

The regular weekly meeting of the Clearfield County Commissioners was held on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 with Chair Sobel conducting the meeting. The following were in attendance: Commissioners Scotto and Glass; Heather Bozovich, Solicitor; Tom Adamson, Controller; David Venturella, Senior Vice President of Client Relations for GEO Group; Brian McShane, Acting Director Philadelphia Field Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Charlie Wilson, Citizen; Sara Wilson, Citizen; Traci Webber, Concerned Citizen, Polly Neeper, Concerned Citizen; Suzanne Shaw, Concerned Citizen; Fred London, Concerned Citizen; Donna London, Concerned Citizen; Jess Shirey, gantdaily.com; Yvonne Lehman, WOKW Radio; Jeff Corcino, Progress/Courier; Yanni Tragellis, WTAJ TV; Douglas Braff, WJAC TV; Adam Curry, IT; Lisa McFadden, Chief Clerk.

Minutes of the previous meeting of September 14, 2021 were approved by motion of Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Scotto; motion carried unanimously.

Controller Adamson presented the following bills for approval: General Fund, \$2,057,069.11; Liquid Fuels, \$36,606.21; Hazardous Materials Fund, \$111.76; American Rescue Plan, \$441,463.65; Operating Reserve, \$7,663,428.19; 911 Fund, \$83,079.54; Records Improvement, \$950.95; Communities Development Block Grant, \$59,705.96; Domestic Relations, \$8,939.47; Children & Youth Services Fund, \$498,304.85. Motion to approve the bills by Commissioner Scotto, seconded by Commissioner Glass; motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Changes

New Hires – Hunter Sinclair, Full-time Corrections Officer, effective 9/20/21

Ashley Dixon, Full-time Telecommunicator/911, effective 9/25/21

Mary Pfeufer, Temporary Department Clerk III, Controllers Office, effective 9/29/21.

Transfers – Victoria Bennett, Department Clerk III/Controllers to Fiscal Tech/CYS, effective 9/20/21.

Separations/Retirements

Austin Barrett, Corrections Officer, effective 9/30/21

Kelsey Vitullo, Caseworker Supervisor/CYS, effective 10/1/21

Diane Murray, Caseworker/CYS, effective 10/8/21

Nichole Gormont, Conference Officer/DRO, effective 10/8/21

Derick Jones, Adult Probation Officer, effective 10/8/21

Approval of the personnel changes by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Scotto; Chair Sobel; motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Polly Neeper spoke that the County is losing qualified dispatchers to other counties and jobs that pay more than Clearfield County.

Susanne Shaw addressed the 911 staffing shortage and the amount of trainees that are on the job and low paying hourly wages that are being paid.

Tracy Weber works on an ambulance and relies on the staff at the 911 center who are taking the calls. There are amazing people at the 911 center and the safety of everyone in the community relies on the 911 Dispatchers.

Chuck Wilson spoke that he owns property next to the proposed detention center. He asked for a copy of the agreement between the County and the Federal Government and GEO.

Old Business

Chair Sobel spoke that the County the Commissioners will be presenting an agreement with ICE for Clearfield County to operate a federal immigration detention processing center for Immigration, Customs and Enforcement and a Global Agreement with GEO to reopen the former Decatur Township private prison facility and operate the same as a federal immigration center for Clearfield County pursuant to their agreement with ICE. Previously the Philadelphia office of ICE contracted with York County but that contract has since ended. GEO has now obtained a new 5-year contract with the United States Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Venturella said GEO had been operating the facility in Decatur Township for approximately twenty years. Previously they contracted with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to house inmates serving sentences for federal felonies and immigration violations. When the contract ended with the Federal Bureau of Prisons in March of this year the GEO facility was closed and over 300 employees lost their jobs. Once the facility is re-opened, it will have a capacity to hold approximately a little over 1,800 adult detainees and will employ over 300. Mr. Venturella said the facility should be open within 45 to 60 days and they are happy to reemploy more than 300 individuals at the facility. Mr. McShane commented that transportation will be provided to released inmates to transportation hubs in major metropolitan areas and GEO has created a robust transportation system to support this. Detainees will not be released until they have had a Federal Immigration Hearing or Federal Board of Appeals. McShane also said that ICE is also looking to open a sub-field office with a few permanent staff at the GEO facility. Solicitor Bozovich explained that due to regulations, Clearfield County would be the service provider for ICE as well as a contract with the GEO Group who would fulfill the contract on behalf of the County. Ms. Bozovich has reviewed both documents and approve them as to form and explained that there are "hold harmless" language in both agreements to protect the County. The County would almost be a pass-through entity, where ICE would pay the County and the County would pay GEO. GEO will assume all the responsibilities and liability in operating the facility.

The Commissioners were all in favor of reopening the facility and restoring the 300 jobs that were lost and feel the pluses outweigh the minuses. Chair Sobel called for a motion to enter into an Intergovernmental Services Agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to operate a Federal Immigration Detention and Processing Center located at the former GEO Prison site in Decatur Township by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Scotto; motion carried unanimously. Motion to approve a Service Agreement between the County and GEO to reopen the former GEO Private Prison Facility and operate a Federal Immigration Detention and Processing Center for Clearfield County in conjunction with the agreement with ICE, by Commissioner Scotto, seconded by Commissioner Glass; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sobel presented an Intergovernmental Housing Agreement with Centre County. The annual agreement is used in the event that Centre or Clearfield County would need to house inmates in one of the County Prison facilities. Approval by motion of Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Scotto; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sobel asked for a motion to consider approval of the Juvenile Probation Services Grant Agreement. The grant for \$91,279 is reimbursement of portions of salaries and benefits of Juvenile Probation officers through the Juvenile Court Judges Commission. Approval of the grant agreement by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Scotto; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sobel asked for a motion to approve the appointment of Cindy Britton to the Clearfield County Public Library Board. Approval by motion of Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Scotto; motion carried unanimously.

Liquid Fuel allocation was approved for Chester Hill Borough in the amount of \$3,000 by motion of Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Scotto; motion carried unanimously.

Solicitors Report – None

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Scotto, seconded by Commissioner Glass; motion carried unanimously.

Lisa McFadden, Chief Clerk