



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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North Central Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Members via Zoom

Ann Losey
Cliff Clark
Dennis McKimm
Dave Glass
John Sobel
Jodi Brennan
Kristy Smith
Matt Quesenberry
Joe Dagher
Padraic McGrath
Eric Wolfe
Jodi Foster
Jeff Pisarcik
Jack Matson
Jamie Lefever
Jim Sleigh
Carol Duffy
Tom Kreiner
Nancy Grupp
Paul Heimel
Will Hunt
Doug Morley

Cameron County
Cameron County
Cameron County
Clearfield County
Clearfield County
Clearfield County
Clearfield County
Elk County
Elk County
Elk County
Elk County
Elk County
Jefferson County
Jefferson County
Jefferson County
Jefferson County
McKean County
McKean County
Potter County
Potter County
Potter County
Potter County

Staff via in person or Zoom

Jim Chorney
Amy Kessler
Christine Perneski
Mary Lou Jessop

Guests via Zoom

Erin Wells
Jill Martin-Rend
Thomas Beveridge
Brian Stockman

Governor's Office
BC3@Brockway
Solicitor
Ridgway Record/Daily Press

Chair Pisarcik called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM via Zoom with the pledge to the flag.

QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call was taken to make sure everyone on the meeting was captured. There was a quorum for the meeting.

Jeff thanked everyone for attending the meeting on such short notice. This meeting was scheduled and then it was decided not to have it; and then in talking to Commissioner Matson, Chairman of the Governance Committee, Jack brought up the idea of a COVID-19 Regional Task Force and requested to have the meeting.

Regarding how this evolved, Commissioner Matson said about three or four weeks ago when we were in the early stages of the pandemic we knew there was going to be a recovery side so they asked their Economic Development people, Jamie Lefebvre and Bill Settee, to start gathering information. That grew to an Economic Recovery Task Force and they enlisted the help of their Chambers of Commerce, Punxsutawney, Brookville and DuBois, and started having discussions such as what does a recovery look like and what are people suffering from now. Since Jodi August was from the DuBois Chamber, they wondered if they should take a regional approach, so they invited Clearfield in on this because they do have the same demographics, same backyard, same kind of footprint and same COVID-19. A lot of it is going to be economic and it seemed that North Central was a good fit for many reasons.

At the Governance Committee on April 21, they proposed the formation of a COVID-19 Task Force, with the broad term of helping with the recovery. Whether that is we are the eyes and ears for the State and Federal Governments on a soft opening, and what that looks like for us. Or an advisory side where some businesses are afraid to open or not sure if they should open or not, we can point them in the right direction.

Through discussions we tried to ask the questions we would anticipate for today's meeting, i.e. what would the makeup of the board look like? We want it to be big enough and robust enough that we are touching a lot of areas because there has been a lot of information coming to all of us. We all may be getting different information which could be shared with the rest of the group. However, we want this Task Force to be small enough that we can get things done. There was discussion on how that was to be built so a loose framework was put together.

Jefferson County's COVID-19 Task Force is made up of the Commissioners, Economic Development staff and the Chambers. However, this could be different in your county. And one member from that micro task force would be a member of the North Central Regional Task Force.

The Governance Committee recommends the formation of the Task Force. Is this a good idea? Is this the path we want to take as a group?

Dave Glass thought it was a good idea. It is something Clearfield County has been thinking about in terms of looking ahead to the recovery. When Jack reached out to Dave and told him he was working on this, David said it made sense to do this regionally and try to make sure we are all on the same page as much as we can be, depending on what comes out of Harrisburg.

One of the ideas Dave shared, to get back to a new normal, is we need testing, contact tracing and isolation and those are three things we don't have. Jack hadn't thought about this as he was thinking more along the lines of how can you convert to curb side, how can you keep social distancing at some of

these businesses? What can be open that is on the list now that can safely be opened? He thinks if we put the plan in place but can't activate it, it's very important for the testing side of it.

In light of what Jack and Dave just talked about on the testing, the contact tracing, and isolation, Amy asked who in the region or is there someone on the Board already that represents the Healthcare side of things that is regional that could help round out this group you are talking about forming?

