

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting**  
**Tuesday, May 17, 2005**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, May 17, 2005 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. PRESENTATIONS/ PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES:**

- A. Commissioner Schwank presented a Proclamation, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners proclaiming Saturday May 21, 2005 as Armed Forces Day – Accepting the Proclamation was Diane P. Price, U.S. Army / U.S. Army Reserve Veteran and Chair of the Berks County Armed Forces Advisory Committee who announced that the Berks County Armed Forces Advisory Committee is holding the 57<sup>th</sup> Armed Forces Day Parade this Saturday, May 21, 2005. The parade which is said to be the oldest Armed Forces Day Parade in the nation, will commence at 10:00 A.M. on Hampden Boulevard in Reading, continue down 13<sup>th</sup> Street ending at City Park. This year's theme is **DUTY, HONOR COUNTRY – OUR VETERANS** and it is the intention of this community to recognize and honor those veterans serving during these tumultuous times in our nation's history.

**III. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:**

**Human Resources Director:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the Human Resource recommendation as per list dated May 17, 2005. Beth Schiepan explained the list of recommendations.

**Purchasing Department**

**Contract Coordinator:**

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per listing dated May 16, 2005. Candace Noll presented the list of contracts.

**IV. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- A. Resolution 167.05 authorizing execution by Judith L. Schwank, Chair, for the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Reading and County of Berks in regard to allocation of funds from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant in the amount of \$21,701.85 to be applied for overtime costs for Berks County Law Enforcement in support of the City of Reading crime fighting initiatives. District Attorney Mark Baldwin presented this project, which he described as a combination of the Law Enforcement Block Grant Fund and the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant. He stated that there is no County match required for these funds. Commissioner Scott made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Gajewski and all voted yes to approve.
- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing bank accounts and banking transactions for the Treasurer's office

**Commissioner Schwank****Commissioner Gajewski**

- A. Adopt Resolution to appoint Lillie Foster to fill an unexpired term till 12/31/05 on the Children and Youth Services Advisory Board.  
**Resolution 163.05 (held from May 12, 2005 meeting.)**
- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing a funding allocation policy for the 2006-2008 for the local Affordable Housing Program. Kathy A. Miller, Community Development Fiscal Officer explained the changes proposed in this plan as a result of the expected reduction in federal funding which is expected to go from \$3.1 million to \$3 million. Commissioner Schwank had several questions regarding this document including whether considerations or incentives have been given to communities involved in joint planning and other cooperative efforts.
- C. Adopt Resolution authorizing execution by Judith L. Schwank, Chair of an application to Penn DOT for Federal Bridge Funds reimbursement for the preliminary engineering project costs for the rehabilitation of the Christman Road Bridge for \$427,500.00
- D. Adopt Resolution authorizing payment of invoices under the following Community Development Disbursement Vouchers:
1. No. 2138-Community Development Block Grant funds - \$52,355.48
  2. No. 1246-Property Rehabilitation Program-\$4,775.00
  3. No. 496-Home Grant Program-\$19,402.00

- E. Adopt Resolution in opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Commissioner Scott expressed reservation on this proposed resolution and suggested that it may not have been North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that was the cause of the nationwide job loss in the 1990s but other economic factors may have affected this economic loss to our Country. He said that having only read this draft resolution today, he would like to hear from economists that have reviews the CAFTA agreement. Commissioner Gajewski indicated his opposition for this Trade Agreement due to its inability to help create a level playing field among competing industries. He suggested that the lack of environmental laws and low wage rates in Mexico allowed the lower pricing of products therefore contributed to the loss of 11,000 jobs in Berks alone (according to the Berks Manufacturing Organization) and in particular, the garment industry.

**Commissioner Scott**

**VI. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

Commissioner Schwank expressed condolences to the family of a young girl who recently became a gunshot victim on the streets of the Reading. She reflected on the number of crime preventions programs and efforts being made but encouraged that parents should know where their children are, where they go and who they "hang out" with. She said "its time for more than spray paint and candles in windows; it's time to ask questions."

Commissioner Scott commended Judy for her sentiments and added that this is a human behavior problem. He said when "behavior gets worse crime increases." We never had enough financial resources as a County to "get ahead of it." He added that in addition to the need for parental involvement, he blamed the mass media for helping to poison the young minds. He then argued for more funding towards police and drug enforcement programs.

Commissioner Gajewski also expressed sympathy to the family of the young victim and her family. He then referred to a meeting he arranged in March, 2004 with Guiliani Associates in New York City and the Commissioners, The Mayor of Reading, Berks County Sheriff, Reading Chief of Police and others met with Bernard Kirek, former Chief of Police in New York City. Commissioner Gajewski said that he had worked for two months to arrange the meeting because he feels Berks County needs a coordinated plan of attack to address the crime problem. He was critical of the Mayor because the day after the meeting, the Mayor publicly criticized the presentation by Commissioner Kirek in the Saturday Reading Eagle as a "sales pitch." Gajewski reiterated his strong belief that a plan of action needs to be developed, even if our form of government is different from that in the five boroughs of New York City. He also noted that the city is a key to the success of such a plan.

**CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

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Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk