

**ERIE AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
May 11, 2016
Millcreek Township Building**

MINUTES

Municipality	Delegate or Alternate	In Attendance:
City of Erie, Mayor’s representative	Mas Sala	yes
City of Erie Council	Casimir Kwitowski	Yes
County Council	Jay Breneman	Yes
County Executive	Kathy Dahlkemper	yes
Franklin Township	Dennis Howard	Yes
Girard Borough	Dennis McNally	Yes
Harborcreek Township	Tim May	No
Lawrence Park Township	Lawrence Park	No
Millcreek Township	Brian McGrath	Yes
Summit Township	Nancy Agostine	No
Wesleyville Borough	Jill Merritt	Yes
Invited guests and others in Attendance:		
EA COG	Jessica Horan-Kunco	Yes
PA Futures	Alan Kugler	Yes
Senator Toomey’s office	Sheila Sterrett	Yes
Quinn Law Firm	Art Martinucci	Yes
Strategy Solutions	Deb Thompson	Yes
Senator Toomey’s office	Matt Blackburn	Yes

A. Call to reconvene

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 pm.

Quorum

Present at the opening of the meeting were Delegates and Alternates for 6 member governments, constituting a quorum.

B. Approval of minutes

A motion to accept the minutes as presented from the Feb 3, 2016 General Assembly meeting was made by Brian McGrath, seconded by Jill Merritt, and passed unanimously.

The Report from the Mar 9, 2016 Work Session was distributed.

A motion to accept the notes as presented was made by Brian McGrath seconded by Jill Merritt and passed unanimously.

C. Public Comment

Matt Blackburn was introduced from Senator Toomey’s office by Sheila Sterrett.

D. Strategic Plan Presentation by Debbie Thompson

The strategic planning process started in September. It began with interviews of stakeholders.

In December, a Strategic Planning Retreat was held and members looked at the purpose statement or mission elements in the Bylaws and reprioritized those items to reflect what is most relevant to today’s EACOG. Those new priorities were the basis of creating a set of goals and objectives for the EACOG. Today the delegates will vote to approve that list of goals and objectives, which will become the EACOG’S 3 year Strategic Plan.

The creation of Three Standing Committees (Executive/Governance, Finance, and Advocacy) is also recommended and an action plan has been created for each of the committee.

The Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives Summary was reviewed.

Some of the highlights of the Plan included:

Goal 1- An annual elected official summit to be held in February with speakers and an advocacy agenda on issues of importance to municipalities.

Goal 2 – Expanded membership to include all Erie County Municipalities.

In recruiting municipalities it is recommended that are informed about the benefits of membership and asked to join by other EACOG members and not just from Jessica.

Objective C- Organize and oversight of the functions of the COG –

To encourage participation and there must be a process in place to evaluate the executive director. This includes an annual performance evaluation.

Goal 3 – Expand the joint purchasing to include more school districts.

Objective C – Enhance IT program – expand activities related to technical support. This has been communicated as a real need from the municipalities. Jessica is currently working through a grant from ECGRA to provide IT support to municipalities.

Objective D – Continuing to coordinate the Erie County Signing Region Trust

Objective E – Future projects

Objective F- Helping to educated groups that are involved with Municipalities – zoning boards, authorities, commissions. Workshops/training series has kicked off, the goal is for it to be local and in the evenings. April 20th was the first training on zoning. It was well attended with 62 RSVP’s and the feedback was very positive. Next topics will be planning commissions and comprehensive planning. The hope is for trainings to be held quarterly.

Goal 4 – Communicate and Coordinate

Objective A & B – Communicating with key stakeholders – Jessica is working on this creating a website and Facebook page. The intent is to use the organization to share information about the municipalities.

Objective C - Tracking the time and calculate the cost savings for joint purchasing and other program participation to measure the value of membership. Provide a value report to each municipality at the end of each year to show the value of being a COG member. For a small municipality the value is a “no brainer” because of the cost saving. It would be helpful to have statistics to show the cost savings associated with joining the COG. We need to spread the word that the COG is for all municipalities in Erie County.

Goal 5- Providing staff support for municipalities – Jessica is looking into writing a grant related to this. This is on the agenda for next summer. One idea discussed was staff sharing between municipalities.

A motion to approve the Strategic Plan documents and the corresponding Action plans was made by Jay Breneman and seconded by Casimir Kwitowski
All voted in favor.

The Vision and Mission Statements

A motion to approve the new Mission and Vision Statements was made by Jay Breneman and seconded by Casimir Kwitowski.
All voted in favor.

A draft brochure that was created to summarize the EACOG’s strategic plan. It was suggested to acknowledge the funders.

E. Treasurer’s Report

1. Financial – Quick books license is expiring at the end of May. Intuit three year license for Quick Books Pro would be \$590. This includes payroll support, and tax and withholding updates. There is a line item in the budget for clerical that has not been used but will not cover it all. We may need to take some money out of the accounting line item.

Jay Breneman made the motion to approve the spending. Dennis Howard seconded the motion.
All voted in favor.

Jessica asked for permission for a subscription for an email marketing subscription through Constant Contact. The price is \$459 a year. This item may fit into the strategic plan. We could use eGov grant funding to pay for it.

Jay Breneman made the motion to approve the expenditure. Kathy Dahlkemper seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

F. Old Business

Project updates:

1. Municipal Training Series kick off:

Results of Zoning Hearing Board Workshop:

Jessica reviewed the feedback and it was very positive. 88% reported that they would come to another workshop. All but one participant has paid and we have collected \$645. It cost \$385 to put it on so we made a small profit. It was discussed that in the future we will need to increase the price. One complaint was that there were no tables.

Next training topic: Planning Commission

2. IT assistance program

The grant expires in August so if a municipality needs IT services please encourage them to seek them now. New websites will be revealed at the Work Session on June 8.

Codification of ordinances for digital record keeping was discussed as a training topic. There has been some discussion about a codification program that the COG could facilitate. Some municipalities codify ordinances yearly in a digital platform. This makes it easier for residents to search for ordinances. The COG can help with grant funding for digitizing records.

The COG voted in February to follow the PA records retention policy. Municipalities should have their own record retention policies tailored to their own specific needs.

3. Trail Project

ECGRA Multi-Municipal Collaboration Grant Application due May 12, 2016

Twelve different municipalities were represented at the most recent trails workshop. It was well attend. Existing, planned and possible trails were mapped out. The goal of the grant project is to increase awareness of the trails, creating virtual connections and signing. Long range goals include physical connections of trails, create new trails and include bike trails. 25 locations will be signed. This grant is a matching grant for \$37,500. This is a one year grant cycle; we would need a steering committee. COG members will get a copy of the completed grant application. A motion was made by Dennis Howard to apply for the grant. Jay Breneman seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

G. Adjournment

Dennis Howard made the motion to approve the adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 4:52pm.

Next Work Session June 8, 2016 Summit Township at 3:30pm