

Commissioners' Board Meeting Minutes April 9, 2015

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, April 9, 2015, at 10:00 A.M. at the Berks County Department of Emergency Services, Direct Link Technology Center, Multi-Purpose Room, Reading, Pennsylvania, 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 Solicitor Alan Miller, Chief Operating Officer Carl E. Geffken and Deputy Chief Clerk Kaitlin P. Daley.

Commissioner Leinbach opened the meeting with a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENTATION

Brian Gottschall, Director of Berks County Department of Emergency Services, presented information on funding issues in the provision of 911 services. The current 911 funding legislation for the Commonwealth of PA is set to expire on June 30, 2015. There is draft legislation that is scheduled to be introduced in the state House within the next five days which means a tight timeline to get the legislation to the Governor by June 30th. Ideally, Berks County would like to see the fee increased to \$2.00 for all types of communications and be indexed for inflation. The legislation needs to support current needs before new programs, be device agnostic, and there should not be language that prevents counties from pursuing uncollected fees.

Commissioner Barnhardt thanked Brian and the DES staff as well as first responders, some of whom were present at the meeting. Commissioner Barnhardt understands the difficulty in balancing budgets at the local level from his time as an elected official in West Reading and incorporating these key points into the new legislation would minimize the cost of putting police on the streets or purchasing fire apparatus.

Commissioner Scott complimented Brian and Commissioner Barnhardt for their comments. He stated the increase is minimal because it would only be \$1.00 for most people which is \$12.00 per year. Commissioner Scott stated the consequences of the decision at the state level impacts the local level the most. If the legislators do nothing, the state will be responsible for raising local taxes.

Commissioner Leinbach stated that CCAP has been discussing this issue since at least 2007 and members of CCAP are all in agreement with the need for a change in the legislation. Commissioner Leinbach clarified that the Commissioners are not asking the state to fund capital expenditures, but the fee is allocated for operating expenses. Commissioner Leinbach commented that one problem with the crafting of this bill is that the telecom companies had a seat at the table when the counties should have had a seat at the table. New spending in the bill provides the possibility that counties could receive

less funding if the fee is not increased to a proper rate of \$2.00. Commissioner Leinbach reiterated Commissioner Scott's comments that the state legislature is stating it supports raising county property tax by not increasing the fee to \$2.00. Commissioner Leinbach thanked and recognized the representatives from the Fire, Police, and EMS Working Groups, the Berks Municipal Partnership, and the legislators and their staff members who were in attendance.

Chief Scott Eaken of Northern Berks Regional Police Department and President of the Berks County Chiefs of Police Association spoke about the increase in cost to the municipalities. He stated that between 2003 and 2011, the municipalities covered by Northern Berks paid \$32,000-\$37,000 for police. Between 2011 and 2014, the cost increased from \$37,805 to \$77,000 and it could still go up to \$107,000. He stated this does not include any new capital costs and many municipalities are paying more than this.

Paul Janssen, Executive Director of the Center for Excellence in Local Government, called this an underfunded mandate and stated the funding should be user fee based.

Chief Ed Moreland of Western Berks Ambulance Association stated that the ability to maintain and sometimes increase staff is critical to handling emergencies and the status quo is not sufficient for the needs of first responders in the next few years.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of April 2, 2015 Commissioners' Board Meeting were approved as presented.

Agenda Items

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt, seconded by Commissioner Scott and all voted unanimously to approve the items listed below:
 - 101.15 Adopt a resolution authorizing 2015 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$35,759.00 and 2015 Appropriations in the amount of \$5,100.00 per listing dated April 6, 2015.
 - 102.15 Adopt a resolution authorizing Human Resources Recommendations per listing dated April 9, 2015 as follows:
 1. Authorize the promotion of Kyle Russell from PC011010 Director of Training to PC010904 Deputy Warden, Operations – Jail System, effective 4/22/2015. Rate of \$66,300/annually. Salary range Minimum \$53,170; Midpoint \$70,893; Maximum \$88,616. Replacement for Barbara Kane who separated. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 12090.

2. Authorize the utilization of a temporary agency for Clerical Support – Prothonotary's Office, effective 4/10/2015. Rate not to exceed \$16.50/hr. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11530.

- 103.15 Adopt a resolution authorizing the award and the Director of Contracts & Procurement to execute a contract for electric generation and supply and associated service for County of Berks' accounts for the term of January 2016 through January 2017 as a result of a Request for Quote by the County's contracted utility consultant, as follows:

Direct Energy
1001 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
\$0.06547 per kwh (includes Gross Receipts Tax)
(The cost excluding Gross Receipts Tax is \$.06161)

Gene Walts from Edge Insights, the County's contracted utility consultant, commented that the County's contract runs through January 2016 and this contract is locking in to a cost similar to what the County is paying today.

2. Motion authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach as Chairman of the Board, to execute Contract Agreements/Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per listing dated April 7, 2015.
3. Motion to authorize payments set forth on Controller's Office vouchers payable listing dated April 7, 2015 for week ending April 8, 2015 and the payment of electronic transfers and employee payroll.

Reports

1. There was no County Treasurer's Report this week.
2. The Controller's weekly report was presented by County Controller Sandy Graffius.

REPORTS OF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICE/CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. Carl E. Geffken, Chief Operating Officer, stated that April is Child Abuse Awareness Month and the Commissioners and State Senator Judy Schwank will be attending the Children and Youth Services staff meeting on April 16, 2015.

Mr. Geffken also remarked that Burns McDonnell is on site conducting a security assessment of the County facilities.

2. Robert J. Patrizio, Chief Financial Officer, noted that the County's Wastewater Treatment Plant is on this afternoon's budget meeting agenda for discussion.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Barnhardt commented on the ongoing events related to National County Government Month and its focus on transportation. He also announced that J.D. Eckman was awarded the rehabilitation work on the Buttonwood Street Bridge. Commissioner Barnhardt discussed the importance of volunteers and noted that on Friday April 10th Berks Heim will be hosting a luncheon in honor of the volunteers who give their time and talents to the Heim. Also, next Tuesday April 14th is the Parks and Recreation Department's Volunteer Dinner.

Commissioner Scott thanked everyone for attending to listen to the presentation on 911 funding.

Commissioner Leinbach reiterated that if 911 service is not properly funded it will fall on the backs of County taxpayers. Commissioner Leinbach also commented on a recent transportation forum that included four local business owners discussing the high costs of transporting their company's goods. He highlighted that the current federal transportation law expires at the end of May 2015. If this issue is not dealt with adequately, it could be a disaster nationwide because fifty-five percent of funding for transportation projects comes from federal money.

CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Evelyn Morrison and Michael Murphy spoke about recent legislation designed to assist offenders to get back on their feet when being released back into the community from prison. They urged the Commissioners to consider a "Ban the Box" initiative similar to the City's initiative going into effect this May.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kaitlin P. Daley, Deputy Chief Clerk