

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, December 21, 2004

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, December 21, 2004, at 10:30 A.M. 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:

The County's Financial Advisors, Financial S&Lutions LLC, represented by Mark Lunquist presented the County's proposed 2005 TRAN (Tax and Revenue Anticipation Line of Credit Note) proposed in the amount of \$25,000. Mark reviewed the proposals received and recommended that the Board approve the proposal from PNC Bank, which will be presented for formal approval at the Commissioners meeting on Thursday December 23, 2004.

III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

The following Resolution, which was missed on the December 16, 2004 consent agenda of the Commissioners meeting, was approved by a motion made by Commissioner Gajewski, seconded by Commissioner Scott and all voted yes to approve.

493.04 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.

A. Adopt Resolution authorizing a grant application to undertake a project under the PA DCED (Pennsylvania Community and Economic Development) Early Intervention Program for the development and implementation of a multi-year financial management strategy for Berks County and the City of Reading via an inter-municipal cooperation agreement. Commissioner Gajewski asked who would be taking the lead on this project. County Administrator Bill Dennis explained that the County would serve as lead and would provide "in kind" services as the match rather than a commitment of County Funds.

Commissioner Scott wished to make it clear that he would strongly object to any attempted "bail-out" of the City with utilizing County Funds. He was assured that this project would not serve as any kind of financial bail-out for the City and the County's only commitment was that of staff time. He explained that the purpose of this program by the DCED is to establish short-term and long-term financial and managerial objectives that strengthen the fiscal capacity of Pennsylvania's county and municipal governments along with the integration of long-term community and economic development strategies that strengthen the local governments tax base. He then reviewed the project's process and this County's projected outcomes from this project, which are expected to include:

- Expenditure reduction
- Revenue enhancement
- Implementation of long-term economic development strategies
- Adoption of best management practices
- Pursuit of intergovernmental cost-sharing strategies.

Commissioner Schwank

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the application of an Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) application for a new position (Operations and Training Officer) and inclusion of an existing position (Deputy Coordinator for Administration and Planning). Bob Osika, Berks County Emergency Management Coordinator, updated the board on the County's Burn Building at the Fire Training Facility and described the purpose of this performance grant application.

Commissioner Gajewski

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing execution of Application for County Aid MS-339 (Liquid Fuels) to increase the allocated amount from \$100,000 to \$150,000 for the Township of Exeter's Exeter Road culvert replacement project.
- B. Adopt Resolution re-appointing David W. Patti, 101 Fairway Drive, Wernersville, PA 19565 to a five (5) year term (12/31/09) on the Berks County Industrial Development Authority.

Commissioner Scott

- A. Adopt Resolution appointing Commissioner Mark C. Scott to fill the unexpired four (4) year term (12/31/06) vacated by Dr. Joe Jurgielewicz to the Berks County Planning Commission. The Commissioner indicated his desire to serve until such time as he is able to appoint a citizen from the "Agriculture -Business" community.

IV. OTHER REQUESTS:**Court Administrator**

Dale Derr, District Court Administrator, expressed concern over projected cuts in the County's proposed 2005 budget, particularly in the area of conferences and training for the Judges necessary for them to be kept current. County Administrator, Bill Dennis commended Dale and his assistant, Tracey Barlett for working with the Budget Director and the Administrator as this budget was being planned. He then committed to sitting down again to review possibilities in the 2005 to include the Courts mandated training sessions. Then the discussion turned to the Conewago project. Commissioner Scott stated that while the Community Corrections Center may appear to be a cheaper alternative to prison incarceration, it was important for the public to understand that at least initially, it would still appear as an additional cost to the existing system not a reduction. Commissioner Gajewski agreed with Commissioner Scott's comment for the short-term but the long-term reduction in recidivism and therefore savings of additional tax dollars was the ultimate goal of this concept.

Solicitor:

- A. Resolution authorizing execution of a Lease Amendment between the County of Berks and the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency for office space located at Berks County Agricultural Center, Bern Township.
- B. Resolution authorizing execution of a Lease Agreement between the County of Berks and the Berks County Industrial Development Authority for office space on the 14th Floor of the Berks County Services Center.
- C. Resolution authorizing execution of a letter to the Children's Home of Reading (CHOR) consenting to CHOR's increased line of credit from Wachovia Bank and further ratifying the Subordination Agreement executed by the County on April 30, 2002.
- D. The Solicitor briefly described the proposed Ordinance No. 5 for the rules and regulation of the County's Park facilities that was advertised for adoption on Thursday December 23, 2004

Contract Coordinator:

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated December 20, 2004.

Budget Director:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$127,543 and Appropriations in the amount \$154,382 per listing dated December 17, 2004. Bob Patrizio updated the Board on the number of cuts that have been made since the draft budget went on the table but with additional cuts in expenditures, additional cuts in Revenue are anticipated. He stated that despite all the efforts being made, the County will continue to hold the line on the budget and tax millage rate as currently proposed for adoption on December 23, 2004.

Human Resource Director:

- A. Beth Scheipan, HR Director, reviewed the list of Human Resource Recommendations dated December 21, 2004.

V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Commissioner Scott presented commentary on two topics affecting the county budget with the first surrounding the subject of farmland preservation in which he compared the cost to the tax payer for preserving farmland to that of the cost to the taxpayer as a result of building residential developments. He used by example, the one time cost of \$200,000 for the purchase of an easement on a 100 acre farm parcel to the costs that are associated with a housing development located on that same farm. He estimated building approximately 80 homes with 2 children per home, costing approximately \$8,000 per year to educate each child could place over \$100,000,000 of additional financial burden on that school district which was by example only the cost to the school district. Additional costs for services will also be increased to the municipality and County for these new residents as well. His point was that he would continue to support farmland preservation as an additional means of keeping taxes down. His second comment surrounded the disturbing facts that Berks County is ranked third in the state for Domestic Violence cases.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk