

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, October 26, 2004

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, October 26, 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 Certificate of Recognition to Rohm & Haas Powder Coating for the 2004 Department of Labor and Industry Governor's Award for Safety Excellence. The award commended the company's success in establishing an injury free workplace for 13 continuous years. Those in attendance accepting the recognition from the Commissioners were; Glenn D. Correll, Research Director - North America Region; Diane E. Warunek, Facility Manager / EHS Coordinator; Gordon L. Tullos, Chemical Hygiene Officer; Nancy L. Osenbach, Industrial Hygiene Coordinator and Tabitha L. McLeish, Chemist / Safety Chairperson.

Commissioner Schwank presented a Certificate of Recognition to Senator O'Pake for his support of area Libraries.

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing County Treasurer and Controller to transfer funds from the Bond Fund to the General Fund.

Commissioner Schwank

- A. Authorizing Judith L. Schwank, Chair of the Board, to execute The Emergency Food Assistance Program –TEFAP (Inventory – Reimbursement Request Form for the Fourth Quarter (July, Aug & Sept) FFY 2003-2004, in the amount of \$8,963.57 for distributing 89,635.68 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 Gajewski

Commissioner Scott

- A. Motion to correct Resolution 419-04 to state amount of \$52,057 for the Tobacco Bridge Grant Agreement approved at the 10/14/04 Commissioners' meeting.

IV. OTHER REQUESTS:**Human Resources Director:**

- A. Adopt Resolution to authorizing the County to become a member of the CCAP (County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania) UC (Unemployment Compensation) Trust. Beth Scheipan, Human Resource Director informed the Commissioners that by joining this established Trust, the County would save an estimated \$104,000 per year. She indicated that in addition to insurance coverage from unemployment claims, the UC Trust would provide legal representation at the Unemployment Hearings.

Budget Director:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 budget transfers in the amount of \$34,719 and Appropriations in the amount of \$88,673 as per listing dated October 22, 2004.

Contract Coordinator:

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated, October 22, 2004.

V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Commissioner Gajewski reported that he would be proposing a Community Corrections Task Force in a future resolution. He indicated that the task force as proposed, may include the Commissioners, the Prison Warden, representatives from the County Board of Judges, the Prison Society and Juvenile Probation. Commissioner Schwank stated that the timing for a task force is good in that a prison master plan is going to be unveiled in the near future.

Commissioner Schwank suggested that the board discuss the possibility for future funding of upfront costs, possibly from CDBG funds, for the County's municipal merger projects. She indicated that some municipalities have expressed that the up front costs to pursue the merger were cost prohibitive. Commissioner Gajewski supported the idea of funding these requests stating that this would serve as an example of how the county could get involved in regionalization. Commissioner Scott stated that the municipalities should recognize that the up front costs of these mergers will be dwarfed when compared to the long term savings to the municipality's tax payers as a result of the merger.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Oscar Egolf citizen from Fleetwood, thanked the Commissioners for requesting the input of the Fleetwood American Legion regarding the issuance of flag holders for non-combat era veterans.

Christopher Winters, Assistant Director of Election Services presented an update in the form of a written report regarding the numbers of voter registration forms processed by his office. His report indicated that the county has a gain of 20,581 registered voters, which brings the total to 234,648 as of October 25, 2004. Chris was asked to describe the number of problematic registrations. He indicated that there are currently 25 that will require additional review by the Elections Office Solicitor before any additional action is taken. Commissioner Scott then read a press release from the US Department of Justice on the issue of voter fraud (not specific to Berks County). Commissioner Schwank asked Chris Winters to discuss the schedule and process for poll worker training.

A continuing discussion regarding the 25 questionable registration forms resulted in Commissioner Schwank asking Chris Winters if the Election Services staff are empowered to contact law enforcement directly to report any potential illegalities. He said he felt they were empowered to do so when necessary but preferred to get the opinion of the Solicitor before taking any additional action on these 25 questionable forms first.

Valentine Rodriguez, citizen of the City of Reading, questioned the 10-day appeal process (for voter registration rejections) established in the Elections Law and wanted to know how the county was going to address this. Christopher Winters informed him that the elections code was created at the time when everyone was required to register in person. With the change in the process, the code was never updated but Berks County will permit individuals that received rejection notices to come in and correct mistakes right up to Election Day.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM