



January 4, 2019 FFNF Highlights

ASK THE COMMISSIONERS

**Josh Parsons, Dennis Stuckey, Craig Lehman
Lancaster County Commissioners**

1) What keeps you up at night? What is your proudest accomplishment in 2018? (All Commissioners answer.)

Responses:

Parsons – Nothing. The Board of Commissioners is a great team. There are many challenges such as growth in the County and property taxes.

Stuckey – Lancaster County is in a great place. The Board of Commissioners is a great team – this is a carryover from the last board. Taxes are the biggest challenge facing the County.

Lehman – Growth is the biggest challenge; however, there is a new comprehensive plan for the County – places2040. It is imperative that broad public support is maintained. A state budget impasse is probable. This time the County is better able to weather an impasse. The Board has just completed the 7th structurally balanced budget in a row. This isn't by accident – it requires sound financial management.

PLANNING

The Planning Commission and Places 2040 Partners have spent countless hours in the development of a new comprehensive plan for the County. 6,000 people were engaged through public meetings and surveys. 75 presentations were done by planning personnel. Places 2040 was adopted by the Board on October 25th.

2a) Now that the Plan is adopted, what do you think can be accomplished between now and 2020 in achieving the goals of the plan?

Lehman – Support by the Partners for Place is imperative. Internal implementation teams are been set up. Social media use is being enhanced. A recognition program is planned – rewards and awards will be presented. Collaboration with municipalities will occur. An official map and a water infrastructure plan are being developed.

Lancaster County's agriculture industry is essential to the County's quality of life, as well as its economic well-being. There are increasing concerns that more restrictive federal regulations are being aimed at farmers in the Susquehanna River watershed by the Department of Environmental Protection (EPA). A recent study by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture explored moving more dairy and livestock farming to western Pennsylvania to relieve environmental stresses mounting in Lancaster County and central Pennsylvania. Three western PA counties were identified. All three located in the Ohio River Watershed have not been targeted for nutrient reductions.

Pennsylvania continues to lag in its promise to reduce nutrients flowing down the Susquehanna River and polluting the Chesapeake Bay. Lancaster County is considered ground zero for this pollution. The Department of Environmental Protection is threatening assuming control over stream cleanup measures.

2b) What impacts do you envision such measures will have on the county? Economic, growth, quality of life, environmental, etc.

Lehman – Lancaster Clean Water Partners will lead the effort in cleaning up fresh water in the County. The County cannot pit one section against another.

2c) What if anything is being done by the County to reduce the likelihood that farmers will decide to abandon the county?

Lehman – Farmers won't abandon the County. The decline of milk prices has impacted county dairy farmers. The new Farm Bill might be helpful. The Bill contains crop insurance, regulatory reform and assistance with animal disease. Pennsylvania is also discussing the possibility of developing a new infant formula program with the dairy industry.

COUNTY STAFFING

Last January you announced the County compensation study conducted by MGT Consulting Group was completed and the Board was awaiting a presentation by the consulting group. The proposed compensation system was presented to the Board for approval in March 2018 with an implementation date of June 25, 2018.

3) What are the results? Have the recommendations been implemented. Please update us on your progress in recruiting and retaining qualified staff at the County? Are county wages now competitive with surrounding counties?

Lehman – The transition plan will be implemented over the period 2018-2021. Salary adjustments have been recommended. Recommendations vary by position. Additional recruiting efforts will occur in 2019; however, the low unemployment rate in the County could make recruiting more difficult.

An 8% adjustment was recommended for starting salaries. The job market is tight. 500 county employees are impacted by the recommendations. Equity adjustments will be made by position where appropriate. Any additional funding will be absorbed in the 2018 budget.

COUNTY PRISON – PRISON/DETENTION FACILITIES

In August the County approved the hiring of a Prison Inmate Re-Entry Manager.

4a) Has a Manager been hired? Please describe the duties of the position. How has this improved the re-entry process?

Parsons – Cheryl Steberger, the Prison Warden is a transformative leader. The new manager was hired in December. The decision to bring re-entry management in-house was a very controversial decision. The Commissary Fund provides monies used in other operations of the prison. The new manager is finishing his training. He will interact with community partners.

