

**Commissioners' Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 27, 2005**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, January 27, 2005, at 10:30 A.M. 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 Miller and County Administrator William E. Dennis.

The Commissioners' Meeting Minutes for the January 18, 2005 Workshop Meeting and the January 20, 2005 Commissioners' meeting were approved as corrected with a motion made by Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Gajewski and all voted yes to approve.

**Consent Agenda**

1. Commissioner Scott made a motion to approve the following consent agenda Items B through K, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Gajewski and all voted yes to approve. Commissioner Gajewski then made a motion to amend Resolution 17.05 to reduce the proposed \$4.4 million to \$2 million dollars. The motion died for lack of a second. A long discussion took place regarding the manner for future funding of the County's Ag. Preservation program, ending with a call for a vote.\* Commissioners Schwank and Scott voted yes with Commissioner Gajewski voting no. The motion carried.
  - 17.05 A. Resolution authorizing Judith L. Schwank, Commissioner, Chair, and Sandy Graffius, County Controller, to execute certification of appropriation funding for 2005 in the amount of \$4,421,422.00 for the purchase of Agricultural Easements under Act 43.
  - 18.05 B. Resolution approving an application to Penn DOT for Federal Bridge Funds reimbursement for the preliminary engineering project costs for the rehabilitation of the Buttonwood Street Bridge.
  - 19.05 C. Resolution appointing Sandra Krafczek, 7 Windsor Court, Reading PA 19606; and Lois C. Shultz, 5 Wendy Road; Greenfields, Reading PA 19601 to the Children and Youth Services Advisory Board to fill two vacant three year terms of which the terms are set to expire for both on 12/31/06.
  - 20.05 D. Resolution approving the following Community Development Disbursement Vouchers:
    1. No. #483 HOME Grant Program - \$249,871.74
    2. No. #2117 Community Development Block Grant Program - \$163,779.22

- 21.05 E. Resolution requesting the Pennsylvania DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development) to conduct a study of Police Regionalization possibilities from a countywide perspective.
- 22.05 F. Resolution appointing Thomas W. Gajewski, Sr., to the Task Force on Community Corrections.
- 23.05 G. Resolution re-appointing Brian Engelhardt and Juanita Morales-Kremer as members of the Council on Chemical Abuse Advisory Board for and three-year terms expiring 2/1/08.
- 24.05 H. Resolution approving the Office of Aging Nursing Home Transition Program for the period January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2005.
- 25.05 I. Resolution authorizing 2004 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$81,637 and 2005 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$2,000,000 and 2004 Budget Appropriations in the amount \$609,638 and 2005 Budget Appropriations in the amount \$ (111,625) per listing dated January 21, 2005
- 26.05 J. Resolution authorizing 1/25/05 Human Resource recommendations.
- 27.05 K. Resolution awarding contracts to the following based on a bid numbered ITB #04-12-KL for Medical Supplies.

**Non- Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Scott made a motion to approve the following resolution on the Non-consent agenda. The motion was seconded and all voted yes to approve.

- 28.05 L. Resolution authorizing the County Treasurer to make 2005 ARC Payments to the County Pension Plan.

\*Discussion on Agricultural Preservation funding:

Commissioner Gajewski presented a prepared statement (attached to these minutes)

Commissioner Scott acknowledged Commissioner Gajewski's position regarding the funding cuts but felt that this investment in permanently preserving the farmland saves taxpayers in the long term while it preserves the quality of life.

Commissioner Schwank felt that the County is in a race for time. She indicated that we need to keep farming viable now as farmland is being developed at a rapid rate and State funding dollars may disappear if we don't draw down as many dollars as possible today.

Commissioner Schwank continued:

She described several legislative initiatives being considered at the State Level that may take the funding pressure off of the local tax dollars but for now she supports keeping the funding level as budgeted for 2005.

Commissioner Gajewski defended his position expressing concern for the future lean years the County may be facing and his concern for creating additional county debt.

A long discussion followed regarding the need for some type of tax reform to occur at the State level. Commissioner Scott suggested that tax reform is a misnomer in that it really is an effort to shift the burden from property owners to a more fair approach such as an earned income tax. He stated that the real meaning of tax reform is to lower the cost of government and develop methods to lower the demands for government services.

**Reports**

1. Nelson Long, CPA. presented the Treasurer's report
2. Sandy Graffius, Controller presented the weekly Controller's report to the board.

**Citizen Comment:**

The citizens from the Brandywine Heights School District concerned with the Longswamp Township Zoning amendment were present to request the status of the County's position on the zoning appeal. The citizens presenting comments included Elaine Falcone and Marshall Boyer. Commissioner Schwank indicated that the board will meet in executive session with counsel to review the petition filed by the citizens and determine the best position for the County.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Terry L. Styer, Chief Clerk