



DAUPHIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP MEETING

MAY 7, 2008
10:00 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Haste, Chairman
Dominic D. DiFrancesco, II, Vice Chairman
George P. Hartwick, III, Secretary

STAFF PRESENT

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk; Marie E. Rebeck, Controller; Janis Creason, Treasurer; William Tully, Esq., Solicitor; Lowell Witmer, Clerk of Courts; Sandra Snyder, Register of Wills; J. Scott Burford, Deputy Chief Clerk; Mary Ann Boyer, Registration & Elections; Dave Schreiber, Personnel; Leila McAdoo, Solicitor's Office; Tom Guenther, Director of IT; Amy Richards, Commissioners' Office; Diane McNaughton, Commissioners' Office; Randy Baratucci, Director of Purchasing; Kay Lengle, Personnel; Hector Ortiz, Human Services Director's Office; Greg Schneider, Budget & Finance; Dan Robinson, Director of Community & Economic Development; Leonard Carroll, Prison; Lamont Alderman, Prison; Glorilyn Rowe, Prison; Michele Varner, Prison; Steve Smith, Prison; David Gray, Prison; Liza Lebkicher, Prison; Fred Lighty, Esq., Human Services Director's Office; Brenda Hoffer, Commissioners' Office and Richie-Ann Martz, Assistant Chief Clerk

GUESTS PRESENT

Garry Lenton, Alex Hartzler and Dave Butcher

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Haste, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Everyone observed a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Haste: We have six sets of meeting minutes that we will take up at next week's meeting.

ELECTION BOARD

A complete set of Election Board Meeting Minutes are on file in the Commissioners' Office.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Haste: We are at the point in time in the meeting for public participation. Is there anyone in the audience that would like to address the Board at this time? (There was none.)

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS/GUESTS

A. Commissioners

1. Proclamation – Correctional Officers' Week

Mr. Haste: It is my pleasure to recognize our correctional employees. This is the week, nationwide, of recognition of correctional employees. The facility that we have and the challenges that are placed out there, I think our employees do an excellent job. It is my pleasure to read a Proclamation.

Office of County Commissioner
Dauphin County, Pennsylvania

Proclamation

We, the Dauphin County Board of Commissioners, are delighted to have the opportunity to honor and recognize the invaluable role played by correctional employees in supporting public safety, executing justice and upholding a safe, secure and humane environment in correctional facilities in Dauphin County and across the Commonwealth;

Whereas, Pennsylvania's correctional system is the oldest in the nation, and, over time, has emerged as a model for other institutions, from the 1770s through modern times;

Whereas, on any given day, Dauphin County houses close to 1,000 prisoners, along with 190 correctional staff, 40 treatment workers and 25 support staff, who confront and manage innumerable challenges in the state's 26 state correctional institutions, 63 other county prisons, 13 community corrections centers, and ten federal institutions;

Whereas, more than 27,000 highly skilled, dedicated corrections professionals work around the clock throughout the state to provide safe, secure and efficiently-run facilities;

Whereas, we thank the counselors, clergy, treatment specialists, administrators, volunteers and officers at Dauphin County Prison for their presence and professionalism;

Whereas, corrections officers serve on the front lines in the battle to combat the aftermath of overcrowding, mental illness, substance abuse, illiteracy, gang warfare and violence in society and in our prisons;

Therefore, we join the 253,300 residents of Dauphin County in acknowledging all correctional employees, who work tirelessly to promote public safety and security in our facilities; we applaud them for the demanding and often heroic job they do, often under great duress; and, in grateful tribute to their tremendous service and sacrifice, we do hereby join the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in proudly declaring May 4 - 10, 2008 to be "Corrections Employee Week" in Dauphin County.