In January the Board approved the implementation of the Guardian RFID Inmate Tracking System at the prison.

4b) How is the system working? Have staffing requirements been reduced as a result of the tracking system?

Parsons – The system is in place and is in a testing phase. Each inmate receives a wristband with his or her ID information. The system will be utilized to track inmates within the facility. This should lead to a reduction in paperwork and labor.

Recently, the Board approved the installation of “Kiosks” within each cell block to provide services electronically to inmates.

4c) What services do these kiosks provide?

Parsons – The kiosks have been installed. Prison officials are in the process of working out the new system. The kiosks can be utilized by inmates to file grievances; purchase commissary items; access a secure messaging system; and to access a law library.

Lehman – The County has renewed the inmate telephone contract. Fees have been reduced by 20%. A fee is collected for each telephone call placed by an inmate.

At the forum in January 2018 we discussed the need for a new prison. We were told that the Board had recently authorized several million dollars worth of improvements. And, at a minimum, it will take five years to build a prison. In fact, a ten year window was projected for site acquisition and acceptance by the public.

4d) What options are you thinking about for an improved prison system?

Lehman – I went on the record in 2009 that there is a need for a new facility; however, there needs to be a fiscally sound response in order to build a new facility. The physical structure contributes to the challenges at the prison.

Parsons – Increasing interest rates may make it more difficult to build a new facility. We may have missed a good opportunity when interest rates were lower. At the time a new prison was being discussed there was considerable interest in a private investment jail. The County continues to pay down debt. By 2022 county debt should be reduced from \$215 million to \$150 million.

The implementation of Prison STAT has led to numerous improvements at the prison. The system has won State and National Awards.

Many inmates suffer from mental illness. Dealing with their needs is very challenging in the current facility.

The Youth Intervention Center has been operating for the past 18 years. Originally the facility was built to provide detention and shelter care services for Lancaster County males and females from the ages of 10 to 18. Since that time numerous counties have entered in to contract with the County to purchase secure detention and shelter bed space.

4d) Currently, how many counties are purchasing bed space? What is the average number of detainees at the Center? On average, how many beds are occupied by Lancaster County residents?

Parsons – The average number of youth in detention is 15. Of which, on average, 12 are from Lancaster County. The average number of youth being sheltered is 14. Of which, on average, 13 are from Lancaster County. More children are being kept out of the system.

The County may reconsider contractual arrangements with other counties for bed space. The possibility of litigation is high. Lancaster County taxpayers shouldn't have to shoulder this burden.

TRANSPORTATION - TRAFFIC

Lancaster County continues to be one of the fastest-growing counties in the state. The County is projected to grow to over 600,000 persons by 2040. This growth will increase demands for all forms of transportation and add to road congestion. It's 2019, and major corridors are already congested. More traffic lanes are needed, not more traffic lights.

5a) What plans have been made to address the already present congestion issue?

Stuckey – Significant future population growth is expected in the County by 2040. Adding lanes may provide some relief in the short term, but in the long term, research indicates that vehicle miles traveled actually go up.

The Lancaster Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has embraced a multi-pronged strategy to address transportation issues associated with the expected continued growth. A management process (CMP) is employed by the MPO to analyze the transportation system and make funding recommendations for projects that will help reduce congestion. The CMP analyzes corridors and intersections in the County and produces ranked lists for use in making project funding decisions. Within the limits of available funding, projects are then selected for inclusion on the County's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which is updated every two years.

The current TIP covers the period from 2019 to 2022 and provides a total of \$218 million for highway and bridge projects. Of this amount, \$60 million or 27% is allocated to projects specifically directed as congestion reduction. Those projects are:

