

ERIE AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Feb 3, 2021 at 3:00 pm

ZOOM Meeting

Minutes

Municipality	Delegate or Alternate	In Attendance:
Albion Borough	Greg Hemmis	X
Albion Borough, Manager	Gary Wells	X
City of Erie, Mayor	Joseph Schember	X
City of Erie Mayor's Alternate	Mas Sala	X
City of Erie Council	Liz Allen	X
County Council	Kim Clear	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
Borough of Edinboro	Jason Spangenberg	X
Franklin Township	Dennis Howard	X
Girard Township	Lindy Platz	
Girard Borough	Dennis McNally	X
Greenfield Township	Steve Rathman	
Greene Township	John Bartnicki	X
Harborcreek Township	Tim May	X
Lawrence Park Township	Eric Gerardine	
LeBoeuf Township	Michael Porter	
Millcreek Township	Dan Ouellet	X
North East Township	Robert Mazza	X
Summit Township	Jack Lee	
Venango Township	DJ Austin	X
Union City Borough	Cindy Wells	X
Wesleyville Borough	Regina Julius	
Invited guests and others in Attendance:		
EA COG	Jessica Horan-Kunco	X
PA Futures	Alan Kugler	X

A. Call to order: Call to order and roll call of delegates/alternates on the video/audio conference at 3:05 pm.

B. Approval of minutes: A motion to approve the minutes from Dec 9, 2020 General Assembly meeting was made by Bob Mazza and seconded by Tim May and passed unanimously.

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C. Public Comment: none

D. Treasurer's Report:

1. Joint Bidding invoices collection status: all invoices are paid in full.
2. Membership dues invoiced on Jan 15, 2020. Dues payments have been coming in steadily. Members were reminded that they can pay in one installment or in quarterly installments.

E. Old Business:

1. Nominations for officers for 2021:

Dennis McNally opened the nominations for officers.

Tim May nominated Dennis Howard for chairperson and Pat Davis seconded it. No other nominations were made, a vote to approve Dennis Howard as Chairman passed unanimously.

Tim May nominated Lindy Platz for Vice Chairperson, John Bartnicki seconded the nomination. The vote passed unanimously.

Tim May nominated Jack Lee as secretary, Honey Stempka seconded the nomination. The vote passed unanimously.

Tim May nominated Dan Ouellet as treasurer, Dennis Howard seconded the nomination. The vote passed unanimously.

- a. Finance Committee members:

We are seeking nominations for members to serve on the finance committee. The treasurer and 2 additional members are needed. Mas Sala, Dan Ouellet, and Bob Mazza agreed to serve. A motion to accept these nominees to the committee was made by Pat Davis and seconded by DJ Austin and passed unanimously.

2. Delegate and alternate assignments:

Please officially assign your voting delegates and alternates as soon as possible.

3. Project updates:

- a. Tax Collector Compensation analysis, Jason Spangenberg, Edinboro Borough

Jason presented his findings on the comparison of tax collector compensation throughout Erie County. The initiative is designed to help municipalities to have accurate information to consider when setting fair compensation rates for tax collectors.

Jason used the total amount paid to the tax collector and divided it across the number of parcels in the municipality to calculate a pay per parcel/per bill rate to account for community size differentials. Jason identified that some of the small municipalities similar in size to Edinboro are paying significantly more per parcel than others. Tax collectors are either paid a flat rate for their work or they are paid a percentage of the amount of tax revenue collected. Tax collectors are also paid by the county and the school districts for their services. Pay rates must be set prior to the election for that office to affect the incoming tax collector.

Jason recommended that municipalities that are paying based on a percentage of property taxes collected reconsider setting a flat rate or a per parcel rate as the task of preparing and mailing bills is not variable based on property values. The property tax collector doesn't influence property value so their pay shouldn't be reflective of declines in increases in value. Edinboro hasn't raised the compensation for their tax collector for 20 years so they will be recommending a small increase to account for inflation.

Mary Rennie pointed out that the county is currently evaluating their portion of tax collector compensation. Deb Cameron is the president of the Tax Collector Association and made recommendations to the county on fair increases. Mary suggested evaluating tax collector

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compensation on a regular basis.

This research should lead toward a more uniform approach to tax collector compensation. The county utilizes a per-tax-bill scale that adjusts downward with greater quantities.

Informal discussion has taken place about considering a countywide tax collector similar to how the earned income tax is collected. A process of changing state enabling legislation would be required to allow for statewide or countywide property tax collection.

b. Glass Recycling Pilot:

Thank you to all the municipalities that are hosting containers. 12 containers have been delivered with 3 more to be deployed soon. Since this is a pilot, utilization will drive the future sustainability of the project. Please promote the project even if you do not have a container. Please encourage residents to use one of the other locations. The purpose of this pilot was to provide **more** glass recycling opportunities in Erie County and not take away from others in this industry. The size, population, market for glass in Erie County can support more than one company in this arena. The goal is to prevent glass from being landfilled and to allow for more convenient locations throughout the county. Nine COG members are currently involved with the project.

c. Fire and EMS Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee:

The first meeting of 2021, is 2/9/21 via Zoom. This year we will focus on the role of municipalities with regard to Fire and EMS in their communities. Warren County, Allegheny County, Chester County, and Franklin County are all undertaking similar committees and projects.

4. Recruitment of Associate members:

Jessica formalized the documents needed to become Associate Members. Erie Waterworks has been approached due to their interest in participating in the joint bidding program.

F. New Business:

1. Buseck, Barger, Bliel, CPAs audit engagement for 2020 at \$2,200

A motion to accept the audit engagement was made by Bob Mazza and seconded by DJ Austin and passed unanimously.

2. Senate Bill 1274 Countywide Public Safety Authority

Jessica informed the membership about a pending state legislation that allows for the creation of Public Safety Authorities. This authority would coordinate the delivery of fire and EMS service in a coordinated fashion. The authority would not be provider of services but could provide administrative support to existing departments. The legislation allows for a per capita fee. The COG and municipalities can take a position on the legislation once it is released from committee.

3. Invitations to join COG:

Invitations have been sent to municipalities who participate in other ways with the COG. Union Township and Lake City have been invited to join. Please follow up with the officials if you are familiar with them. DJ asked for a letter to be sent to Wattsburg Borough to invite them to join.

4. Collecting data on Covid19's impact on municipal revenue and expenses:

The County Council has formed a committee to evaluate the entire impact of Covid on all levels of our community. The committee requested information from the COG on municipal impact in terms of revenues, expenses and operations. After the fact finding is complete, hopefully the committee will begin the process of planning a recovery from the impact of the pandemic. EIT and LST revenue collections will be affected for 2020 and at least the first 2 quarters for 2021. Bill Leonard, from Berkheimer is providing a report with comparison to prior year collection that Jessica will distribute to members. County Planning will be surveying municipalities again to get an update on the continued impact of the pandemic. Liz Allen pointed out that the city is experiencing unexpected increases in landfill tipping fees. She suggested a recycling event to provide an optional opportunity to dispose of items.

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5. Open discussion of delegate updates

- If you have received a notice from Spectrum/ Charter regarding renewal of cable franchise agreements, please let Jessica know. Current franchise agreements are in place until 2023 so there is no time crunch to act. The COG should consider joining together again in joint negotiations when the time is right.
- ECGRA MMC grant round is open. Let Jessica know if you have a shared project idea.

6. Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made at 4:30 by Honey Stempka and seconded by Pat Davis.

Next Work Session March 3, 2021 Zoom 3:00pm

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