

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, October 5, 2004

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, October 5, 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 and Commissioner Mark L. Scott in attendance. Also present were County Administrator, William E. Dennis, Solicitor, Alan Miller, Esq. and Chief Clerk Terry Styer.

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

II. PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES/PRESENTATIONS:

Commissioner Gajewski presented a Proclamation for Polish American Heritage Month. The following individuals spoke on the subject of their heritage and the organization they represented:

Dolores Taras - Polish-American Heritage
Father Richard Nachurski - St. Anthony's R.C. Church
Father Edward Ratajczak - St. Stephen's Polish National Church
Andre Hempel, Secretary, and Roman Patynouski, member - Polonia Solidarity
Pan Stefan - Pan Stefan Polka Show
Leona Szadlowski, President - Polish Falcons Senior Citizens
Ted Zaorski, President - Polish Falcons
Kaz – Kaz's German Bavarian Polka Show

Commissioner Gajewski presented a Proclamation to Reading's Fire Marshall David Janiszewski in honor of Fire Prevention Week.

III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

- 413.04 A. Resolution authorizing a Grant Agreement between the County and Department of State in the amount of \$15,000; under the Provisions of Title II of the Help American Vote Act of 2002 for financial assistance to accomplish all activities that are required by the Act. for a five (5) year term ending 12/31/07.
Commissioner Scott made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Gajewski and all voted yes to approve.

At this time Christopher Winters, Assistant Elections Director reported on the current volunteer effort underway to handle the voter registration applications. He indicated that with the help of 22 volunteers and an overwhelming show of support from County Employees he is very confident that they will get the job done.

Commissioner Schwank indicated that CCAP (County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania) has received reports from numerous counties facing the same volumes of registrations along with numerous duplication issues.

Chris reported while the State's "SURE" computer system has been slowing the process, it does help to eliminate fraudulent and duplicative registrations. He then made a plea to the public for volunteers in the evening hours.

Commissioner Scott presented an example of three registration applications that appeared to be from the same individual that were received in this registration campaign. He noted that the system worked to detect this error.

Commissioner Schwank suggested that we need to get these energetic registration campaign volunteers to recognize the seriousness for accuracy when registering voters.

Commissioner Schwank

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the re- appointment of Eileen Kastura, 431 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing Hills, PA 19610 to the Berks Redevelopment Authority for a five (5) year term ending 12/31/07.

Commissioner Gajewski

- A. Adopt Resolution Authorizing the appointment of Elaine Swavely, 316 Port Clinton Avenue, Hamburg, PA and Cathleen Palm, 136 Main Street, P O Box 396, Bernville PA 19506 to the Children and Youth Services Board filling two vacancies with terms expiring 4/8/06.
- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing changes to the County's CDBG Program as advertised.

Commissioner Scott

Commissioner Scott stated that with the Columbus Day holiday around the corner, he wished to recognize the Italian American community and recommended a particular radio station in reference to that Heritage.

The Commissioner then read from a letter written by Bill Kochan, Director of the Berks Mapping Department that addressed the proposed annexation of property in Caernarvon Township to New Morgan Borough. Commissioner Scott commended Mr. Kochan for extending his knowledge for the proper procedures under the law for this type of land exchange to those municipalities involved in what appears to have been a potential violation of the law.

IV. OTHER REQUESTS:**Budget Director:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 budget transfers in the amount of \$127,939. per listing dated October 7 , 2004 and budget appropriations in the amount of \$1,715,286.

Contract Coordinator:

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated, October 1, 2004.

V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Commissioner Schwank reported that the County Environmental Advisory Committee working with Liberty Environmental Consultants who was hired by the County to review a permit application for the Conestoga Landfill's proposed use of Methane Gas, has recently received responses from the applicant indicated that changes will occur due to those comments. She also announced dates for the meetings to discuss the County Greenway Parks and Recreation Plan, which is believed to figure prominently in the County's future for Economic Development. Commissioner Schwank then reported that CCAP (County Commissioners Association of PA) is involved in a reviewing the way some property owners in Pennsylvania are taking advantage of the preferred assessment under the Clean and Green Law and will report to the board of Commissioners as her CCAP Environmental / Land Use committee continues this evaluation.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Carlos Zayas, citizen of Reading, alleged inappropriate conduct involving partisan influence by those in charge of the Elections Office. He also said he would be watching the progress of the current voter registration efforts and felt that the Elections Office should have been better prepared for the recent registration campaigns preceding a Presidential Election. He then asked for an explanation of the use of the Provisional Ballot.

Commissioner Schwank stated that the County's goal will be to get everyone who registered in the system on time and that the Provisional Ballot which is intended as an emergency backup to assure all voters that their vote will be counted will not be necessary.

Commissioner Gajewski invited Mr. Zayas to participate in the process by volunteering his help in the Elections Office.

Christopher Winters emphasized that the Elections Office will be working 24 hours, seven days a week to fulfill their obligations. He then explained in greater detail the process for the Provisional Ballots, which he explained would ultimately be reviewed by the Elections Board.

CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR continued:

Mr. Zayas then alleged some wrong doing on the part of an election service vendor known as Precision Marketing. He was asked by the Chair to put his specific complaints in writing to the Elections Board.

A long discussion followed with additional questions from Mr. Zayas and Mr. Rodriquez asking about the process for checking duplicate registrations and about the voting rights of those with PFA actions filed against them. Christopher Winters responded to the questions and assured him that every Berks County citizen who is properly registered by October 4, 2004 will be able to vote and their vote will be counted.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM.