

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, December 14, 2004

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, December 14, 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 the Pearl Harbor Survivors Group.

III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

A. Adopt Resolution authorizing Judy Schwank, Chair, to execute Local Jurisdiction Waiver with respect to Federal Drug Control and System Improvement (DCSI) Program under the Special Victim Services Initiatives Funding program to be earmarked for Berks Women in Crisis to provide English and Spanish-speaking counseling/advocacy at the Courthouse during night, weekend and holiday hours.

Commissioner Schwank

- A. Adopt Resolution to re-appoint Sandra Krafczek, 7 Windsor Court, Reading, PA 19606 to a five (5) year term (to 12/31/09) to the Reading Public Library Board.
- B. Adopt Resolution to re-appoint Ronald M. Ewing, 324 Washington Street, Birdsboro, PA 19508 to a four (4) year term (to 12/31/08) to the Berks County Planning Commission.
- C. Adopt Resolution to re-appoint Raymond J. Hubbard, MD, Reading Pediatrics, 40 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyomissing, PA 19610 for a three (3) year term (to 12/31/07) to the Berks County MH/MR Advisory Board.
- D. Adopt Resolution to re-appoint Virginia Miller, 715 Old Mill Road F-1 Wyomissing, PA 19610 to a three (3) year term (to 12/31/07) to the Berks County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board.

- E. Adopt Resolution to re-appoint Yvonne Stroman, Community Prevention Partnership, 227 North Fifth Street, Reading, PA 19601 a three (3) year term (to 12/31/07) to the Berks County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board.
- F. Adopt Resolution to re-appoint Jayne Dieruff, 101 Deborah Drive, Wyomissing, PA 19610 to a five (5) year term (to 12/31/09) to the Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority Board.

Following a discussion of the above resolutions, Commissioner Schwank brought several current issues and ideas to the floor for consideration. The first involves an Office of Aging fund raising idea for Christmas Dinners to Aging Clients who are shut-ins. She indicated that they are hoping to collect \$8.50 to cover the cost of one meal per person and that we may consider sending a County Wide e-mail to solicit donations from county employees. The second was in regards to a Sierra Club letter informing the county that the DEP (PA Department of Environmental Protection) will no longer be providing inspections for farms that opt to utilize bio-solids (treated sewage sludge) as fertilizer on their farm fields. She suggested that the County may want to consider allocating funds to continue inspection services through the County Conservation District that the DEP currently funds. Her third point was to suggest a special environmental defense fund with defined expenditure parameters be establishes in the budget of 2006.

Commissioner Gajewski suggested that a special fund of this nature should have been established when these landfill fees became available to the county. He said that we need to view with a thoughtful approach in that reallocating their use has to begin with the County General Fund's dependency on those funds.

Commissioner Scott said that he will not support a budget that does not propose to separate those Landfill fees from the General Fund's expenditures and set up for the County's environmental protection purposes.

Commissioner Gajewski

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing amendments to the County's CDBG and HOME Programs (Community Development Office.)

Commissioner Scott

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the allocation and expenditure of federal monies under various waiver agreements through contracts between SAM, Inc., and providers of mental retardation services (for the period 07/01/04 – 09/30/04), with allocation of funds and resulting contracts reviewed and approved by the MH/MR Administrator, ensuring appropriate oversight as recommended by legal counsel.
- B. Adopt Resolution to re-appoint Ronald R. Seaman, 120 Hawk Mtn. Road, Kempton, PA 19529 to a five (5) year term (to 12/31/09) to the Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority Board.

Commissioner Scott reported that he arranged a conference call meeting with Congressman Gerlach and county staff regarding the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funding program. He commended George Kovarie, Director of Children and Youth for his input on possible legislative changes for the funding requirements of this program, which could ultimately help to restore the 2-8 million needed for the Children and Youth programs and the Youth Detention Center. He then suggested that the future budget cuts should be focused on those programs that are dependant on local real estate taxes rather than those funded by the State and Federal govt.

IV. OTHER REQUESTS:

Solicitor

- A. Resolution authorizing execution of an Amendment to Lease between Bern Partners, L.P., 1420 Clarion Street, Reading, Pennsylvania 19601, and the County of Berks for office space for District Justice Thomas Gauby (23-3-05).
- B. Resolution authorizing the Berks County Solicitor's Office to advertise Ordinance No. 5 providing for the Rules and Regulations Governing the Use of the Berks County Park System and Providing Penalties for Violation of the Same, to be enacted at the meeting on December 23, 2004.

Contract Coordinator:

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated December 6, 2004.

Budget Director:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$961,816 and Appropriations in the amount of \$285,591 per listing dated December 3, 2004.

Human Resource Director:

- A. Adopt Resolution approving the Human Resource Policy recommendations:
 - Sick Time Donation Policy
 - Tobacco/Smoking Policy
 - Human Resources Record Retention Policy
 - Fair Labor Standards Act Guidelines, Overtime, and Compensatory Time Policy

V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

A discussion regarding the smoking policy involved various suggested solutions such as a possible area set aside for smokers outside of the Government Services Center, which Bill Westcott estimated to cost \$1,475.00. It was suggested that the county may need to consider providing the same benefits to all county buildings.

Commissioner Schwank noted a major shift in this policy will be the prohibition to smoking in the Services Center Garage. She noted that it is not only a safety hazard; many employees and citizens enter the building via the garage elevator entrance and have to walk through a cloud of smoke.

Commissioner Gajewski reported that he has drafted a letter to the State legislature regarding the need for tax reform. He then suggested that legislation should be changed to allow Counties to provide defined contribution plans for employee pensions and the county should conduct a study to determine if regulations for social service programs differ for those in Berks County. Commissioner Scott stated that the welfare issue is complex and it needs detailed study to determine if eligibility requirements are being monitored. Commissioner Schwank said that we need to work with the social service agencies and draw upon their expertise to find a solution to the increasing demand.

Kurt Bellman, Election Services director update the board and reported on the State's SURE system evaluation. He learned that Lisette Mendez-Rodriguez of Berks County's Election Services was shown to be one of the top five most efficient registrars on the SURE system across Pennsylvania.

Commissioner Schwank updated the board on the activities of the Election Reform Tax Force and the intention to meet and report the findings to State Officials on December 17, 2004.

Keith Stamm, citizen from Berks County questioned what he described as 150 new positions added to the County budget. He suggested cutting 10 jobs and cutting one farm from preservation during 2005. His information was corrected to note that the figures he was citing reflected new positions over a period of years.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned to an Election Board meeting at 12:05 P.M.