



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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North Central Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 24, 2023 – 9:30 AM

Members – via Teams or In Person

Ann Losey	Cameron County
Cliff Clark	Cameron County
Dave Glass	Clearfield County
Jodi Brennan	Clearfield County
Kristy Smith	Clearfield County
Matt Quesenberry	Elk County
Eric Wolfe	Elk County
Tracy Gerber	Elk County
Padraic McGrath	Elk County
Jeff Pisarcik	Jefferson County
Jessica Funk	Jefferson County
Carol Duffy	McKean County
Tom Kreiner	McKean County
Nancy Grupp	Potter County
Doug Morley	Potter County
Abbi Peters	At-large PA Wilds
Jill Martin-Rend	At-large BC3@Brockway
Carolyn Newhouse	At-large Bradford Area Alliance

Staff - via Teams or In Person

Jim Chorney
Amy Kessler
Samantha Mitchell
Ed Matts
Julie Kasmierski
Shelly Caggiano
Jenn Hibbard
Mary Lou Jessop

Guests

Tom Beveridge	Solicitor
Brian Stockman	Ridgway Record

Chair Ann Losey called the meeting to order at 9:39 AM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call was taken and there was a quorum for the meeting.

MINUTES

With no corrections or amendments to the March 22 and April 26, 2023, Board Minutes, Jeff Pisarcik moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Dave Glass. Motion unanimously passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Reports

With no corrections or additions to the March and April Financial Reports, Doug Morley moved to accept the Financial Statements as presented, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. Motion unanimously passed.

A95s

There were no A95s.

Correspondence

There was no Correspondence.

Purchases

There were no Purchases.

Resolutions

There were no Resolutions.

Loans

Jenn had one Microloan to review.

Robert G. Cosper, Jr. dba Cosper's Produce, Smethport, McKean County, has requested loans in the amount of \$8,500 from the NCP Microloan for 5 years at the rate of 5% and a loan in the amount of \$8,500 from the SSBCI for 5 years at the rate of 5% for the purchase of equipment. Purchase of equipment is to complete a high-tunnel greenhouse/above ground irrigation system project for use in growing and supplying crops for the roadside produce stand. North Central's collateral will be UCC-1 filing on all business assets as well as the personal guarantee of the owner and spouse. One full-time job and three part-time jobs will be retained.

With no questions, Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the loan to Robert G. Cosper, Jr. dba Cosper's Produce.

Kristy Smith moved to approve the loan to Robert G. Cosper, Jr. dba Cosper's Produce, seconded by Carol Duffy. Motion unanimously passed.

Building Committee Update

Jim gave a brief update. We are waiting for the bid package to be prepared by the engineer. Once we receive that, we will review it with the Building Committee prior to making a recommendation to the Board to put it out for bid.

DISCUSSION

New Tax Assessment of Building

Last December the Elk County Assessment Office reached out to us. In 2021 and 2022 there were a number of building permits applied for by Keystone Rural Health as they were making modifications to some of their office spaces in the half of the building they lease.

There was also a conversation with one of our neighbors regarding a small building at the front of the property which was an old gas pumping shed. There was a conversation with one of our neighbors regarding the small shed who wanted to use it, but the conversation hasn't gone any further. However, they reached out to the Assessment Office and that triggered the Assessment Office to look at things.

In January staff from the Assessment Office came up and walked the property, went through it and even scheduled time to go through the new improvements that were being made to the Keystone Health side of the building.

We didn't hear anything until May 15 when we received a Change of Assessment notice from the Assessment Office. Basically they are changing our assessment value from 281,000 to 405,750, which is a difference of 124,750. Currently we pay approximately \$21,000 in taxes a year. This new assessment would be an increase of just over \$30,000 so an increase of about \$10,000 a year for the new assessed value.

Jim has had conversations with Elk County as well as with Chair Losey to run by some of the options we might have from our perspective.

Our options are 1) doing nothing and just accepting the new increase; 2) we can appeal where we have 40 days from the date the notice was filed; or 3) we can request an exemption given our status as a 501 (c) (3) organization.

Jim wanted to find out from the Board what your thoughts are on this.

Solicitor Beveridge was in attendance and reported that he and Jim had talked about the spot assessment where an authority has certain criteria that triggers an assessment for one particular business or one particular piece of property as opposed to a county-wide assessment.

After a very lengthy discussion, Jim thought the logical choice would be for North Central to apply for exemption for the space we occupy and still pay taxes on the space occupied by Keystone Rural Health which would be a compromise to the situation.

Solicitor Beveridge's thought is that we should file the appeal so it will be on record as this must be done before our June Board Meeting and it can always be withdrawn.

Dave Glass said he certainly supports that idea and made a motion to that effect so it would be recorded in the minutes, seconded by Nancy Grupp.

When asked to repeat the motion, Dave said the motion is to authorize an appeal be filed by the deadline.

This was seconded by Nancy Grupp.

Tom also said before the June meeting he will make sure the notice of intention to appeal is filed and he will research the requeſtion of the revenue received from Keystone Rural Health and how it affects the taxability of the organization and then he and Jim can also coordinate to talk more about tax exemption matters. Also, if it is outside of his purview and he can't answer the questions, he will acquire whatever information from appropriate attorneys or accountants that might be able to help us with those issues.

Chair Losey asked Dave again if we can have a motion to approve filing the appeal with the Tax Assessment Office?

Dave Glass replied so moved and seconded by Nancy Grupp. Matt Quesenberry opposed the motion and Abbi Peters and Tracy Gerber abstained.

Potential Regional Broadband Application

A Board member asked Jim if North Central was going to apply for a regional broadband project. We are not opposed to doing that but do have a few concerns.

With that Jim asked Ed to talk about this.

The first funding that is available is the CAP funding, which is \$200 million that the Commonwealth is putting out and he believes the applications are due July 10.

Regional projects are tough because we are so disjointed and there is no interconnectivity between counties as far as fiber and it makes it hard.

The question really is, do we do one regional project or do we help counties do their own projects and hope we get a few county projects as opposed to not getting anything?

Dave said this is a big priority of his and he is involved with the Broadband Task Force for CCAP. He also said that Jefferson, Elk and Clearfield have been discussing trying to do a mini project but are finding that difficult because of the different providers in each county. Elk and Jefferson have a lot of Windstream whereas Clearfield has Breezeline. It seems Comcast is the constant provider in all three areas.

With a July 10 deadline for this round, it would almost be impossible for the six counties to try to get something together as we are almost in June. Now would be the time to start thinking about funding for next year.

Dave also thinks it improves our chances of success if we can credibly put together a regional proposal to submit. This is something we should talk about over the summer and into the fall to see what we can come up with.

Ed stated he will be resurrecting the Broadband Committee that was working with the CEDS Committee so if anyone is interested in being on that Committee, please let him know. Dave had his hand up.

Ed also said it would be important to have a representative, or the chair of that committee, to perhaps either give a monthly update to the Board or at least every other month when we have our regular Board meetings. That will let everyone know how things are proceeding.

Also, he thinks whoever participates from each county should bring the needs from that county and not be worried about what the other counties are doing.

Once we see what each county's needs are, if there are similar projects in perhaps three counties, we could see if we could do them as a bundle. This is a great opportunity for that Committee to share all the information and everything will be taken into consideration.

Just remember we're here to help the counties; and if we are the supplier of last resort, then we will take care of it the best we can.

Ed will follow up with the CEDS Committee to start looking at resurrecting the Broadband Sub-committee. We will try to have a meeting as soon as possible to start these conversations.

Another item Jim wanted to talk about was the future of the board meetings. Jim was recently at a conference and speaking with other people, he found out that a lot of places are doing in-person meetings and not virtual anymore, some because their state laws don't permit virtual meetings.

Jim then asked the Board for their preference.

Several members stated that if it was mandatory to be in person, they wouldn't be able to attend as many meetings because of other things going on that they need to be in the office. Padraic noted that with the growth of his company he didn't know if he would be able to continue to serve on the Board.

From what was said Jim stated for now we are going to continue having our meetings, odd months being in-person and virtual and the even months being virtual to approve loans and other things that may come up that are of urgent nature.

Then it was suggested perhaps having one in-person meeting, perhaps the January meeting, as it is the start of the new year.

Ann suggested Jim do a Doodle poll to get everyone's comments as to what they want to do.

Jim will send out a Doodle Poll that will ask how you would feel about having one in-person meeting and which odd month would you prefer.

Another thing Jim talked about was most of our committees have by-laws and they go through an election of officers on an annual basis. However, two of our committees, the Governance Committee and the Audit & Finance Committee don't do that. They meet on an as-needed basis.

It's probably been two years since we elected those people who volunteered to be on those committees. Do we want to consider looking at these on an annual basis as far as who is participating, as well as the opportunity for other board members to participate in them?

The consensus was it would be a good idea to make this part of our January meeting. And if there is anyone here, or you can think of anyone who would like to participate on either of these committees, please send Jim an email.

Also, Jim asked how SharePoint is going and if anyone was experiencing any issues. If so, please let Ed know so his staff can come out and help access files or anything else you are having problems with.

Ann stated she has been having issues from the very start and has to get in touch with their IT people to see if it's something they are doing wrong. Cliff also added he is unable to access the information as well.

The last thing Jim wanted to mention is that during the Discussion part on the agenda, this is your opportunity to share information with each other. If there is a common theme between counties that you'd like to discuss, this is the time. It doesn't have to involve North Central, so if there is an issue that you'd like to discuss or question you want to ask, this is the time for that.

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 28, beginning at 9:30 AM and will be Virtual to approve loans we may have.

Adjournment

With no other business for discussion, Chair Losey called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Pisarcik moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Kristy Smith. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Padraic McGrath, CPA
Secretary/Treasurer