Mr. Haste: With us today, we have Deputy Warden Lenny Carroll, Lieutenant Steve Smith, Correctional Officer Lamont Alderman, Correctional Officer Glorilyn Rowe, Records Officer Michele Varner, Treatment Specialist David Gray and LPN Liza Lebkicher. I would like to thank each one of you personally for what you do and I ask that when you go back that you share it with your coworkers. I think most of you know that I come out there on a regular basis. I guess I get to see a lot of things others don't get to see. I get to see, and this is often forgotten, the times that correctional officers actually save the life of an individual, whether it be in the gym or their cell or whatever else. Our employees are first responders in many cases out there when something happens. Even though there are complaints about the food and healthcare, many of these individuals are getting better nutrition inside the facility than they get on the streets. I know many of them get better medical coverage inside the facility than they get on the streets. Far too often throughout the year you folks take shots that just aren't warranted and I don't think the people in the community or the media appreciate what you do on a day-to-day basis. I see it and thank you very much for what you do.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I would like to take an opportunity today to just stress the thank you, but also to echo Commissioner Haste's comments. The responsibilities that you carry out for the community's good do not get adequate attention. I'm trying very hard to carefully place my words, but it is very unfortunate that we had to go through the drama that we had to go through when in fact if you really want to tell a story publicly then the story should be what you have to put up with on a daily basis in your job; and the service that you do for this community in keeping exceptional control over an institution that very easily could be out of control. I can tell you that there are a lot more people on the streets who are very grateful for the job that you do than maybe comes to light. The bottom line is there are very few people in our community that would choose to take on the responsibility that each of you has taken on and we thank you for that. Truly there are people in communities all across this county who can sleep better at night, because you are the one that is dealing with the person that they don't want to deal with on the street. Today, I just want to say thank you very much and I truly wish and hope that at some point you will get publicly the recognition and respect that each and every one of

you truly deserves. I do believe that the public and the taxpayers do appreciate the job that you do. Today, I want to say thank you very much for the job that you do.

Mr. Hartwick: In one of the many jobs that I have done in County government, I know one of the most challenging and difficult one was when I came out and did a couple shifts in the blue uniform out at the Dauphin County Prison. I know that the individuals who do the job every day are the ones who really make or break that facility. I know that sometimes additional attention on a facility may not necessarily be a bad thing particularly now that we get to see, as more and more information is disclosed, the actual good works of people who perform that job every day. One of the things that we don't talk about a whole lot is our Prison population is actually down from where it was about four or five years ago and attempting to try to divert and keep people out of the Prison. I also want to thank the Treatment staff who also has an extremely challenging job as well. Part of my duties that day was to go in and talk to the sex offender group, as well as the drug and alcohol group. Talk about challenging individuals to deal with to try to provide treatment and counsel and get individuals in a position where when they get outside the Prison walls we don't want to see them back. You do an outstanding job of providing that service despite some of the criticism and despite some of the attacks that you receive publicly and inside the facility from some of the inmates. I also know that you earn a great deal of respect from the inmates and you certainly have a great deal of respect from this Board of Commissioners. Thank you for the job that you do every day.

(Pictures were taken and applause given.)

B. Alex Hartzler, President & Principal, WCI Partners

1. Green Street Redevelopment

Mr. DiFrancesco: I'm pretty excited today to have Alex come in here and give a presentation to us. I had invited them to come in and get on the agenda. About three weeks ago I had the pleasure of attending a CREDC Executive Board Meeting at one of the homes that we are about to see in the presentation. I was real close to signing on the dotted line, because these homes were absolutely fantastic. They were beautiful. The location is fantastic. The great story behind this really is the revitalization that is taking place in another neighborhood that I'm hoping we will see some pictures of before and after shots today. These are the types of stories that we really need to promote, because these are, to me, the economic development projects that have some meaning to the quality of life. They speak great to the quality of life in the community when projects like this are undertaken. So, I'm very excited to hear about this and I thank you very much for coming in.

Mr. Hartzler: Thank you very much for having us. I'm here with Dave Butcher, who is Vice President of WCI and I'm the President. This project, in what we call Olde Uptown Harrisburg, which is mostly defined as Maclay to Muench, Second to Third, is represented by about a \$16 million development. We are backed by a grant from the

Pennsylvania Housing & Finance Agency and also a State grant as well. (Power Point) The area shown is the Governor's Mansion during the Agnes Flood of 1972. Our area is immediately behind Maclay and Second Street. This area, about 300 tax parcels, was completely flooded in 1972. The area that we are building actually new homes on has been vacant since that time. It is interesting to me, when you think about the folks in Katrina, how long it is going to take them to rebuild. We actually have a similar, very small scale story here where this area that we are working on now has been destroyed since 1972 and really is just now being rebuild thirty-some years later. Prior to, you talked about before and after, us starting this project two years ago we did a survey of the area. There are 337 tax parcels. Almost half of them were in serious disrepair. We had burned out buildings, a lot of buildings with no roofs on them, vandalism, trash, absentee landlords, that was a big drug trafficking area in the City, graffiti and disinvestment. I would note that in the area an interesting point is that just look at homeownership. Homeownership in the County as you know based on the National and State trend, about 65% of the people own their own homes. However, in the City it is about the reverse of that. Thirty-five percent of the people own their homes and 65% rent. However, in this area only about 10 to 20% of the people own their own homes. What we have done, the cornerstone of the project is we have 16 new townhomes. Twelve are currently built and four are under construction at the corner of Green and Peffer, between Peffer and Delaware. On Friday, we are having the ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially dedicate the homes. We tried to bring a little bit of different feel to the homes. They have a one car garage and an outdoor parking spot. The living area is on the second floor and the bedrooms are on the third floor. They are all two or three bedrooms, with 2 ½ baths. We have instilled something that hasn't been seen too much in Harrisburg, a sophisticated urban design.

In addition to the new homes, we are renovating over 85 homes. It is probably now over 100 existing homes in the area. A lot of these were abandoned for a better part of decades. Now they are being restored to their original use, which are single family homes. A lot of them are very grand homes. If you look at all those homes that are shaded are ones that will be affected by the project. There are new homes and ones that are being renovated.

I would have three points or takeaway points that are important. I commend the County, as far as economic development. First, build it and they will come. There is a thought in the community that there is a demand for middle and upscale housing in Harrisburg. There really just simply isn't much, other than Capital Heights and now us. We have sold seven of the twelve already prior to our grand opening and an eighth pending and there is great demand for it if you build the products. That is the good news. The bad news is currently non-subsidized new construction is simply not viable in the City of Harrisburg. We are subsidized by about \$1.5 million in PHFA, as I mentioned, through their revitalization program. It is part of their \$10 million that they disburse across the State every year. We have gotten two phases of that. We have also got a \$250,000 grant for sidewalks, street trees and other improvements through DCED. Without that public money, however, we could not do this project. The new townhomes are selling for far less than we built them for. The reason is the high tax

rates between City, School and County. The burden of the Harrisburg taxpayers is such that there is a cap on prices. You can go and build this townhome in a suburban setting in Dauphin County and command probably 40 to 50% more for it simply because the taxes are going to be that much less. The City taxpayers pay about \$3,200 per \$100,000 of value. While a new \$200,000 townhome would cost \$6,000 if there wasn't tax abatement. There is a phase in tax abatement in place, however, who can afford \$6,000 on top of their new purchase. The good news is there is a demand. The bad news is while you are not seeing supply it is simply you cannot build them unsubsidized for what you need to sell them for to make money. Thirdly I would add that progress can be made. This is a good private/public partnership. Having a stable viable community means having homeowners. As I said earlier, we are converting this from probably a 10 or 15 homeownership situation neighborhood to one when we are done about 65% of the neighborhood is going to be homeowners. That means the streets are clean, growing greener by planting trees and finally we got help from the County from the DA's Office, the City Police. We were actually out to see some of the correctional folks, you mentioning the correctional folks today. They are actually working with us, as well in helping us patrol the streets and get the drug traffickers out of the area. That has been a great help in deterring this neighborhood from one where you were afraid to walk into, to one that is really nice. A block from the Governor's Mansion. It is a terrific part of our community and it is coming back that way. There is a lot of great news here and there are a lot of things that we can still do to continue to do projects like this. I appreciate your time in listening to us.

Mr. Haste: The only thing I think this does and you said about if you build it they will come. I think it is not just the tenants, but I'm somewhat familiar with your project and some of the things around there. You take somebody out of the streets and things like that. The other revitalization that is going on, not just by you guys, but other investors who see what is going on and once the momentum starts going other private dollars come in, not maybe for homeownership, but for much improved facilities for families to come in and get started in as a lease to own or a rental property. Other investors are following you around, because once the neighbor starts to improve others might join that bandwagon. Even though it is a portion of it I think what you are doing will cause the rest of the neighborhood to improve. I think just across 6th Street in that neighborhood, I believe the City is into a revitalization program as well. You are going to be able to take not only this neighborhood, but the neighborhood on the other side and I think you will see both of them start to make that improvement.

Mr. Hartzler: That's definitely right. The work that is going on with the Harrisburg Community College on Reily Street is tremendous. The City's longstanding work with Capital Heights. If not for those two projects and what the City is doing now, we simply wouldn't have had the confidence to even start in the area.

Mr. Hartwick: I know, as the Mayor of Steelton, and with almost identical problems related to housing and homeownership, the single most important thing that you can do to revitalize a community is to encourage and provide new housing and homeownership. I can think of no more important revitalization steps that you can take

besides re-housing stock and homeownership. When you think of why you move into a community as a young family you think about the school district and housing stock and then you think of your amenities and being able to walk to things. Some of those amenities now with some of the things that are happening in Midtown and hopefully that synergy will build as Jeff had mentioned. To take an area that had 10 to 15% homeownership and turn it into 65% homeownership and we say this from the Board all the time if you own your own home and if you replace the housing stock you care about your neighborhood. You become a part of what goes on and you have a vested interest. If you don't own it, you trash it and then leave and you leave it to whoever is coming in next to take care of it. We have a similar project going on in Steelton on Adams Street where we acquired properties. How did you acquire the properties? Did you do it or did the City do it or in combination?

Mr. Hartzler: It was both.

Mr. Hartwick: Acquisition and demolition.

Mr. Hartzler: For the new homes, that was land that the houses were destroyed during the Agnes Flood. The City owned that land. They were clear, but there was excavation to remediate the soil. We did acquire those properties from the City. That was great.

Mr. Hartwick: Did they receive DEP monies to do the remediation?

Mr. Hartzler: They did not. We got that through our grant from PHFA. We used our PHFA monies to remediate the soils. The existing homes we acquired privately, most of them prior to announcing the new project. Now, we are faced with the wish we would have bought more.

Mr. Hartwick: That is always the challenge. That is what we did on Adams Street. The minute we started buying the houses the owners wanted more money. The acquisition is the key to these projects. The other thing that I wanted to know, did you just use those two funding sources as a way to do it? We are going to do similar things in Middletown, areas where we need to provide infill housing. There is never one secret formula for this. It takes a whole lot of pieces, different revenue streams to be able to offset your expenses as a developer.

Mr. Hartzler: We have our own real estate fund. So, we are borrowing through Graystone Bank, our own equity and then we also partner with another group, Green Street Partners who is doing about 40% of the rehabs with us. Teaming up with another developer helps.

Mr. Hartwick: What does WCI Partners stand for?

Mr. Hartzler: We are not that creative, George, because it is Web Clients, Inc. That is our tech company so my partners Josh Gray and Scott Petrosky who are partners of mine in the internet company are the founders of WCI.

Mr. Hartwick: I just didn't know what the acronym was.

Mr. Hartzler: We were not that creative when we came up with the name.

Mr. Hartwick: Can you give us a short update about the hotel as well?

