

ERIE AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

November 13, 2019 at 3:00 pm

Summit Township Building

Minutes

Municipality	Delegate or Alternate	In Attendance:
City of Erie, Mayor	Joseph Schember	
City of Erie Mayor's Alternate	Mas Sala	X
City of Erie Council	Casimir Kwitowski	X
County Council	Kathy Fatica	
County Executive's Representative	Honey Stempka	X
Borough of Edinboro	Pat Davis	X
Franklin Township	Dennis Howard	X
Girard Township	Lindy Platz	
Girard Borough	Rob Stubenbort	X
Greenfield Township	Steve Rathman	
Harborcreek Township	Tim May	X
Lawrence Park Township	Cindy Jo Cunningham	
LeBoeuf Township	Michael Porter	
Millcreek Township	John Groh	X
Summit Township	Jack Lee	X
Venango Township	DJ Austin	X
Wesleyville Borough	Jill Merritt	
Invited guests and others in Attendance:		
EA COG	Jessica Horan-Kunco	X
Sheila Sterrett	Senator Toomey's office	X

A. Call to order: Tim May called the meeting to order at 3:05.

B. Approval of minutes: A motion to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2019 General Assembly meeting was made by Jack Lee and seconded by Mas Sala and passed unanimously.

C. Public Comment: none

D. Treasurer's Report:

- 2018 Financial Statements & Independent Auditor's Report: Sean Sullivan is doing his last audit for the EACOG and the statements are not complete. The audit will be ready for the December meeting. The 2019 Audit will be completed by Buseck, Barger, Bleil and will be started sooner in the future.

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2. Presentation of 2020 proposed membership dues:

The Finance Committee has recommended keeping membership dues for municipalities the same. The County has agreed to increase Cog dues by 15%. This is the first increase the County has received since 1997 their 2020 dues will be \$37,000.

When 2020 Census Data is available it will be timely to re-evaluate our dues calculation or even consider a different dues model.

3. Presentation of proposed 2020 Draft Budget:

The Finance Committee prepared the budget based on current year actual revenue expenses.

On the revenue side: Non-member fees are down due to participants becoming members. Membership is at its highest level ever.

Workshop income is down due to the fact that we have held some workshops that have been free to attend. This is a service that we are providing to all municipalities.

On the expense side:

A 3% raise has been included for Jessica's salary.

Most expenses are remaining consistent with this year's projected actual.

The Auditing and Legal account line item is increasing due to the introduction of the new auditor and to potentially allow us to apply for 501C3 status. This would cost approximately \$1500.

Delegated discussed the 501C3 idea, Dennis Howard asked if this would change our charter and our current form of organization and if there were any negative implications. Research should be conducted to see what other COGs are doing. This will allow us to apply for more grants such as the local Erie Community Foundation, currently we are required to have a 501C3 to serve as the fiscal agent on our applications. It was suggested to establish a secondary branch or sub-organization rather than to change the EACOG. There will be additional reporting requirements including filing an IRS 990 form. Atty Martinucci and the auditor should weigh in on the matter. We will leave the money in the budget for now while we evaluate it.

Other budget line items were reviewed. Delegates were requested to take the budget to their municipalities for official action.

Dennis Howard made a motion to approve the budget as proposed, Caz Kwitowski seconded the motion and the delegates voted unanimously in favor.

E. Old Business:

1. Multi-municipal Training Workshops: Upcoming

- Fair Housing Workshop for Municipal Officials
November 14, 2019 10:00 – 12:00 Millcreek
In conjunction with the County CDBG our speaker is from Southwest Legal Services. Fair Housing regulations and discriminatory practices will be discussed.
- Flood Plain Management workshop on updating flood insurance maps hosted by

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Erie County Emergency Management on November 14, 2019.

- Strategic Planning for Fire Departments -PSATS, Jerry Ozog from PFESI is presenting. December 9, 2019 Summit Township from 12:30 – 4:30. Helping fire departments understand the crisis of volunteerism, the need to work together with municipalities and how to meet the expectations of the community. Jessica will send the powerpoint from that presentation to the Cog members to review and consider attending.
- Hosting LTAP trainings:
Should the COG investigate hosting these trainings locally?
Tim May recently attended a LTAP workshop in Conneaut. Mitchell Obenrader is the contact to set up trainings and Harborcreek offered to be a hosting site. PennDOT has assigned the NW Commission to be the organizer of these, but that is Oil City. Currently, Greene Township has hosted but they get cancelled due to lack of attendance. LTAP also has technical advisors that will come to look at paving problems in specific municipalities.
Jessica will look into this for 2020.

2. Emergency Management Study Update:

The Emergency Management study is in draft format. We will be meeting to review it with FEMA and ECEMA before it is finalized. The consultant is recommending that 6 municipalities work together to provide better disaster preparedness and meet the Emergency Management requirements, currently most participants are not in compliance with Title 35. Once the document is finalized it must be approved by DCED and then we will present it to the participants.

3. Recruitment and Retention Committee update:

Meetings on hold until after the holidays. The committee is preparing to present our findings to date at the February UPMC Public Safety and Government dinner. The committee is charged with getting a handle on what is happening locally in Fire and EMS and defining some strategies to deal with declining volunteers and paid staff.

Delegates discussed that there is no magic answer except to reinvent the system. A discussion ensued on the excess in apparatus for Fire Departments especially ladder trucks that are in numerous departments with limited high-rise properties. The committee is revealing a lot of inequities in the system and band aid solutions as opposed to an overall collective approach. Our committee is collecting data on call volumes, dropped calls, and equipment and relying on self-reporting by the departments for information about their volunteer rosters.

John Groh, pointed out that state legislation could be put in place to replace the requirement of the provision of public safety being the responsibility of each municipality with the requirement being at the County level.

Casimir Kwitowski mentioned that an Authority could be established to provide for public safety for multiple municipalities.

Delegates discussed the political, and department leadership issue with changing the system. Municipalities are financially subsidizing departments now with no oversight.

The committee has had some trouble with data collection from departments which was echoed by the delegates. Delegates stated that they have trouble getting rosters from

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departments in order to report for Worker's Comp, a benefit that the municipalities pay. The slow committee process is not a surprise.

Capturing the data as to how much money municipalities are currently contributing to departments and how it was spent would be helpful. The delegates expressed that they greatly appreciate volunteer's willingness to respond to calls however record keeping and paperwork are not priorities. The Auditor General requires annual reports that are often difficult for departments to complete.

4. Census Outreach Project update, ECF Grant Application

Michelle Jaggi, the Census Outreach Coordinator is working hard. She has 4 municipalities that she has yet to schedule. She is going to be on the Tax Payer Hotline show with Casimir Kwitowski next week. Michelle will attend upcoming events that you identify for her as good opportunities to reach residents.

We applied for an Erie Community Foundation Grant for \$10,000 for a big census day kick off event or series of events.

F. New Business:

1. Joint Bidding May 2020 Gas and Diesel Fuel:

Current contracts go through 6/30/2020. This is a great benefit to COG members.

2. Check signers, Officers, Committee members needed 2020:

The EACOG will be losing Jill Merritt, who is Vice Chair and a check signer, Gene Krahe who is the Treasurer and member of finance committee and John Groh who is our Secretary. We will also lose city and county council delegates Cas Kwitowski and Kathy Fatica.

Officers can serve 3 consecutive terms so Dennis McNally can continue as Chairman. We will need nominations for officers and another willing check signer.

3. Resolutions of each municipality or letters from Executives needed on:

- Approving or disapproving of the 2020 budget

4. Open discussion on delegate updates

Millcreek received a Multi-modal Grant for a Presque Isle Walking/ Cycling path.

This is John Groh's last meeting and he expressed his appreciation for being part of the COG and indicated that he would still be working for the betterment of the region. Delegates thanked John for his hard work and support of the COG initiatives and Tim May expressed that we are thrilled to know that the Erie community will still benefit from John Groh even though he is leaving Millcreek.

G. Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Howard at 4:40 pm

Next meeting Dec 11, 2019 3:00 pm Harborcreek

Voting on 2020 Budget

Presentation from Joy Knapp about the Erie County Parks, Trails and Rec Plan

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