

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting**  
**Tuesday, July 20, 2004**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, July 20, 2004, at 10:30 AM, in the thirteenth floor Board Room of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Judith L. Schwank was attending a conference; therefore Vice-Chairman Thomas Gajewski called the meeting to order with Commissioner Mark L. Scott in attendance. Also present were County Administrator, William E. Dennis and Solicitor Alan Miller and Chief Clerk Terry Styer.

Commissioner Gajewski followed with a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**II. PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES/PRESENTATIONS:**

**III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing Court Administration to apply for a Grant of \$55,000 from the Berks County Community Foundation for the implementation of a Treatment Court program. Judge Peter Schmehl, Berks County Treatment Court, presented the request and explained the goals of the program by saying that it follows the DUI Treatment pilot project that Berks County successfully implemented recently.

Commissioner Gajewski commended the Judge and those involved in this project and expressed the hope that this program will successfully reduce the recidivism rate among the program participants.

***Commissioner Schwank***

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing Judith L. Schwank, Chair of the Board, to execute TEFAP Inventory – Reimbursement Request Form for the Third Quarter (May, June, July ) FFY 2003-2004, in the amount of \$10,068.59 for distributing 100,685.86 pounds of food at \$.10 per pound and to authorize Margaret Bianca, Executive Director, Greater Berks Food Bank for apply for the funds on behalf of Berks County. Commissioner Scott pointed out the fact that Berks County distributed twice as much free food as does Montgomery County with a larger population. Based on a per capita estimate, Berks County distributes four times as much. He stated that his theory might be that there is a correlation between the free food distributions, coupled with the low cost of housing that may be adding to the migration of poverty to this area. He suggested that agencies should be audited to determine that all participants are indeed eligible and meet the guidelines established for these programs while those in the position to continue the program can continue to debate whether they are causing a positive or negative effect on our social problems.

Commissioner Gajewski agreed that the programs are required to follow federal guidelines but some kind of eligibility audit should be performed to assure that only those eligible actually receive the free food.

***Commissioner Gajewski***

- A. Adopt Resolution awarding contracts for RFPs as recommended by the Berks County Workforce Investment Board for the following contracts that were presented by Edward J. McCann, Director of Workforce Development for the Berks County Workforce Investment Board. Ed began by saying that these contracts are competitively bid every two years.
1. Reading Area Community College – The RACC Career Lab provides Adult basic as well as specialized education services during weekends and evenings and serves approximately 150 individuals. The contract amount is \$231,938.
  2. ARBOR E & T – Out-Of-School Youth (Teen Work Plus) –provides GED preparation, English as a Second Language and job training including follow up services for school dropout youth aged 16 – 21 that are unemployed or underemployed. The program serves approximately 85 individuals. The contract amount is \$280,884.
  3. Goodwill Industries of Mid-Eastern PA - Post-Placement Retention & Follow-up services – This program provides intensive case management and follow-up services to customers who have exited from DPW Workforce Development programs. The program serves approximately 75 individuals. The contract amount is \$179,122.

***Commissioner Scott***

- A. Commissioner Scott introduced Kathy Frey, Deputy Director of Administration of the Berks County Office of Aging and asked that she describe the contracts for the Hispanic Center of Reading and Berks and the Berks County Adult Day Care program.

Kathy described the Adult Day Care programs as being similar to child day care and provides a safe, secure environment for older people with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and physical disabilities who require supervision. A noon meal and activities are provided. Adult day care operates five days a week for 8 – 10 hours a day and greatly benefits working caregivers. She said we have 10 adult day care contracts, several with facilities in surrounding counties where it has been found that for rural residents, it may be closer for families to take their loved one to a facility in Lebanon, Lancaster, Lehigh, Chester, or Montgomery County rather than coming to Reading.

Kathy Frey continued:

Adult day care is an affordable option for caregivers committed to caring for their loved ones at home, avoiding nursing home placement. The costs range from \$42 - \$54 per day. The Office of Aging subsidizes the cost for low-income elderly. For more information on adult day care, call the Office of Aging at 610-478-6500.

