

ERIE AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

150 East Front Street • Suite 300 • Erie, PA 16507

Phone (814) 454-1770 • Email jhkunco@erieareacog.org • Web www.erieareacog.org

MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

August 5, 2020 at 3:00 pm

ZOOM Meeting

Minutes

Municipality	Delegate or Alternate	In Attendance:
Albion Borough	Greg Hemmis	X
City of Erie, Mayor	Joseph Schember	X
City of Erie Mayor's Alternate	Mas Sala	X
City of Erie Council	Kathy Schaaf	X
County Council	Mary Rennie	X
County Executive's Representative	Honey Stempka	X
Borough of Edinboro	Pat Davis	X
Borough of Edinboro, Manager	Kevin Opple	X
Franklin Township	Dennis Howard	X
Girard Township	Lindy Platz	X
Girard Borough	Dennis McNally	X
Greenfield Township	Steve Rathman	
Greene Township	John Bartnicki	X
Harborcreek Township	Tim May	X
Lawrence Park Township	Cindy Jo Cunningham	X
LeBoeuf Township	Michael Porter	
Millcreek Township	Dan Ouellet	X
North East Township	Robert Mazza	X
Summit Township	Mark Welka	X
Venango Township	DJ Austin	X
Union City Borough	Matthew Joyce	X
Wesleyville Borough	Regina Julius	
Invited guests and others in Attendance:		
EA COG	Jessica Horan-Kunco	X
Art Martinucci	Quinn Law Firm	X
David George	Health Department	X
Breanna Adams	Health Department	X
Chelsea Bates	Health Department	X
Valerie Hartley	BBBs, CPA	X
Christie Mahany	Erie County Land Bank	X
Sheila Sterrett	Senator Toomey's office	X

Member Governments

Boroughs of: Albion • Edinboro • Girard • Union City • Wesleyville • City of Erie • County of Erie

Townships of: Franklin • Girard • Greene • Greenfield • Harborcreek • Lawrence Park • LeBoeuf • Millcreek

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A. Call to order: Roll call of delegates on the video/audio conference; introduction of guest speakers.

Meeting re-advertised as a General Assembly in order to vote on items such as the audited financials.

B. Approval of minutes: from June 10, 2020 General Assembly meeting. Motioned by Joseph Schember and seconded by Tim May and passed unanimously.

C. Public Comment:

Speakers:

1. Valerie Hartley, Auditor, Buseck, Barger, Bleil & Co:

- Review of 2019 Financial Statements and Audit findings

Independent Auditors report: unqualified opinion, the highest opinion you can receive. The Internal Control report shows that all controls are appropriate, and no deficiencies or weaknesses were found.

The Balance Sheet shows assets down due to use of deferred grant funds.

Operating revenues are down and expenses are up due to professional fees and personnel costs. Most are due to receiving grant revenue up front and then spending those funds over two years.

There was a positive change in net assets of \$10,000.

Budget to actual shows an increase in net position of \$10,000. Joe Schember noticed a negative \$10,000 was listed on the budget comparison sheet that needs to be corrected to reflect a positive.

A motion to accept the audited financial report was made by Pat Davis and seconded by Dennis Howard and passed unanimously.

Each member municipality will need to pass a resolution accepting the audit and return it to Jessica.

2. Christie Mahany, Director, Erie County Land Bank:

- Update of progress and activities

The website is Eriecountylandbank.org to see municipalities involved and activities of the Erie County Land Bank. The Land Bank officially began acquiring property in November 2019. Currently working on the evaluation of 8 properties acquired through the repository or judicial sales.

Two Demolitions of severely blighted properties have recently been completed. One included an owner that had experienced significant storm damage and rather than allow the property to sit and wait for tax sale, Union City was able to convince the owner to donate the property to the Land Bank. The second demolition in Albion Borough was a significant blight removal that resulted in a buildable lot.

One benefit of the Land Bank is priority bid at the tax sale this will prevent properties from continue to cycle back and forth from the sale lists once owners realize the magnitude of the blighted conditions.

Currently going out to bid for demolition on several other properties. Properties with potential for renovation will be addressed under a developer agreement with the Land Bank.

Greg Hemmis from Albion thanked Christy for the help of the Land Bank. Christy thanked the municipalities for their patience and support of their early efforts.

The Land Bank does not have enforcement power or eminent domain power.

The Erie County Land Bank works closely with the City Land Bank.

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Municipalities that have not yet joined can do so without a fee as this point, just let Christy know. Also let Christy know of any properties on your radar and also review the Judicial Sale list for any properties in your municipality that are of concern.

3. Erie County Health Dept: David George, Chelsea Bates, Breanna Adams

- Encouraging masking for sporting events including coaches and spectators
- The Dept of Health has posters depicting mask requirements for your ball fields etc. Masking guidelines in effect if you are within 6 feet of others, even outdoors.
- The primary purpose of enforcement is information and education. ECHD is working with Liquor Control Board on enforcement, requesting voluntary compliance not penalties. On the municipal level enforcement is difficult. State targeted mitigation guidance will be shared with the members. Warnings are recommended and if there is a big issue with compliance contact the Health Department. Entities are required to have a Covid plan on record if they are holding events. The Health Department showed the planning document and will help with reviewing and preparing a plan, the event holder is ultimately responsible. Please encourage anyone holding events to submit a plan to the Health Department. Outdoor events are encouraged whenever possible.

D. Old Business:

1. Non-member participation fee proposal

- Latest versions provided with participation in programs other than Joint Bidding. Workshop participation at 2x member fees. Grant funded projects non-members pay the 50% match of their participation in the project. All other program fees will be prorated across participants with members portion covered by membership dues.
- Atty Martinucci did not see any legal issues. Greg Hemmis made motion to accept and Kathy Schaaf seconded, and the proposal passed unanimously.

2. Associate member policy

- A marketing document regarding Associate membership was reviewed. A withdrawal provision has been added. A motion to accept was made by Tim May and seconded by John Bartnicki and passed unanimously. The By Laws may be amended and an application will be created.

E. New Business:

1. Proposal for uniform signage on fireworks sales

- Members reviewed a document prepared by the City Fire Department for fireworks retailers to make buyers aware of Fireworks regulations in the City of Erie. Members felt that store owners would be resistant to post such information.
- Members discussed municipal ordinances that are on the books but are not being followed. With the legality on the state level for fireworks the public thinks that they are allowed to do whatever they want. Municipalities can put more ordinances in place but catching people is impossible. Lobbying at the state level would be the only way. Distances from occupied structures could be required in municipalities but enforcement is an issue. Mary Rennie suggested signage at stores that encouraged "being a good neighbor." Kevin Oppe suggested to lobby to change the current state law to require such signage at retailers. Fireworks pose a risk for fires and property damage. Joe Schember mentioned this is an exceptional year due to no public displays. Lack of enforcement ability is limiting a multi-municipal approach. Jessica will review current legislation and provide information on municipal ordinances to the members.

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2. ECGRA MMC Grant round due Sept 30, 2020

Let Jessica know if you have a Multi-municipal project idea and need support in writing a grant.

3. Tree care field training: Aug 12, 8:30 Summit Township: all tree program participants are invited.

4. Open Discussion of delegate updates:

The 2020 Census deadline now 9/30. Please encourage your residents to complete the Census on my2020census.gov.

Adjournment: 5:30 pm on a motion by Mas Sala and seconded by Pat Davis.

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