

## **Commissioners' Workshop Meeting Tuesday, June 20, 2006**

### ***I. CALL TO ORDER:***

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, June 20, 2006 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 C. Scott in attendance. Also present were County Administrator, William E. Dennis, Solicitor, Alan Miller Esq., and Chief Clerk Terry Styer. A brief discussion among board members resulted in the decision to cancel the meetings of July 4<sup>th</sup> and July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

### ***II. PRESENTATION:***

Julia Novak, Regional Vice President of Management Partners Inc. provided a Power Point presentation of the County of Berks/City of Reading Early Intervention Program (EIP) funded with \$200,000 in grant funds provided through by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program. (a copy of the power point slides will be attached to these minutes.) She commended the County Commissioners and their finance staff for the development of a cash flow financial model that produces accurate and timely data as well as the system of internal controls, which she described as sound and effective and presents the board with a clear understanding of the fiscal future. Several of the reports focused on suggested efficiency improvements to various county departments and programs. She also acknowledged those departments that appear to be operating in the most effective and efficient manner while providing needed services, in particular she pointed to the Sheriff's Central Processing Unit. As a follow up to these specific areas of focus, the report makes several suggestions of intermunicipal cooperation possibilities between the City and County suggested to improve both public entities' efficiency and effectiveness together with specific suggestions regarding improved economic development for the entire county. Commissioner Schwank then acknowledged that the County has begun the implementation of some of the efficiencies outlined in these reports that she looks forward to additional opportunities. Ms. Novak added that the State DCED has encouraged the County to apply for additional funding for the implementation phase of this EIP. The board then thanked and commended Ms. Novak for Management Partners professional evaluation, suggestions and in particular Commissioner Scott complemented what appears to be their obvious understanding of County Government.

**III. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:****Contract Submissions:**

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated June 19, 2006. County Coroner Dennis J. Hess reported that one of the contracts in this list is proposing that the Reading Hospital perform autopsy services for the Berks County Coroner at a flat rate of \$1,500 per autopsy. He explained that this should represent a significant savings to the County despite the fact that the average cost of an autopsy may not change, the transportation costs saved by avoiding the travel time required with the previous arrangement with the Lehigh Valley Hospital should result in substantial savings to the County.

**Human Resource Director:**

- A. Beth Schiepan Director of Human Resources reviewed Human Resource Recommendations list dated June 20, 2006. She also announced that the settlement for "fund reserve" as part of the County's health insurance contract with Blue Cross/Blue Shield was estimated to be \$900,000.00 per year for two years.

**Domestic Relations:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the renewal of the Catholic Charities grant in the amount of \$9,645.33 to implement services to families with custody/visitation issues and a child support order. No county match required, except the agreement by DRO to assist them to facilitate the data collection to measure compliance with court orders by the referred families.

**Office of Aging:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the execution of the Pennsylvania Department Community and Economic Development grant for \$10,000.00 to support Blue Mountain Senior Center, in Hamburg, PA.

**Emergency Management:**

- A. Adopt Resolution adopting the County of Berks Hazardous Material Emergency Response Preparedness Assessment Update For Calendar Year 2005. Brian Gottschall Acting EMA Director presented the update and commended Jim Major for completing this detailed submission.

**Parks/Recreation:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the execution of application to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Department for a grant for the purpose of carrying out the Adaptive Restoration Area project.

**IV. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing execution of a grant application by and between the County of Berks (District Attorney) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for 100% State funding in the amount of \$61,200.00 for the Berks County Forensic Services Improvement Project. Chief Detective Keith Fister presented this grant application noting that no county match was required.

**Commissioner Schwank**

- A. Discuss the formation of a Joint Municipal Authority to serve under the leadership of the Penn St./Penn Avenue Corridor Steering Committee. Jerry Johnson, volunteer with the BEP (Berks Economic Partnership) presented this request to form a study group to determine if the concept of a joint authority to oversee and develop projects such as the Bike Race and Riverfest and other similar corridor events. He suggested that some type of an authority for the Penn Street / Penn Avenue Corridor area could be described as a "Civic Center without a roof." To address some of the concerns expressed by the board regarding potential overlap of other agencies and creating adding additional layers of bureaucracy, Mr. Johnson suggested that the study group would be evaluating the possible consolidation or providing an umbrella to these "like-minded" organizations such as the DID (Downtown Investment District.) Commissioner Scott asked that areas like Hamburg and Boyertown not get forgotten as the focus of these development projects seem to focus primarily on Reading. Commissioner Schwank agreed that they are also dealing with similar problems as with this corridor region, but she reminded the board of the numerous County based programs that provided funding to boroughs such as Hamburg and Boyertown in the past. The Commissioner urged the board to consider this request as a study only. The results of this study would then provide the information to the Commissioners that would determine if an Authority structure with its own possible funding stream is the recommended next step. Mr. Johnson requested that if approved, the board appoint an individual to serve on this study team that could possibly continue to serve as a future Authority member.
- B. Commissioner Schwank announced that MB Investments appealed the Judges decision on the Antietam Lake condemnation. She also announced that Congressman Gerlach sent a letter acknowledging that the County's proposed use of the Naval Marine facility on Kenhorst Blvd. qualifies as public benefit use, which further suggests a better chance for the County to acquire the building at little or no cost.

**Commissioner Gajewski**

- A. Commissioner Gajewski read a letter from the Department of Transportation regarding the status of the Rt. #222 Corridor

**Commissioner Scott**

- A. Resolution reappointing Stephen A. Wheeler, Boyertown, PA to the Berks County Environmental Advisory Council for a two-year term ending 06/11/08.

**V. PRESENTATION CERTIFICATES**

- Commissioner Gajewski presented a Proclamation for 20th anniversary of Berks County Library System to Robert Jones, Chair of Berks County Library Board who thanked the board for their continuing support.
- Commissioner Gajewski presented a Certificate of Recognition to Stephen Hite, PRIDE Youth Programs International Drug Educator of the Year who competed and successfully won top honors in an international competition.

**VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

John Thomas Cooper presented an update of the Schuylkill Valley Metro task force and asked the board to consider more of a leadership role and suggested that BARTA be involved in continuing the talks regarding a rail line to Philadelphia. Mr. Cooper indicated that Norfolk Southern Railroad estimates costs to build the line on their existing tracks at \$310,000,000. He indicated that all federal funds have been cut and all involved will need to seek alternate funding for the project to succeed. He suggested that the Commissioners obtain a copy of the task force final report from Dennis Louwerse Executive Director of BARTA.

**VII. ADJOURN**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk