

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting**  
**Tuesday, August 17, 2004**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, August 17, 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 called the meeting to order with Commissioner Thomas Gajewski in attendance. Commissioner Mark L. Scott was on vacation. Also present were County Administrator, William E. Dennis and Solicitor Alan Miller and Chief Clerk Terry Styer.

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

The Commissioners' Meeting Minutes for August 10, 2004 and August 12, 2004 were approved as published with a motion made by Commissioner Gajewski, seconded by Commissioner Schwank and all voting yes to approve.

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

Commissioner Gajewski will present a Proclamation for National Recovery Month. Patrice Stevens and Al Eckstrom from Easy Does It, will be present to receive the Proclamation.

Commissioner Schwank will present a Certificate of Recognition to Deena Kershner recipient of the 2004 Townie Award from the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

Barbara Coffin, Director for Office of Aging described the results of a consumer questionnaire that was distributed throughout the County in order to determine current and future needs of the Berks Senior Centers. She said that the results of the surveys paired with an analysis of the attendance at the majority of the senior centers indicate a major shift in the way seniors participate in traditional senior centers. She indicated that seniors attend activities in far greater numbers than attend centers for a meal and it was apparent that, given the attendance numbers the desires and needs of today's and future seniors it will require a different focus for the program to continue and expand; and for this reason, the Berks County Office of Aging conducted strategic planning sessions with all senior center providers to receive input into development of a countywide center strategic plan. This plan has evolved into three major initiatives:

1. Services for the City of Reading

Three senior centers are located within the city; Kennedy Senior Community Center is located in the Reading Housing Authority's Kennedy Towers. Until the end of June, Diakon Ministries, Inc administered this center. This center is now temporarily closed.

LaCasa de la Amisted is administered by the Hispanic Center of Reading and Berks County. The Latino senior population is continuing to grow; attendance currently averages around 90 people with as many as 120 on specific days. The area south of Penn is becoming predominantly more Latino; Kennedy Towers has increasing numbers of Latino residents. Oakbrook Housing Project has over 100 Latino seniors that would like to participate in some organized activity/program structure. Family First (previously South of Penn 55+ Club) has also experienced the changing neighborhood demographics as they redefine their mission and functions.

Many of the people attending LaCasa meet this definition, as well as needing the services that the traditional senior center model provides, offering socialization centering around a congregate meal.

The Hispanic Center receives funding to support the senior center. LaCasa de la Amisted will be the hub continuing the current a five-day operation, preparing their own food, and offering a range of socialization, educational and informational activities at the Berkshire Towers location. A planning committee comprised of representatives of the Reading Housing Authority, the Hispanic Center, Family First and the Berks County Office of Aging, will be meeting over the next two months to develop a plan for addressing the needs of the population in the south of Penn area (with Kennedy as a designated service site), as well as the Oakbrook and Glenside populations. Initial plans are to look to Kennedy, and Oakbrook as potential satellite operations supported by staff at LaCasa and offering a variety of programs and activities with a meal on designated days.

## 2. Service to the Boyertown Area

Boyertown Area Multi-Service provides a full range of services including administration of a senior center and home-delivered meals to the Boyertown area. A capital campaign is underway to provide support to construct a new facility, which will include space for senior activities. Commercial kitchen facilities are planned to allow for the preparation of meals for the senior center as well as home delivered meals. BAMS currently manages home-delivered meals for consumers in that area as well as recruiting volunteers for delivering meals. Discussions will center on meal preparation beginning in January and possible increased responsibility for additional home delivered meal routes.

## 3. Services in the County

Berks County Senior Citizens Council operates the meal program at Providence House in addition to offering a wide range of services, programs and activities at their Reading location at 9th and Court streets. Providence House is an assisted living facility offering three meals a day, seven days a week to community residents as well as residents of Providence House.

She said by saying that Berks County is unique with senior clubs throughout the County that are administratively linked to Berks County Senior Citizens Council, Inc. Attendance at senior clubs continues to grow while center congregate meal participation continues to decrease. Through the Council, the structure is already

in place to deliver and expand activities, working through over 75 senior clubs located throughout the County.

Therefore, it makes both administrative and fiscal sense to look to this structure in changing the direction of center services in Berks County and contract with Berks County Senior Citizens Council to administer a county wide program of activities, building on the current structure but incorporating the extensive network of granges, libraries, universities, park systems and health clubs. A planning committee comprised of members of the staff and board of Berks County Senior Citizens Council, Diakon staff and the Berks County Office of Aging staff and advisory council, is being organized to address the multitude of issues of transition. Members of this committee will also include the Pennsylvania Cooperation Extension, the Berks County Library system, the County Park and Recreation Department, Alvernia Senior College, health clubs, and health providers. The planning committee's first job will be to develop a transition plan and timetable that will insure that those individuals depending on the current system will be provided with alternative services or support.

Barb ended by saying that it is important to note that none of this would be possible if Diakon had not built the base of the traditional senior center model and effectively administered it over the past twenty-six years; this base is what will allow us to move to the next level of services, building on the uniqueness of Berks County and developing a model that could become part of the statewide initiative for addressing the changing needs of Pennsylvania's senior population.

### **III. CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion by Commissioner Gajewski, seconded by Commissioner Schwank and all voting yes, the following motions and resolutions were approved.

- 377.04 A. Resolution authorizing execution of a grant application by and between the County of Berks (District Attorney) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for 25% funding (\$15,675) of the total budget of \$62,700 for the for the Elderly Abuse Unit covering the period 1/1/05- 12/31/05.
- 378.04 B. Resolution authorizing execution of a grant application by and between the County of Berks (District Attorney) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for 100% State funding in the amount of \$168,947 for the Victim/Witness Assistance Unit covering the period 1/1/05 - 12/31/05.
- 379.04 C. Resolution reappointing Michael P. Ehlerman 11 Cardinal Place, Wyomissing, PA 19610 to the Berks County Convention Center Authority for a four year term ending 8/29/08.
- 380.04 D. Resolution authorizing Commissioner Schwank, as Chair of the Board, to execute Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor and Industry, Grant Recipients Release, Assignment and Closeout forms pursuant to the terms of WIA Grants totaling to

\$1,266,245.00.

- 381.04 E. Resolution authorizing application to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to renew Grant for Victims of Juvenile Offenders (VOJO) program – total budget cost \$132,817 (State funding 64%- \$84,592 with County match of 36% or \$48,226.)
- 382.04 F. Adopt Resolution authorizing Berks County's Chief Juvenile Probation Officer to sign the Title IV-E Administrative Quarterly Claim form verifying the County's expenditures for Juvenile Probation.
- 383.04 G. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 budget Transfers in the amount of \$56,443 and 2004 Budget Appropriations in the amount of \$ 152,430 per listing dated, August 13, 2004.

Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated, August 13, 2004.

Motion to Award Request for Proposal # 04-08-RC a contract for the furnishing of public library system long-range planning consulting services to Aaron Cohen Associates, Ltd. with an office at 159 Teatown Road, Croton-On-Hudson, New York, 10520 at their fixed and firm proposal price of \$30,000.00. Julie Rinehart, Director of the Library System provided additional information to the board.

Motion to Authorize payment of bills for week ending August 20, 2004 as presented by the County Controller and reviewed and approved by the County Budget Director.

**IV. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

Commissioner Schwank announced a meeting that was being held to discuss ideas regarding the Angelica Dam. She indicated that a letter will be drafted from the County to the city to restart discussions regarding the County's interest in the Antietam Dam.

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:25 PM.