

Budget/Operations Meeting Minutes

August 15, 2019

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, August 15, 2019, at 2:00 P.M. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 13th floor of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach called the meeting to order with Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt and Commissioner Mark C. Scott in attendance. Also present were County Solicitor Christine M. Sadler, Chief Administrative Officer Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Financial Officer Robert Patrizio, Chief Clerk Maryjo Gibson, Warden Janine Quigley, Deputy Warden-Operations Michael Buono and Mr. Reppert Reppert, Facilities Manager at the Jail.

The following items were discussed:

1. Entech estimate for the Jail -
Mr. Reppert Reppert, Jail Facility Manager, provided a summary of the final Entech report for the Hiester Mansion/Administration Building, noting the results are getting worse instead of better. Mr. Reppert said the estimate is in the amount of \$206,700 and it is the third air quality test taken at the Mansion. He also reported some of the exhaust work was never completed and is not wired. Mr. Reppert stated if the Board decides to remediate the building, the Administration staff would have to be moved out of the building. A back and forth discussion took place on where to relocate the staff until the work is complete and focused on either the fourth floor of the CRC, the possibility of bringing in trailers or erecting a pole barn. Questions were raised of costs and what to do with trailers and/or a pole barn once a new jail is built. The estimated time to remediate the Administration Building/Mansion was estimated to take four to six months. The Commissioners were interested in learning more about the trailers and pole barn, and also a definitive price for remediation. The Commissioners charged Ron Seaman to work with the Jail, Purchasing, Justin Loose and Paul Bradshaw to move the process along and directed the following:
 - a. Obtain a definitive price for remediation and time frame for moving the staff out of the Mansion.
 - b. Pricing for a pole barn and trailers.
 - c. Directed Mr. Reppert to directly go to the BCRC, 4th Floor, and look into the possibility of moving the Administration Staff to that location.

2. 2020 budget items -
Mr. Patrizio provided a summarization on the final savings for the 2019 A & B bond.
Mr. Patrizio talked about the impact to the 2020 General fund revenues and impact on property taxpayers, in terms of a tax increase, in the unlikely event the county landfill host fees are eliminated because of current landfill litigation with Republic Services/Conestoga and Rolling Hill/Delco. Mr. Patrizio noted there

could be a potential revenue loss of \$3.9 million but cautioned there are many other variables to consider to offset the potential loss.

Mr. Patrizio reported on the loss of Jail revenue, and potential tax increase due to the decline in State TPV inmates due to a lack of beds. He noted the conversion of a housing unit to accommodate a higher population of women inmates as the cause and asked if there was anything we could differently including more utilization of the CRC building. He also noted we are not receiving inmates for Schuylkill County as they have other options they are using and the need to remove this revenue from the 2020 budget. The Board said this should be discussed with Jail leadership.

3. The Epler School -

Commissioner Barnhardt mentioned he has received numerous telephone calls and emails from residents concerned about the Epler School House and asked if there was anything the County could do to help save it from demolition.

Commissioner Barnhardt reported he had a meeting with Ed Swoyer, who is willing to back off on the any demolition to give us an opportunity to figure out a plan. Commissioner Barnhardt contacted Harry O'Neill to look at the School to determine if the School can be moved in one piece. There was discussion on possibly moving the School to Kutztown University and maybe the Heritage Center area. Mr. O'Neill will provide a cost estimate to Commissioner Barnhardt. Commissioner Barnhardt will report back when he hears from Mr. O'Neill. No decision was made to pursue County ownership or financial support.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:43 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk