

Commissioners' Board Meeting Minutes October 18, 2012

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, October 18, 2012, at 10:00 A.M. in the Boardroom on the 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 Solicitor Alan Miller, Chief Operating Officer Carl E. Geffken and Chief Clerk Maryjo Gibson.

Commissioner Leinbach opened the meeting with a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Commissioner Leinbach announced that since the last Commissioners' Meeting Senator Arlan Specter passed away and is the reason flags are at half mast across the Commonwealth, and commented the Senator was very influential for several decades in the Senate and before that was in the District Attorney's Office in Philadelphia. Commissioner Leinbach also announced there were 2 Executive Sessions, one held Friday regarding real estate and litigation, and one held Monday dealing with union negotiations and personnel issues.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of October 11, 2012 Commissioners' Board Meeting was approved as presented.

PRESENTATION

Army Lieutenant Colonel Wendell May, Chief Instructor of the Wilson High School Jr. ROTC, announced the Berks County 2012 Veterans Appreciation Dinner Dance will be held Saturday, November 10, 2012 at Wilson High School. Lieutenant Colonel May commented there would be approximately 1000 veterans attending the Dinner Dance. Lt. Colonel May introduced some of the ROTC Cadets working on the event, and mentioned that last year the Cadets at Wilson High School participated in over 160 events during the school year and nearly 8000 hours of community service. The Cadets offered a brief overview of the activities that will transpire at the Dinner Dance.

Consent Agenda Items

1. Enactment – Ordinance No. 06-2012:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF BERKS, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING
INCURRING OF NONELECTORAL DEBT THROUGH THE ISSUANCE OF
TWO SERIES OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE COUNTY IN
THE AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED
SEVENTY-FIVE MILLION DOLLARS (\$75,000,000), SPECIFYING THAT

SUCH INDEBTEDNESS IS TO BE INCURRED TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS OF THE COUNTY WHICH INCLUDE, AMONG OTHER THINGS; (A) THE FUNDING OF THE COUNTY'S UNFUNDED ACTUARIAL ACCRUED PENSION LIABILITY; (B) THE DESIGN, ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COUNTY'S EXISTING BUILDINGS, FACILITIES AND SYSTEMS AND THE ACQUISITION OF NEW EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO (1) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COUNTY'S COURTHOUSE AND SERVICES CENTER; (2) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COUNTY'S EMERGENCY 911 SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE TOWERS AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES; (3) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO CERTAIN OF THE COUNTY'S ROADS AND BRIDGES; AND (4) THE DEMOLITION OF EXISTING COUNTY FACILITIES.

The Commissioners asked Robert Patrizio, Chief Financial Officer, to speak about the Ordinance and the 2013 Budget. Mr. Patrizio introduced a slide to explain the Budget deficit. Mr. Patrizio commented the decision before the Board today in the form of the Ordinance is to fund the unfunded actuarial accrued pension liability and various capital improvements, which would reduce the deficit. The Budget Office and the institutional investment advisors are supporting this action. Mr. Patrizio further advised the Commissioners, and the Budget Team is recommending a one year pay freeze. Commissioner Barnhardt commented that the County has not raised taxes for over 7 years and this Board has overseen 4 years of no tax increases through many herculean efforts by department heads, elected officials and staff, and by also recognizing that the people of Berks County cannot consume any more tax increases and must find a better way to become more efficient as County government. Commissioner Barnhardt commented there are many federal requirements and mandates the County must abide by. Commissioner Scott commented the new initiatives are consistent with this Board and that he has never worked with a Board so focused and dedicated to financial issues and opportunities in saving taxpayer monies as this Board. Commissioner Scott commented the Pension Bond issue is an opportunity to take advantage of historically low interest rates and is a great opportunity to reduce the cost of funding employee benefits. Commissioner Scott further commented that the County is in great fiscal position and is hopeful the employees will join the Commissioners and make the necessary sacrifices so the County can afford the taxpayers another year without a tax increase. Commissioner Leinbach commented that after reaching out to internal sources and outside sources, in the end he came to the conclusion that we were significantly better off going ahead with enacting this ordinance. Commissioner Leinbach mentioned that yesterday the Pension Board approved moving ahead with the bond funding ordinance. Michael Vind presented information on the bond issue and the other funding made part of the bond issue. Mr. Vind commented that if the County does nothing it would cost the County and taxpayers more.