Mr. Hartzler: Sure, we announced in the spring that we established a development partner, Hersha Hospitality. Hersha is one of the largest national hotel owners. We are developers. We are not hotel builders or owners. They are now the lead on the project. We are still invested with them. We hope to be in the ground late fall, however, construction prices have risen dramatically. Just the cost of steel alone, so the prices that we originally thought would be to build it are probably a factor of quite a bit higher. So, we are wrestling with that, getting bids, etc. to figure out. It is not a financing concern, it is more of what is it worth once it is built versus what it costs you to build it. That is a difficult equation. We are working through that and we are confident that it will go forward. The timing is just up in the air at the moment.

Mr. Hartwick: Do you have an idea of the amount of rooms?

Mr. Hartzler: It is the same. A loft hotel with 138 rooms. It is 14 stories. There will be a first floor restaurant and commercial space. We have a tremendous amount of interest in the rooms and the commercial space. Everyone is very excited about it. It is just a question of the right numbers working.

Mr. Hartwick: This came up in a conversation this weekend about putting something up on the top, conference room space. What is the idea of how much conference room space and commercial space will you have at that facility?

Mr. Hartzler: We are going to leave that to Rick.

Mr. Hartwick: Most of the times when you book the conference room space it comes attached with the amount of rooms you are booking.

PERSONNEL

Ms. Lengle: Are there any questions on the Salary Board items? (There was none.)

Are there any questions on the Personnel Packet itself?

Mr. Hartwick: I just have a couple questions and I can get them outside of the meeting. If you could fill me in on what is happening with #25 and #30.

Ms. Lengle: Sure. Is there anything else? (There was none.) I don't need a vote for anything today.

PURCHASE ORDERS

Mr. Baratucci: Do you have any questions on the packet that you received? (There was none.) There are more than usual over budgets, so we will get those figured out between now and next week.

TRAINING PACKET

Mr. Haste: Is there anything in the training packet that needs approved?

Mr. Saylor: I do not see any.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- A. Tax Refunds:
 - 1. Refund of 2008 Real Estate Taxes – Peter Howland, Esq. – Parcel #65-004-028 - \$328.06.
 - 2. Refund of 2008 Real Estate Taxes – Zembo Shrine – Parcels #10-041-001, #10-048-001, #10-049-001 and #10-049-002 - \$10,098.21.
 - 3. Refund of 2008 Real Estate Taxes – Carol Zinn – Parcel #63-024-244 - \$103.39.
 - 4. Refund of 2008 Real Estate Taxes – Patrick & Trudi Brinkley – Parcel #56-019-119 - \$250.70.
- B. Appointment of Matthew P. Stinner to the MH/MR Advisory Board, term expires December 31, 2010.

Mr. Haste: We have the Items for Discussion, which will be handled next week.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT – WILLIAM TULLY, ESQ.

Mr. Tully: I have nothing to add, unless you have any questions. (There was none.)

CHIEF CLERK'S REPORT – CHAD SAYLOR

Mr. Saylor: Likewise, I have nothing unless there are questions of me. (There was none.)

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Mr. DiFrancesco: Just one thing we need to consider, the Blackberry thing in Dauphin County. It has been a slow trickle of requests coming in. I have seen a couple more emails come into me. I don't think the formal requests have come in, but emails at least come into me and I'm looking at this request and saying there is no way that this meets the criteria. I know we have been sort of playing this case-by-case as these things come in, but at this point I think just to give IT clearer direction on where I'm coming from. I think I'm going to join George for a little while on a moratorium until we formally

decide a policy that says under these circumstances or whatever. For right now I really think this is an area. It is not abused, because again we only approved a small amount that the County pays for. I just want to make sure that we constantly send that message back to our employees that you know what a lot of people think they need Blackberries and they really don't. At this point I think I am giving mine up and I pay for mine out of my own pocket. I'm giving mine up, because it tends to be more of a distraction than a benefit. I just think it is important to send word. Obviously this is not a formal policy, but I do believe that at this point an employee would be very hard pressed to get me to support any kind of a Blackberry claim. I think it is important that we make note of that in a public meeting and the directors take that back. That is all I have.

Mr. Hartwick: Our first moratorium.

Mr. Haste: I still think they are a good idea.

On the 17th is E-Recycling so those of you who want to get rid of your Blackberries you can take them up to HACC and I will be happy to toss it for you.

Mr. Saylor: One thing I should mention as well. The one thing that we have been discussing with the Solicitors and senior staff is the whole issue of the separation of powers between us and the judicial branch and some of the row officers. This also brought up the issue of if they want some Blackberries of their own they are going to pay for it out of their own funds. Do we approve them? Do we not approve them? Do we have the power all that kind of thing? There is also the issue of funds. There are a number of entities in County government that have their own funds that they collect through fees, not through taxes. They are set up and they are part of the County budget, but our discretion over those funds is not clear. We have been working through getting a concise list of these accounts. Who has them and what their rules are and we are going to work through the various departments to make sure we have a clear understanding as to how those monies, whether they use them for Blackberries or whatever, how those monies are spent. The problem is that we have encountered some problems recently where they will move through purchases using these accounts, which they are able to do and then they come back through us and have to go through the purchase orders and that kind of thing and then there is a question of then we have to approve the purchase orders, what kind of discretion do we have. We are trying to work through that to provide some clarity in those areas.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I'm going to share a comment on that. It is basically while there may be a separation of powers when it comes to budget policy and review of budget, anybody in this County who is spending whatever the fund is, it doesn't matter where those fees are coming from, if they are spending money that \$50 a month to have a Blackberry and it is not an essential function of what they are doing and they are spending tax dollars basically or public money on that request then I would review that as not being very responsible with the public trust. We are not here to purchase toys out of public money. I understand there are some jobs that it makes a lot of sense for

them to have a Blackberry. Somebody that is not at a desk every day or somebody that is on the road. There are certain positions where it makes sense for them to have a Blackberry and it does aid them in doing their job. It is far fewer positions than requests that have come in. I would strongly suggest in a lot of those cases that if you feel strongly that it would make you do your job better you can do as we do on this Board and that is you can pay for it out of your own pocket. If there is not a specific reason why public funds should be spent to the tune of, and again you can look at it and say one is \$50 a month, but when you start to add them up that money adds up very quickly and that is an absolute waste of tax dollars. From a budget policy perspective we won't even get into the whole point of how an individual either in the judiciary or in an elected official's office spends their money there is a separation and that is their business, but from a budget policy perspective I can say I'm going to look for every avenue of waste and try in some manner to control that and to me, getting a Blackberry, unless you need it, is absolutely wasting money.

Mr. Haste: I don't think that is the trend.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I just want to make sure...

Mr. Haste: I don't want some people to get the impression that is the trend. It is not the trend.

Mr. DiFrancesco: I just know that a couple of the requests that have come in just kind of caught me the wrong way.

Mr. Hartwick: Again, we are supportive of individuals who want to get Blackberries, just like they have a personal cell phone, pay your bill and buy a Blackberry and what it takes to hook up into the County's system that is perfectly fine. If they need a Blackberry in that way and they want to take on the responsibility I'm all for it. I couldn't live without mine. Unfortunately it has become...

Mr. DiFrancesco: I'd live better without mine.

Mr. Hartwick: I'm sure we would live better without them. There is no doubt about it. There used to be an inventory of how many cell phones we pay for people right now. That is a whole other issue.

Mr. DiFrancesco: The thing about the cell phones is that we negotiated accounts where you only pay for the minutes you use as opposed to having so many minutes you pay for whether you use them or not. Again to have somebody have a cell phone it is not quite as expensive as it is with a Blackberry. If you have a Blackberry you are paying \$50 a month whether you use it or not. That is the difference. The cell phones I agree they have to be controlled and we are constantly making sure that people aren't using them for private use. Cell phones have become very economical and with the new contract with the push-to-talk feature that saved us a lot of money. I agree we need to keep tight control over those as well.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Haste: We are at the point in time in the meeting for public participation. Is there anyone in the audience that would like to address the Board at this time? (There was none.)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Mr. DiFrancesco and seconded by Mr. Hartwick that the Board adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk

Transcribed by: Richie-Ann Martz