Commuter Services of Pennsylvania	Ridesharing, Vanpooling, and Transit Coordination	\$1,380,343
Centerville Road Interchange	Reconstruction of the existing interchange with Route 30 (construction)	\$19,652,500
State Road Interchange	Upgrade interchange, replace bridges over PA-283 and Amtrak on PA-722 (construction)	\$20,745,000
Centerville Road Widening	Widen Centerville Road to five lanes from Marietta Avenue/PA23 to Columbia Avenue/ PA 462 (construction)	\$892,500
US 222 Reconstruction/Widening 1	Construct and widen US 222 to six lanes from US 30 to north of Jake Landis Interchange (preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way, and utilities)	\$6,600,000
US 222 Reconstruction/Widening 2	Construct and widen US 222 to six lanes from north of Jake Landis Interchange to PA 772 (Preliminary engineering)	\$950,000
US 222/US30 Interchange Improvements	Improvements at the US 222/US 30 interchange (final design/construction)	\$5,360,000
US 30/Harrisburg Pike Interchange	Interchange improvements/ add turn lanes (construction)	\$4,000,000

- The funding assigned to each project in the table above may be for preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way acquisition, utilities, or construction, and may not be the full amount needed to complete the project.
- For major projects, such as the US 222 reconstruction and widening, several TIP update cycles may be needed to provide sufficient funding to complete the project.
- For comparison to the amount allocated to congestion reduction, \$86,753,525 or 40% of the TIP is allocated for preservation, rehabilitation, upgrade, or replacement of 86 bridges.

5b) How will Lancaster County accommodate the projected growth in population and cars? What options are there?

Stuckey – In March 2019, the Lancaster MPO will begin development of its new Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This effort will involve extensive community outreach to assess attitudes about a broad range of transportation and land use issues, and will be an early implementation activity for places2040. The solutions to accommodating future population and transportation demand will lie in both land use and transportation actions. Among the options available to help balance the need to accommodate additional population growth with the potential impacts it creates are:

- Working with our municipalities to implement land use options that help to minimize the generation of new single occupant vehicle trips on our roadways;
- Making improvements to our transportation system that allow transit service to be more effective and attractive, such as transit priority treatments, dedicated bus lanes, stop consolidation, and enhanced passenger amenities;
- Maximizing the utility of mobility as a service as a component of the transportation system, such as the use of shared rides, and the use of ride services for first mile/ last mile connections to transit;
- Working more closely with employers to offer incentives to their employees to use means other than their personal vehicle to get to work;
- Improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to make it safer and more convenient for people to bike and walk to their destinations;
- Expanding the use of technology to improve signal timing by moving from a single corridor focus to a system approach that coordinates signal systems on a regional basis to improve overall transportation network function;
- Using the CMP to make corridor and intersection improvements with the documented capability to improve the level of service; and
- Making limited, critical capacity improvements, where the need is demonstrated.

OPIOID CRISIS

In November the Wolf administration announced the receipt of \$10 million from Bloomberg Philanthropies to fight the Opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania.

6a) What portion of these monies are expected to reach Lancaster County?

Parsons – The County’s understanding is that Pennsylvania will divide the monies with counties. Counties may have to submit a grant. If so, Joining Forces is the County group that would apply.

6b) What progress has been made in the fight?

Parsons – Governor Wolf declared the Opioid crisis as a state of emergency. That freed up monies from the Federal government. The Governor is impressed with the work being done in Lancaster County – Lancaster is the #1 success story in the State.

Significant progress has been made. The crisis impacts families in many ways. Lancaster General Health Staff has done a superb job in driving the issue. They align around metrics in order to coordinate efforts.

Opioid Deaths – Lancaster County

Year	No. of Deaths
2014	60
2016	117
2017	167
2018	78

VOTING MACHINES

The Pennsylvania Department of State earlier this year ordered all counties to replace their voting systems with one that leaves “voter verifiable paper records” by December 31, 2019.

7a) What progress has the County made on this mandate? What will the new Lancaster County system include? How will the County pay for it?

Parsons – There is a secure voter system now. There is no vulnerability or security problem with the existing system. This was an arbitrary decision made by the Governor as a result of the Jill Stein 2016 lawsuit. At that time only 16 counties were using paper trails.

Stuckey – The County approved the replacement of the current voting system in October. The cost is estimated to be \$3.5 million. \$500,000 may be available from the Federal government. The Governor is requesting \$75 million in the budget. It remains to be seen if he will be successful.

There are five vendors. There are six systems that the vendors are seeking certification of. The target is to make a selection in April or May. Delivery would occur over the summer. Training will occur in the fall.

Lehman – Some county dollars may be required. Leasing the system might be a possibility.