

# ERIE AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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## MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

December 11, 2019 at 3:00 pm

Harborcreek 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	
Borough of Edinboro	Pat Davis	X
Franklin Township	Dennis Howard	X
Girard Township	Lindy Platz	X
Girard Borough	Dennis McNally	X
Greenfield Township	Steve Rathman	
Harborcreek Township	Tim May	X
Lawrence Park Township	Eric Gerardine	X
LeBoeuf Township	Michael Porter	
Millcreek Township	John Groh	
Summit Township	Mark Welka	X
Venango Township	DJ Austin	X
Wesleyville Borough	Jill Merritt	
<b>Invited guests and others in Attendance:</b>		
EA COG	Jessica Horan-Kunco	X
Regina Smith	Senator Laughlin's office	X
Joy Knapp	County Planning	X

**A. Call to order:** Chairman Dennis McNally called the meeting to order at 3:10.

**B. Approval of minutes:** A motion to approve the minutes of 11/13/2019 General Assembly meeting was made by Dennis Howard and seconded by Tim May and passed unanimously.

**C. Public Comment:** Welcome Regina Smith from Senator Dan Laughlin's office

### D. Treasurer's Report:

1. Review and Discussion of 2018 Audited Financial Statements:

Sean Sullivan presented the Audit for 2018, highlights include:

The auditor statement indicates that our financial statements are an unqualified or clean opinion. Total Assets for 2018 were \$270,000, Total liabilities \$118,000 which includes unspent grants, deferred revenue, payroll and payables. Deferred revenues

### *Member Governments*

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include grant funds that were not matched or spent in 2018. Unrestricted Net Assets are \$135,000 representing the equity in the COG. Statement of Revenues and Expenses includes approximately \$300,000 including \$116,000 in grant revenue and \$90,000 in matching funds. On the expense side, personnel expenses remain level from prior year, grant revenues are expended primarily in the Professional Fees line item. Net operating revenue was \$74,000 in 2018 compared to \$1000 in 2017. The cash flow statement shows the source of revenue and converts from accrual to cash. Maintaining a surplus is a good practice, net assets are up from \$77,000 in 2017 to \$150,000 in 2018.

A motion to accept the audited financial statements was made by Tim May and seconded by Dennis Howard and passed unanimously.

- a. Resolutions needed approving the audit report – a template will be provided
2. Resolutions received in favor from a majority of members regarding 2020 budget
3. Official vote to approve 2020 Budget: Motion to accept made by Tim May and seconded by Lindy Platz and passed unanimously.

**E. Presentation:** Joy Knapp, The Erie County Parks, Trails and Recreation Plan:

Joy updated the EACOG members on the status of the plan. Greenways Funding from Act 13 Marcellus Shale funding was used to create a countywide plan for parks and recreation in order to create strategic direction for focused park investment in the future. The project has been underway since October 2017. Consultants were hired to convene stakeholder groups and collect leadership and public input on priorities and challenges. All the input was analyzed and synthesized into priority areas. The question of how the County can help you achieve your goals was a key focus.

The final plan will be implementable and incorporate the input of the public and municipal leadership. Four focus topic goals emerged from the process: promote health and equity; enhance communication; set countywide priorities; provide funding support. Action plans will be included with implementable strategies, goals and milestones.

The final phase is to hold a public meeting to reveal the plan with the County Executive followed by a 45 day comment period and then formal adoption by County Council. Once the plan is adopted then the steering committee will shepherd the implementation.

Dennis Howard discussed connecting bike trails to provide economic opportunity for rural communities like the Great Allegheny Passage does. The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail completion is going to be a big focus of the plan. Pat Davis mentioned the efforts of the Rt 6 Trail Alliance for bike trail connections.

**F. Old Business:**

1. Multi-municipal Training Workshop update:

Three workshops were held in 2019. Jessica reported that 32 of 38 municipalities have participated for an 84% participation rate. 270 participants since launch in 2017. Topic suggestions included: rural blight prevention strategies, PennDOT funding opportunities.

2. Emergency Management Study Review and Seminar with PEMA: 1/24/2020:

The study of 7 municipalities is complete. The consultant has reduced the number to 6 municipalities and has asked that we review the findings with PEMA on 1/24.

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3. Recruitment and Retention Committee: Presenting at 2/7/2020 Public Safety and Government Dinner hosted by UPMC.

Please attend to hear about local efforts and statewide perspective on the crisis in Fire and EMS.

Jerry Ozog from PFESI will likely speak at the dinner for a statewide perspective on Fire. Delegates discussed his Strategic Planning for Fire Departments workshop and the idea of sharing or regionalizing fire services. Dennis Howard felt that leadership would need to help to develop a regional model with some department autonomy within a larger management structure. Lindy Platz discussed the autonomy of the Fire Department from the municipal responsibility and how much the municipality can/should get involved. Jessica discussed the idea of sharing the tedious tasks such as administration, billing, recruitment, training. Jerry Ozog recommended starting with a pilot group of interested participants. If you are aware of Fire Departments or municipalities that are willing to work together let Jessica know. The solutions/ideas need to be researched and vetted as not every idea is a viable one. Preventing a domino effect of departments folding is key. Personality and politics should not be allowed to determine the public safety of our residents.

General public needs to be educated to not abuse the EMS system for non-emergent issues. The number of problems in fire and EMS that need solving is eye-opening. Available staffing and low pay for EMTs was discussed. Incentives may not achieve a goal of attracting volunteers due to societal decline in volunteerism.

The committee may apply for a PA SAFER grant to help develop regional models. Municipalities and Fire departments would have to commit to being part of the grant project. West County EMA might be a good starting place since sharing is already taking place. The shortage of administrative know-how and time is apparent when information is requested from fire departments for worker's comp and auditor general reports and billing. DJ Austin suggested a central staffer that would assist each department with administrative tasks.

4. Census Outreach Project: Save the date for Census Ambassador training 1/9/2020  
A training is being held on 1/9 to educate leaders on the 2020 Census process.

#### **G. New Business:**

1. Annual report of 2019 COG Programs and Accomplishments:

Jessica printed out a report of 2019 programs and accomplishments for you to share.

2. New Delegate orientation January 2020, date to be determined

Five delegates will be leaving the COG. An orientation will be held once new delegates are assigned.

3. 2020 Schedule of meetings and work sessions: discussion of topics and locations

Draft provided, please review your host location and date and confirm. Feel free to suggest topics that you would like to discuss.

4. Open discussion of delegate updates: None

5. Farewell and thank you to our departing delegates

Thank you for your service to the COG!

**Next meeting Feb 5, 2020 3:00 pm Lawrence Park**

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