

PINELANDS PERSONNEL & BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

This meeting was conducted in-person and available remotely.

The public could view/comment through Pinelands Commission YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/PinelandsCommission>

August 20, 2024, 9:30 AM

MINUTES

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chairman Alan W. Avery Jr. **Remotely:** William Pikolycky, Mark Lohbauer and Nicholas Asselta. Governor's Authorities Unit representative Alexis Franklin was also in attendance.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commission Chair Laura E. Matos

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Susan R. Grogan, Jessica Lynch, Charleen Cruz and John Bunnell.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Avery called the Pinelands Personnel & Budget Committee meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

2. Adoption of the June 18, 2024, Personnel & Budget Committee meeting minutes.

Commissioner Lohbauer moved the adoption of the minutes of the June 18, 2024, Personnel & Budget Committee meeting. Commissioner Pikolycky seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

3. Financial Updates:

- a. Check Register –Jessica Lynch, Business Services Manager, highlighted the more noteworthy purchases/checks on the register for June 2024.

More notable purchases mentioned were Science supplies, Jeep repairs, renewal of Professional Dues, Application Fee refunds, CWA Union Dues and Telecommunication services (2 Months).

Ms. Lynch said the telecommunications amount will be reduced in the next couple of months due to switching the fiber optics cables from Fenwick Manor over to the Richard J. Sullivan Center (RJS) basement.

Executive Director (ED) Grogan said the move of the fiber optic cables is in preparation for the Fenwick Manor rehabilitation project. She said Evan Bossett, MIS Manager, suggested moving the telecommunication wires and equipment out of Fenwick Manor basement and into the RJS basement, which is a safer, more modern environment.

- b. Electronic Disbursements – EFT, Direct Deposit, ACH (April - June 2024)
Ms. Lynch highlighted the FY24 Annual Employers Pension Liability, noting the amount is a 12% increase from FY23. The FY25 Pension Liability will be available at the end of October – early November 2024.
- c. Application Fees – Ms. Lynch stated that application fees have exceeded the anticipated amount (\$700,000) for FY24 by 55.02%. Fees collected totaled \$1,085,112.12. She said this revenue goes to support our budget; it does not result in a surplus. The revenue gets rolled back into the undesignated fund balance, which supports our future budgets.

4. Personnel Updates

Charleen Cruz, Human Resource Manager, reviewed employee actions and recruitment efforts.

Departing employees – none

New Hires – none

Recruitment – Research Scientist 3 – interviews being conducted.

5. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Discussion

ED Grogan delivered a presentation (see attached) for the projected FY25 budget, which included FY25 Initiatives, Operating Funds and Ongoing work.

Commissioner Lohbauer asked about the reduction of the budgeted amount for FY25 Professional Services. ED Grogan responded that there is funding encumbered from previous years in which the Commission did not have to use full amount of budgeted funds. She said this allows the Commission to budget less since there are leftover funds from FY24 and FY23 that can be used if needed. She said she's hopeful that it would not be needed as our outside labor costs will be lower this year due to ratification of the contract. ED Grogan said in terms of the Attorney General's Office, the Commission does have ongoing litigation matters. She said the Commission could use the remaining encumbered amounts from previous years if needed.

Commissioner Lohbauer said that is good to hear. He asked where he could find the line item for vehicle purchases. He asked if the Commission has an annual item for vehicle purchasing. ED Grogan responded that since there is no anticipated purchasing of new vehicles in the upcoming year, there is no line item. She said the monies in the line item were spent when the Commission bought the two new hybrid Jeeps and then had to buy a used vehicle to replace the Ranger. She said there may be a need next year to put money in the budget for a vehicle.

Commissioner Avery asked if the funds from the Sanctuary Settlement Agreement are going to the General Fund or to a specific account. John Bunnell, Chief Scientist, responded that funds would be focused on a specific area.

Commissioner Avery asked what the administrative costs are to support the Pinelands Development Bank (PDC). ED Grogan said it is approximately \$30,000/salary plus fringe (approximately 77%). ED Grogan said it is something the Commission is keeping a close eye on because the Pinelands Conservation Fund (PCF) funding is not going to last forever. Staff has drafted new legislation to officially transfer the PDC Bank to the Commission rather than keeping it in the Department of Banking and Insurance. She said the legislation would provide the PDC Bank with additional authorities and responsibilities, and along with that would need to come an appropriation for purchase of PDCs and administration.

Commissioner Avery said the Commission took over the PDC Bank program by default and it requires funding by the Department of Banking and Insurance, as they have more resources than the Commission.

ED Grogan agreed. She said that would be one way the Commission could make that request. She said all options will be explored. She said the Commission has been operating the PDC Bank with no funding from the State since 2011.

Commissioner Lohbauer asked about the reduction of funding in the Education and Outreach section of the budget. He asked what things have been removed from that program to achieve that savings. ED Grogan said the funding decrease is a decrease in the money the Commission is drawing from the PCF that was being used to fund some general education and outreach salary expenses. The work will still be done but will come out of the Operating fund. She said this is so that the PCF funds will target specific events, for example, the Short Course or projects like the re-designing of the website. Commissioner Lohbauer said he is relieved to hear that response.

Commissioner Avery asked if the consultant that completed the Fenwick Manor Preservation Plan is still under contract. ED Grogan said that contract is concluded. She said the vendor is a pre-qualified Historic Preservation Consultant by the Department of Property Management and Consulting (DPMC). Their firm can respond to the Request for Proposal (RFP) as Design Consultant, Project Manager and participate in hiring the Contractor.

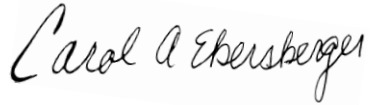
Commissioner Lohbauer asked if the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Fenwick Manor has gone out. ED Grogan said she does not think it has been posted. ED Grogan said Marc Paalvast (Cultural Resource Specialist) has been checking daily. She said the DPMC recently contacted Marc with questions to verify the source of the funding.

Commissioner Lohbauer moved the adoption to recommend FY2025 Budget to the Commission for approval. Commissioner Pikolycky seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

6. Public comment - None

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Lohbauer moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Pikolycky seconded the motion. The Committee agreed to adjourn at 10:20 a.m.

Certified as true and correct:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Ebersberger". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Carol A. Ebersberger
Business Specialist

August 20, 2024