Jack said there would be a total of 17 members proposed to make up this Task Force and would be made up of representatives from:

- One member from each County COVID-19 Task Force – If you don't have a Task Force, it could be one representative to provide insight.
- One Representatives from each of the cities of Bradford, DuBois and St. Marys – Their challenges as cities will be different than the counties.
- A Representative for Finance/Banking
- A Representative from Healthcare
- Two Education Representatives
 - Higher Education
 - K-12
- A Representative from Workforce Solutions of North Central Pennsylvania
- A Representative from County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) – They are doing an excellent job of trying to digest all the legislation coming through and how it affects the counties. Jack thought Lisa Shaffer would be a good choice if she is available.
- A Representative from North Central PA Regional Planning and Development Commission
- A Legislative Representative or a Representative from the Commonwealth – so there is an open line of communications back and forth.

This is the outline the Governance Committee came up with on how the Task Force would be made up.

Carol thought it would be a good idea, because the more we share the more beneficial it will be for everyone, and is on board with forming the Task Force.

Brian Stockman asked if it would be possible to send him some information on what we have so far on this for Jefferson County's region.

Jack said they are having discussions on what is going on. Jamie Lefever has been doing a wonderful job of keeping them informed on some of the banking things that are going on locally and also on some of their customers, where their pain points are. It was brought up regarding greenhouses in our region where some of them believe they are not supposed to be open.

Brian said he knows the PA Farm Bureau is actually trying to petition Governor Wolf to open those greenhouses.

Jack said the value of having this discussion is hopefully someone can get those answers. He knows Jamie Lefever and Jodi August were working on that.

Dave Glass stated that one thing that hasn't been talked about, and assuming this Task Force is formed, is how you are going to round out these position. Are you going to take nominations?

Jack has given this some thought and also as full disclosure he stated he is running for office and doesn't want to look as being politically motivated. He can assure us it's not from his point of view and doesn't want it to look like that either, because if that perception was there it could turn into reality. He doesn't know what his role should be in this going forward.

Jeff said it could be left up to each county. Jeff thinks everyone received the email from Jim that was sent out yesterday afternoon of the recommendation for one member from each county and the three cities. That should be up to the counties to decide those people.

Dave said he wants to make a motion to form this Task Force. He's just not sure how to round out those other members. Maybe you're right about the cities coming from the counties, but those other at-large positions we will have to have a discussion on how those get filled.

Jeff thought that was good point and would assume we would start with the first nine people, six from the counties and three from the cities when they start meeting, then that would be them, as a committee, to fill in the rest of the members.

With that in mind, Dave made the motion to form the COVID-19 Task Force with the basis of each county putting forward one representative to start, seconded by Ann Losey. Motion unanimously passed.

Jack thanked everyone and feels it is going to be a good thing for our region. We know our region better than anyone else. We are the boots on the ground and will be a real asset. The faster we're ramped up to be that asset, the more out there we can be. And whether the legislature or Governor wants to use us, or we can advise back the other way, this is an idea we had that works.

Jeff asked what the time table is for this before we adjourn the meeting. That should be put together right now.

Dave suggested that each county submit their own nominee this week and then those people can meet next week by Zoom.

Jeff asked if Jim would be okay with having those recommendations send to him to which he said yes.

We can even set up the next Zoom meeting for the people that are going to be nominated. He had a question which was he thinks we can have the North Central and Workforce Solutions representatives there as well. And do you want them included in the decision-making process for the other positions?

Jeff stated they are on the committee and would have no objections. Dave had no objections and Carol said we need to be flexible with everyone being so busy and will be grateful to anyone who can donate their time.

Jim will coordinate this. The first meeting will be held with up to 11 people, six from the counties, three from the cities, one from Workforce Solutions and one from North Central.

Jim will also reach out to the cities and ask them for a representative for this Task Force; and he will also contact Workforce Solutions.

Asking what day we wanted these recommendations in by, it was set for Friday, April 24. Dave said he was good with that and he was volunteering for Clearfield unless there was an objection.