2. A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to approve the items as presented under the Consent Agenda as well as items number 2, the Controller's Office vouchers. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Scott and all voted unanimously to approve the items listed below:

336.12	Adopt a resolution authorizing 2012 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$235,266.00 per listing dated October 12, 2012.
337.12	Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Proposed Program Costs and Fee Summary's for administrative rates for calendar year 2013 for the Capital Blue Cross Health Contract for the County of Berks.
338.12	Adopt a resolution authorizing Ryan Hunter, Director of Facilities and Operations, to execute Change Order No. 2 to Vision Mechanical, Inc. in the amount of \$14,424.00 to provide labor and materials to paint excess sprinkler piping within the garage footprint beyond the original contract requirements for the Services Center Parking Garage Restoration Project.
339.12	Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute a letter to Dewberry Engineers Inc., 101 Noble Boulevard, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 17013-4109 granting an extension of time for completion of Part II – Final Design and Part III – Services During Construction phases of the Berne Station Bridge replacement project until June 30, 2013 and July 31, 2014, respectively. The extension for Part II – Final Design is to allow for sufficient time with which to obtain the remaining required reviews and permit approvals for the Project. The extension for Part III – Services During Construction is to bring the now-anticipated 18-month construction phase in alignment with the projected completion of Part II. This extension has been reviewed and endorsed by the County's contracted bridge engineer. Ryan Hunter, Director of Facilities and Operations, commented that due to regulatory oversight on a project of this scope, there are more approval processes to receive. This is a joint permit agreement between DEP and the Army Corps of Engineers. The length of time for the approval process is taking more time than anticipated. Mr. Hunter commented that District 5-O has listed this as a high priority.
340.12	Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of Addendum No. 5 to Agreement No. 116349-10 between the County of Berks and High Safety Consulting Services, Ltd. to provide indoor environmental quality services for the Old Berks Heim building for an additional two (2) month period ending November 30, 2012.

341.12	Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Mental Health & Mental Retardation Income & Expenditure Report and Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Intellectual Disabilities Income and Expenditure Report. Dr. Edward Michalik commented this is a standard annual report.
342.12	Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Proposal letter dated September 17, 2012 from Johnson Consulting of Chicago, Illinois to perform a market analysis for the possible expansion of the hotel room tax for the County of Berks. Commissioner Barnhardt commented the County was approached in 2008 on the request of the Convention Center Authority and Visitor's Bureau to consider expanding the hotel tax from the 15 mile radius of the Convention Center to County borders, but took no action at the time. Commissioner Barnhardt commented the Board was approached again by the Convention Center and Visitor's Bureau. The Board contacted three firms to do an analysis of hotel room tax rates and the impact on the hotels, and it was decided that Johnson Consulting would provide the most in comprehensive data. Commissioner Barnhardt commented the data will lead the Board to the right conclusion, and did not want to raise a tax without doing due diligence. Commissioner Barnhardt commented that if the analysis comes back that the hotels do receive material benefit; he will support the new tax. Commissioner Scott commented he intends to not vote for the expansion in the hotel room tax and feels that both his colleagues will benefit from the results of the study, and will support the study for getting the information the study will produce. Commissioner Leinbach commented he supports the study and when he sees the data he will vote according to the data.

2. Motion to authorize payments set forth on Controller's Office vouchers listing dated October 16, 2012 for the week ending October 17, 2012.

Reports

1. County Treasurer Nelson Long, CPA submitted a prepared weekly Treasurer's report.
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. No report at this time.

2. Robert J. Patrizio commented there will be continued discussion on the 2013 budget and 5 year forecast.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Barnhardt commented he thinks this was one the best and most informative meetings held so far this year.

Commissioner Scott read an article from the Wall Street Journal regarding the Veteran's Department at the national level and the lack of care the veterans are receiving.

Commission Leinbach

ROW OFFICERS COMMENTS

County Controller Sandy Graffius commented that her office is working in conjunction with Berks County Veteran's Affairs Office and Berks County pensioners to provide transportation to veterans to Coatesville and Lebanon. Ms. Graffius also announced her office is working with National Penn to speed up the benefit checks to the veterans. Mr. Graffius also announced a new updated FUFs (Friendly Understandable Financial Statement) will be printed and released shortly.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk