

Commissioners' Board Meeting
Thursday, October 14, 2004

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, October 14, 2004 at 10:45 AM in the Board meeting room on the thirteenth floor 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 Scott in attendance. Also present were the Chief Clerk Terry L. Styer, Solicitor Alan S. Miller and County Administrator, William E. Dennis.

The Commissioners' Meeting Minutes for the October 5, 2004 Commissioners' Workshop Meeting and the October 7, 2004 Commissioners' Meeting were approved as published with a motion made by Commissioner Scott seconded by Commissioner Gajewski and all voted yes to approve.

Commissioner Gajewski made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Scott and all voted yes to approve the following Consent Agenda with the exception of item 420.04 C. for the reappointment of members to the Ag. Preservation Board. All voted yes to approve the remaining items.

On the matter of 420.04 C. Commissioner Gajewski read a prepared statement (attached to these minutes) in which he abstained from the vote on this proposed resolution. Commissioner Scott stated that he respected Commissioner Gajewski's position but felt that the members served the board well for a number years and they deserved his vote for reappointment. He also added it is incumbent upon the Commissioners not to overstep the County Goals established for the Agricultural Land Preservation Board. Commissioner Schwank said she also respected Commissioner Gajewski's concerns and proposed that the Commissioners adopt a resolution to change the guidelines and point system that the Agricultural Land Preservation Board utilized in approving applicants for easement purchases, such as requiring that a property be located in a designated Ag zone. She suggested that perhaps Lancaster County's easement purchase guidelines should be reviewed for possible amendments to Berks County's point system. Commissioner Scott also questioned the Ag Land Board ranking system in that he was of the understanding that property surrounding public sewer and water lines were ranked higher. Commissioner Gajewski felt that the current system does not take highway projects into consideration. Commissioner Schwank stated that it would be the responsibility of the Ag Land Preservation Board to comply with the county's Comprehensive Plan (such as the Current Vision 2020) and she stated further that she was not aware of any instance where they approved easement purchases that were not in compliance with than plan.

At this time Commissioner Scott made a motion to approve the appointment, Commissioner Schwank seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Consent Agenda

1. Authorizing consent agenda items:
 - 416.04 C. Resolution authorizing changes to the County's CDBG Program as advertised. (held from October 7,2004)

- 418.04 A. Adopt Resolution authorizing Edward McCann to sign On-The Job Training Contracts and Subsidized Employment Agreements per list attached to agenda and dated 9/27/04.
- 419.04 B. Adopt Resolution approving a grant agreement between Berks County Office of Aging and the PA Department of Aging to receive funding under the Tobacco/Bridge Grant program in the amount of \$57,057 for the period of 7/1/04 – 6/30/05.
- 420.04 C. Adopt Resolution authorizing the re- appointment of Victoria Kintzer, and Dr. Robert Ziegenfus, to the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board for a three year term ending 12/31/07.
- 421.04 D. Adopt Resolution authorizing execution of Amendment to Lease by and between the County of Berks and Francesco and Ilda H. Avanzato to amend Lease Agreement dated October 24, 1996 to lease property located at 242 Exeter Street, Reading, Pennsylvania.
- 422.04 E. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 budget transfers in the amount of \$43,500 per listing dated October 7, 2004.
2. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated, October 7, 2004

Reports

The County's Deputy Controller, Mark Hanson presented his report to the board. Administrator, Bill Dennis reported on the Treasurer's report, prepared by Nelson Long, CPA.

Agenda Items for Discussion

Commissioner Scott reported that he met with District Attorney Baldwin to discuss the process for investigating the potential fraudulent voter registration forms. He suggested that in a future Election Board meeting, the board should authorize formal action for this investigative process to begin.

Assistant Solicitor Sadler suggested that the investigation may ultimately be an Attorney General's issue especially when addresses involve those outside of the County.

Commissioner Schwank described what she considered to be a very small stack of registrations that are "questionable" but not necessarily intentionally fraudulent.

Commissioner Gajewski stated that the time to review these questionable documents is when all the facts are gathered. He emphasized that he does not want to see these discussions undermine the elections process.

Agenda Items for Discussion continued:

Commissioner Scott reported that statistically, the number of problem registrations appears to be the result of organized voter drives. He also stated to protect the integrity of the system it should be investigated and no criminal act of voter registration fraud should go unpunished.

Commissioner Schwank noted that perhaps the people handling these drives are not properly educated on the process but the Voter Registration Office cannot be involved in partisan activities.

Citizen Comment/Business From The Floor

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 A.M.