Jack is going to reach out to Lisa Shaffer at CCAP. He doesn't know if they will be part of the first meeting or not.

Erin Wells from the Governor's Office had a few comments. First was a thank you to North Central and staff for all the work they have been doing during this time in keeping people informed. She then thanked all the Commissioners who have stepped up and not been shy in reaching out to her.

Erin would be happy to be involved in whatever meaningful capacity you would like her to take on this Task Force. She will be glad to be the eyes and ears and take things back to the Governor's Office as she does in a lot of their one-on-one conversations. If there is a time when you feel you want to gather those thoughts privately and not have her included, she appreciates that as well. If we include her in the communications, she will do best her best to attend those meetings.

Right before the Zoom meeting, Erin learned that Governor Wolf will be having a press conference tonight to announce the actual metrics that will be used to evaluate the counties under the reopening plan. As this whole thing progresses we will be reaching out to you as to how you want to participate in the plans as they unfold. If there is a time we think is okay to lift in your county, they want county feedback whether you feel it is the right time or what part of that is giving you pause or concerns. They want to do this basically the same way the State did walking into this whole situation.

Many of you have shared your comments and concerns already whether they are concerns about reopening or when you think it should happen.

After tonight's press conference Erin stated the counties will be hearing from her, either by the end of the week or early next week, regarding things that are planned for your county as those metrics are applied to each of the current situations in the counties.

Jack stated Erin's comments were good news and thanked her for volunteering to be on the Task Force, as she will be a great addition to the Committee.

Erin stated whatever capacity or just want her to be a guest is fine. She also stated she can bring in other experts as needed for the recovery effort, whether it is someone from the Department of Health, or Education or DCED, to help get through a trouble point or need a contact person. There are a lot of resources she can bring to the Committee if needed.

She thought what we are doing is a great idea and our region has always pulled together as being a team for these types of things; and again, if she can be of help to make sure she is included.

Brian Stockman asked Erin if garden centers were allowed to be open or not.

Erin stated that greenhouses can be open for growing but not allowed to be open for resale. She also noted a letter was sent out to the big box centers, Home Depot, Lowe's and Walmart that have lawn and

garden centers that the lawn and garden centers are not allowed to be open. As well, the smaller 'mom and pop' operations are not allowed to be open. She did note that are several little businesses in the area that are open. She's not sure if they received waivers or are operating as a vegetable or fruit stand or small market type of business but they have flowers, mulch and other things for sale. This is something she thinks they are evaluating on whether they can open up safely or not. There should not be any sales in front of the house right now.

Chris Perneski mentioned the meeting coming up on April 23 regarding a survey the LaunchBox has done. Brad is presenting this to the PREP Partners at that time. Since many of you have received invitations, if you would like to sit in on the meeting to please contact Chris and she can provide you with the link.

The intent, which was started by Jefferson County, was to gather data at the municipal, county, local and regional levels. Brad is willing to adjust that survey to fit any Task Force but he wants to make sure he has a good outreach and has now brought it to the PREP network to try to fill the gaps. They are reaching out to industries, small businesses, manufacturers and the municipalities.

Amy let the Board know that the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be going out for its 30-day comment period. She is waiting on Air Quality documents for Clearfield County and then the TIP will go out only on line. She is going to do a modified Public Participation Plan where everything will be available via the web or by request. If Amy can get the Air Quality done this week, we will get the legal ads out in the papers early next week. Instead of copies of the TIP being dropped off at the county courthouses and libraries, it will be all on line and will still get the same input.

Regarding the PIDA COVID-19 Working Capital Loans Program, they have started to announce some of the awarded loans. Jim will forward the list that is up to April 17. We will forward additional updates as we receive them.

The next NC Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 27, starting at 9:30 AM via Zoom.

Jeff thanked everyone for participating in the meeting.

ADJOURN

With no additional items to be discussed, Chair Pisarcik called for a motion to adjourn. Dave Glass moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Carol Duffy. The meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Padraic McGrath, CPA
Secretary/Treasurer