to County Council members.
Mrs. Zembo further stated she informed Mr. Spadoni about the post and he instructed her to send an e-mail to County Council informing them she had no part with regard to its appearance on Lehigh Valley Ramblings.

Adjournment

Ms. Vargo Heffner made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Heckman seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously by acclamation.

__________________________________________
Linda M. Zembo
Clerk to Council