

**SPECIAL MEETING – PUBLIC HEARING  
PERRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COVID-19 PHASE 3 RESPONSE PROGRAM  
FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

The Perry County Commissioners held a public hearing at 9:00 a.m. via zoom as was advertised. In attendance was President Tom Hauser, Randy Kleaving, Gregg Jarboe, Teresa Kanneberg (Administrator), Jenny Matheis (Ind 15 RPC), Erin Emerson (PCDC), Amanda Crockett (PCDC), and Business Owners - Cindi Taylor, Cathy Fitzhugh, Cathy Boerste, Joe Herrmann, Laura Schilling, Mendy Lassaline, Herbert Landers, Breanne Walsh, Logan Day and Natalie Gentry.

Jenny Matheis, Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission, opened the meeting that on March 11<sup>th</sup> is when they are planning to submit the application for the COVID-19 Phase 3 Response Program. This date was originally at the end of February but the State pushed it back. She said the proposals were due in January and the award date is the middle of April. She said the County could be awarded \$250,000.00 to go to businesses in the County that were impacted by the pandemic. Jenny also said we will have to have another public hearing closer to the award date.

Erin Emerson commented that Perry County was impacted by the pandemic. She has been working with the local businesses this past year and what impacts they may have. Some of the businesses shut down for several months, some closed permanently, and some tried to do local programs. These businesses are essential to the community. Erin said she has heard from 29 businesses of about 150 employees total. They are trying to spread the word throughout and get responses from all over the County.

Several business owners took this opportunity to speak about their businesses and the impact on them from the pandemic this past year. Breanne Walsh, Everybody's Health and Fitness, commented that she and her husband own 3 different businesses in Perry County. She said the Fitness Center was hit hard. It is an outlet to exercise for a person's health and mental attitude. The revenue for 2020 was down 30%. Some quarters it was down 60%. They still had overall expenses which are higher now because of the extra cleanliness that has to be done. She said it was a set back for growth and they are still recouping from the loss.

Cathy Fitzhugh, Cornerstone Counseling, said they never did close. They did some meetings virtual. She said their revenue was down also by 20 to 30%. They also still had the fixed expenses and additional expenses of masks and extra cleaning supplies. There was also unexpected hardware equipment to provide services. She said they are the only counseling center besides Lifespring to provide mental health service to Perry County.

Jenny said for one this grant will provide assistance to local businesses and second help with the mental impact. She said they have received several applications for this program. Businesses need to contact Erin Emerson on their impact story. This will make our application even stronger. We are competing with larger cities such as Evansville and Indianapolis.

Natalie Gentry with Taylor Tours commented that they cannot provide services for carry out. They have been completely shut down since March 2020. They did provide services for schools all over the State. They are working on processing refunds back to the schools for trips that were already planned. They have no income coming in and still paying salary to two other ladies with them. This money will help them to continue on. She said they have high hopes for 2022 and 2023 when it is safe for schools to travel again.

Logan Day with Ohio Scenic Railway say they started operating in the Fall of 2020. They had to stop a lot of things for hard costs when the pandemic hit. They are able to sustain day to day business with their cash flow. He said they did have physical

limitations. The tours were far below what they expected for revenue. He said they took on a lot from 2020 from the previous owners. This money will help go a long way to fill in gaps they had. This will help them and support other industries in the area such as restaurants.

Laura Schilling said they have set up home fitness with Everybody's for the ones not comfortable coming into the center. They had to purchase certain equipment to provide this service. Reimbursement of the equipment would be beneficial or to use to expand on what they are doing.

Breanne Walsh said with the other two businesses they had to install Wi-Fi at Forgotten Times for the ones working remotely and for Walsh Plumbing they had to hire more employees because they work more in the residential area.

Tom thanked all involved in making this program happen. He said at the next meeting they will talk about the grant administrator fee that needs to be paid. Jenny said she will send out the forms for Tom to sign and yes to visit the topic of the local match.

Meeting ended at 10:00 a.m.

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Thomas J Hauser

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Randy Kleaving

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Gregg Jarboe

*Minutes prepared by: Pam Goffinet, Perry County Auditor*