

**MARCH 12, 2013 MINUTES**  
**Formally approved at March 26, 2013 meeting**

FULL BOARD PRESENT: Also present: Susan M. Kauwell, Prothonotary; Jim Petro, Treasurer; Max Von Blohn, Danville Borough Council; Steve Phillips, BIDA, Columbia Alliance; Karen Blackledge, The Danville News; Chris Krepich, PressEnterprise.

The meeting was opened in prayer by Solicitor Robert L. Marks. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Mr. Ward moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Mr. Gerst seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Ward moved to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Mr. Gerst seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

General Account Disbursements	\$187,091.32
General Account Receipts	\$228,423.96
General Account Checking .10%	\$697,172.57
Capital Reserve Fund .25%	\$26,758.02
Operating Reserve .25%	\$40,057.17
General MMA	\$0.00
Total Checking, MMAs	\$763,987.76
Act 44 .10%	\$56,292.19
Act 78 Checking .10%	\$11,111.80
Children and Youth Checking .10%	\$215,002.05
Domestic Relations Checking .10%	\$147,397.52
Domestic Relations Incentive	\$121,829.95
Flood Mitigation .10%	\$1,833.94
Hazardous Material Account Checking .10%	\$14,418.41
Human & Community Services Checking .10%	\$37,933.57
Improvement Fund Checking .09%	\$3,716.27
Liquid Fuels Checking .10%	\$74,163.73
Liquid Fuels MMA .45%	\$130,000.00
Medical Assistance Transportation .10%	\$73,346.31
Offender Supervision Account Checking .10%	\$49,183.77
Transit Fund Account Checking .10%	\$44,584.59
Wireless 911 .10%	\$163,871.02

Mr. Finn called for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Finn said he received an e-mail from Ian Stone, editor of Keystone IMC, stating Mr. Stone planned to attend the meeting to ask questions about prayer at public meetings. Specifically, Mr. Stone wanted to know: whether the opening prayer at Commissioners

meetings was a formal procedure or just tradition; whether prayer led by solicitor Marks, being paid with taxpayer dollars and leading a prayer in taxpayer-funded facilities was a point of concern; and whether a prayer by a county official at a public meeting violated the establishment clause.

While Mr. Stone was not present for the meeting, Mr. Finn said he felt it important to address the questions. Mr. Finn called the opening prayer “a nice tradition that keeps everyone calm and allows us time to think and focus on positives” before the meeting begins. As for any concern over Mr. Marks’ status as a paid employee of the County invoking prayer at taxpayer expense, Mr. Finn said Mr. Marks is also a citizen of the United States. As such, he has the right to speak, say a prayer or petition the government. Concerning the issue of Mr. Marks’ salary, Mr. Finn said based on Mr. Marks’ annual salary, the cost would average out at 25 cents per prayer. Mr. Finn said there is no violation of the establishment clause as the County is neither requiring anyone to do anything nor attempting to establish a religion. The opening prayer is merely, “trying to open the meeting with a positive influence, not trying to establish a religion,” Mr. Finn said.

The County is not doing anything to violate the Constitution but in fact is working in unison with the Constitution, he said. All one has to do is read the Preamble to the Constitution, which states in part the intent to “secure the Blessings of Liberty” and “do ordain and establish this Constitution.” The “Blessings of Liberty” certainly would be a blessing from God, said Mr. Finn, noting the Declaration of Independence establishes “God-given rights.” As the founders of this country left behind a government of sovereign kings, he said, “we the people .... ordain through God.”

Mr. Gerst said the County doesn’t force prayer, nor should the County be bullied into discontinuing the tradition of prayer. Mr. Gerst said he polled a number of County residents on this issue and not one person took exception to the County’s tradition of opening meetings with a prayer.

There was no old business.

Under new business, Mr. Gerst moved to approve purchase of service agreements with George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania, Grove City, and Adelphoi, Latrobe, on behalf of Children & Youth Services. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Gerst moved to affirm the conditions in an agreement between Luzerne County and Metro Flag. The agreement allows Montour County’s Office of Veteran Affairs to purchase flags at a reduced rate negotiated by Luzerne on behalf of itself and four other counties. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Gerst moved to pay the following bills: General Account, \$141,818.32; Children & Youth, \$18,229.74; Transit, \$9,192.74; Liquid Fuels, \$22,136.95; Act 78, \$6,011.27; Domestic Relations, \$0; Human and Community Service, \$1,600.38. Mr. Ward seconded. On called vote, all voted in favor.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted By:

Holly A. Brandon, Chief Clerk

**MARCH 12, 2013 CDBG FY 2013 FIRST PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**  
**Formally approved at March 26, 2013 meeting**

FULL BOARD PRESENT; Also present, Jamie Shrawder, SEDA-COG.

Mr. Finn opened the hearing and turned over proceedings to Ms. Shrawder, who said the County is expected to receive an estimated \$211,513.00 in CDBG funding in 2013, a decrease of 5 to 8 percent.

The following proposals for 2013 funding were received: Shady Oaks mobile home park, Derry Township. The park owner has elected to close the park rather than fix DEP sewer system violations, said Ms. Shrawder. Derry Township is seeking \$30,000.00 in funding for demolition of the mobile homes, sewage treatment facility and other debris; Washingtonville Municipal Authority, \$163,000.00 to repair or replace several items at the sewage treatment facility; Montour County, \$159,900.00 for handicapped accessibility projects to the former County Home building, in the form of accessible bathrooms and an elevator.

Ms. Shrawder also presented budget modification proposals for consideration as follows: 2010 funds of \$28,322.00 for a pool access project at Sunnybrook Park; 2011 funds of \$76,678.00 for the Sunnybrook project and \$23,322.00 for sidewalks and alley repairs in Washingtonville Borough; and 2012 funds of \$33,500.00 for the Washingtonville Municipal Authority to relocate and elevate the pump station and to add bypass piping; \$115,000.00 to assist income-eligible residents of Cooper Township with the installation of sewer laterals; and \$14,949.00 for Washingtonville Borough sidewalks and alley project.

There being no further public comment, Mr. Finn adjourned the hearing.

Submitted By:

Stacy Cole, Assistant Chief Clerk