She said that the Commissioners will also be asked to approve a contract with the Hispanic Center for the operation of La Casa de la Amistad, a Spanish senior center located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Berkshire Hotel at 5<sup>th</sup> and Washington Streets in Reading. La Casa operates five days a week, prepares and serves a delicious ethnic / Spanish meal each day, offers activities, programs, computer classes, crafts, music, and social services for Hispanic elderly. Kathy said the center is warm and welcoming and has between 75 and 100 seniors attending daily. La Casa loves visitors and we would like to invite Berks County residents to stop by and see the center. Be sure to make a reservation for lunch. You'll be glad you did. The phone number for La Casa de la Amistad is 610-685-1284

Commissioner Scott described a situation he encountered with a County Citizen who was losing caregiver services due to recent funding cuts. Kathy advised the Commissioner of some of the alternatives that this couple might be eligible for with the new PDA waiver program.

- B. Resolution authorizing George Kovarie, Executive Director of Berks County Children and Youth Services, to execute all approvals for extensions of care for eligible children as proposed in the annual Children and Youth Services budget.

#### **IV. OTHER REQUESTS:**

##### ***Budget Director:***

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 Budget transfers in the amount of \$187,674 per listing dated July 1, 2004. Kim Grinage, Asst. Director of Budget and Finance presented the transfer requests.

***Purchasing Director:***

- A. Renee Carpenter, Purchasing Director, presented the Invitation to Bid #04-07-RC, for a one-year contract for the furnishing of medical grade oxygen to Messer Griesheim Industries, LLC, d/b/a MG Industries with an office at 3 Great Valley Parkway, Malvern, PA 19355 at their bid prices of:

medical grade oxygen in "D" aluminum cylinders	\$ 3.75 ea
medical grade oxygen in "E" aluminum cylinders	\$ 2.85 ea
medical grade oxygen in "H" aluminum cylinders	\$ 4.35 ea
rental of "D" cylinders	\$ .27 per day
rental of "E" cylinders	\$ .27 per day
rental of "H" cylinders	\$ .27 per day
emergency delivery surcharge	\$100.00 ea
same day delivery surcharge	\$ 40.00 ea

Estimated annual expenditure is \$21,542.10

***Contract Coordinator:***

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated July 15, 2004.

***V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS***

Commissioner Scott wanted to remind everyone that the Berks County Household Hazardous Waste collection day, which is a free program to Berks County residents to dispose of their household hazardous waste, is scheduled for this Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> of July. He reminded everyone that latex paint (which is not considered hazardous) will be refused from the facility, so please do not try to dispose of it through this program only oil based paint and paint cans will be accepted.

Commissioner Gajewski noted that this year 1.5 million dollars will be spent marketing economic development in Pennsylvania as part of the Governor Rendell's Economic Stimulus Package. He then noted his concern and read a prepared statement that will be attached to the minutes, regarding the County's new budget director's decision to take a week of vacation only two days after he began his employment with the County. Commissioner Scott said he was not against the individual needing to commit to what was a possible pre-arranged plan, but he felt that the Commissioners' could have been notified.

There was a long discussion that followed Commissioner Gajewski's prepared statement regarding the budget process and in particular the beginning fund balance used in the 2004 budget. Kim Grinage was asked to describe how this year's estimated fund balance was developed.

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS continued:**

Commissioners Scott and Gajewski and Treasurer Nelson Long discussed the various issues that the County dealt with in the past years and concluded by agreeing that if 2004 expenditures followed historical trends, the County may have a cash flow problem during November or December of this year. It was also concluded that the Budget Department can only provide data and estimates as that information is presented to them from the Controller's office. It was generally agreed that when the new Controller and her administrative team have their new financial reporting system in place, they would be better able to provide improved services to the Budget Department. Commissioner Gajewski commended Treasurer Long for his cash management skills in helping the County to avoid this cash shortfall during March of 2004.

**VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

John Ulrich of the City of Reading expressed frustration over the lack of attention and repairs with two area Bridges. The first was the deteriorating condition of the Buttonwood Street Bridge. County Engineer Bill Westcott stated that the bridge was being planned for possible road surface treatment intending to hold it for the next two years as the plan for funding applications is put in place to rebuild the entire structure. Mr. Ulrich's other concern was with the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge that is owned and maintained by Penn Dot. He expressed concern for the safety of school children that cross the bridge daily. Commissioner Gajewski said he would place a phone call to Senator O'Pake to see if Penn Dot could get some immediate attention placed on the safety issues for this structure. Mr. Ulrich then invited the board to attend a future water authority meeting as he discussed his support of economic development in the planned Airport Industrial Park. He informed the board of the location of a distilling basin on the north side of the area that could possibly be available for purchase from the State.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45AM.