

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 23, 2007**

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

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 23, 2007 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 W. Gajewski, Sr., and Commissioner Mark C. 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 the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. She then introduced her student shadow, Kate Berman from Wyomissing High School noting that Kate took first place in the Berks County Outstanding Young Woman 2007 Scholarship program and was awarded a \$7,000 cash scholarship. The Pennsylvania's Outstanding Young Woman Program is a non-profit corporation led by volunteers throughout Pennsylvania who represent all sectors of the community including business, civic leadership and education. Together with its local and regional programs across the state, Pennsylvania's Outstanding Young Woman Program seeks to recognize the accomplishments and commitment of our young women and to assist them as they chart their futures. Each year, outstanding high school senior women are selected for special recognition.

***II. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:***

***County Administrator***

- A. William Dennis, County Administrator presented his weekly report (attached)  
Commissioner Scott suggested that the negotiation with the Federal Immigration Customs Enforcement Office (ICE) for office space in the area of the Youth Center used for INS housing may present an opportunity to discuss concerns regarding the practice of illegal immigrant drop off points and ways to aid the police agencies that come in contact with illegal aliens and their families for more efficient way to transfer them into the hands of Federal Authorities. He then noted how impressed he was with the care and education received by the children of these illegal aliens located at the Berks facility while they are being detained prior to deportation. Commissioner Schwank noted that the Nature Trail System planned for the Ag Center is more than a nature trail, she said it will serve as a teaching tool to showcase Best Management Practices in dealing with environmental issues such as storm water management.

- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing Judith L. Schwank, Chair to execute an agreement extension between the County of Berks and Security Guards Inc. of Wyomissing, PA for the provision of trained and supervised security guards at selected County Facilities for a one year term continuing from February 28, 2007 to February 28, 2008. Commissioner Gajewski asked that a proposed solution or at least discussions begin with the courts and SGI (Security Guards Inc) on the issue of cell phone restrictions in the Courtrooms before the SGI contract is signed. The Commissioner also suggested dropping the word "Welfare" from the address of the county facilities located on County "Welfare" Road.

**Ag Land Preservation**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing Judith L. Schwank, Commissioner, Chair, and Sandy Graffius, County Controller, to execute certification of appropriation funding for 2007 in the amount of \$8,174,327.00 for the purchase of Agricultural Easements under Act 43 –the Agricultural Area Security Law, as amended. The total funding amount requested is comprised of \$8 million from the line of credit approved on December 20, 2005 by the Commissioners, as well as the interest collected from the Clean and Green Rollback Tax Penalties and donations to the ACE Program in 2006.

Line of Credit Funding:	\$8,000,000.00
Interest Collected from 2006 Clean and Green Rollback Tax Penalties:	\$ 172,084.00
Aglan Restricted: Donations and Plate Sales:	\$ 2,243.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 8,174,328.00</b>

In response to the question of farmland preservation ranking, Ms. Hildebrand stated that Berks County is #1 in Pennsylvania and the Nation if you only count the acres preserved under the State and County easement programs noting 406 farms totaling 46,252 acres preserved to date. She explained that if you count all preservation efforts including the various private "Conservancy" efforts and other methods of preservation that may not be permanent such as the transfer of development rights then Berks is 4<sup>th</sup> in the Nation after Montgomery County Maryland, Lancaster and Chester Counties in Pennsylvania. She also thanked the board of Commissioners and credited their efforts and support towards agricultural preservation noting that they are being seen as role models for other counties interested in initiating similar Agriculture preservation programs. Commissioner Schwank commended Ms. Hildebrand for the sensitivity she has shown in dealing with area farmers and providing assistance to what is essentially estate planning for many county families. Commissioner Scott suggested a follow up study or white paper be considered that would provide current statistics regarding the impact various land uses impact on the cost of municipal government and school districts.

**Ag Land Preservation continued:**

Commissioner Gajewski asked if there was an optimal number of acres that should be preserved in the County. Ms. Hildebrand responded by noting the County's Comprehensive plan has identified 200,000 acres but noted that based on a County soils map, 167,000 acres is the realistic goal.

**Budget Department:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2006 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$63,864.00, 2007 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$27,706.00, 2006 Appropriations in the amount of \$13,919.00, and 2007 Appropriations in the amount \$3,053.00 per listing dated January 19, 2007. Robert Patrizio presented the budget report.
- B. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated January 22, 2007.

**Community Development**

- A. Ordinance No 1 of 2007 which will create a TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) Plan for the Borough of West Reading and the Wyomissing District has been advertised for adoption for Thursday January 25.

**Office of Aging**

- A. Adopt Resolution Authorizing the execution of grant amendments to the PDA Waiver program, Tobacco /Bridge Program and Senior Community Services Employment program updating Appendix F-1 representing changes to the Commonwealth travel rates.

**III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- A. Adopt Resolution ratifying and confirming the 2/21/06 transfer of funds from the General Fund to the Retirement Fund in the amount of \$55,968.02 for the reimbursement of the Retirement Fund's transactional fees and expenses and including a \$1,000.00 Benefit contribution to the Retirement Fund.
- B. Adopt Resolution for the Treasurer's authorization for the January and the remaining 2007 ARC payments.
- C. Adopt Resolution authorizing the County of Berks to execute the Family Center/Fatherhood Renewal Application 2007/2008. Judith Blimline, Director of BCAP attended the meeting to update the board on the number of area children and families served by these and other similar programs funds.

**Commissioner Schwank**

- A. Commissioner Schwank remarked that she has received several calls for and questions from residents and township officials regarding the Bern Station Bridge in Tilden Township. Bill Dennis, and Bill Westcott, County Engineer, indicated that due to Penn Dot design regulations and requirements, the project will is not slated for funding until 2010.

**Commissioner Gajewski**

- A. Commissioner Gajewski inquired of Bill Westcott as to the timeline for the Buttonwood Street Bridge. Bill indicated that there is some patch work to be done in the spring, with the major design completion scheduled for 2008.
- B. Commissioner Gajewski thanked the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) for pushing forward to the next steps of work on the intersection of Routes 222 and Park Road in Muhlenberg Township.

**Commissioner Scott**

- A. Commissioner Scott commented on the Route 222 Corridor Improvement Project, in particular the intersection of Routes 222 and 662. Large trucks park on the shoulder of the road at Sheetz and depress the material making it dangerous for the horses and buggies in the area to transgress the area. Indication from PennDot is that it will be repaired soon.

**IV. RESOLUTIONS HELD FROM PREVIOUS WEEK:**

- 26.07 Resolution nominating Brian Boyer as a Public Director to the Berks County Conservation District, replacing John G. Smith, who resigned. Mr. Boyer's term will end 12/31/2007.

**V. PROCLAMATIONS**

- A. Commissioner Gajewski presented a Certificate of Recognition for Phil (Vagnoni) Long.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk

To: County Commissioners  
From: County Administrator  
Subject: Weekly Report  
Date: 1/23/07

The following summarizes some of my activities of the week and advises of future considerations:

### **Supervisory Academy**

HR along with a number of key personnel have been working on the development of a Supervisory Academy. The Academy is targeted for mid-level supervisors and is designed to enhance supervisory skills which are critical to the performance of management positions. The Academy will focus on not only technical skills but also personal, interpersonal and administrative skills.

Participants will meet each Friday for a full day over a five (5) week period, for a total of forty (40) hours of training. The Academy will be offered each quarter. Session 1 begins on March 9, 2007 and concludes on April 13, 2007.

A introductory meeting with department heads to discuss processes in detail will be held on Wednesday 11:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Board Room. The Commissioners are invited to attend if their schedule permits.

### **Youth Center - ICE**

The Federal Immigration Customs Enforcement Office (ICE) has made a request for office space in the area of the Youth Center used for INS housing. We have advised ICE that to accommodate that request would require the relocation of one housing unit into an unused portion of the Old Heim Main Building. ICE has requested that if we do that could we accommodate 40 additional beds.

Any change to the current operation and structure will incur Construction/renovation costs. These costs will have to be included in the square foot charge to ICE because that agency does not provide capital funding. The County would charge a per square foot charge for the use of this space. These requests provide the opportunity to negotiate current and additional agreements with ICE. These include per square foot housing rate, per square foot office rate, guaranteed occupancy, and annual adjustments. Youth Center staff is working with the Budget Office and Facilities to develop cost estimates, funding options and a projected business plan for this operation. Once completed, a recommendation will be provided to the Commissioners.

### **Reserve Center**

Garry Gontz from the Federal Office of Economic Adjustment advises that he has obtained permission of inspect the reserve center and is currently working with navy/marine corps staff to schedule a date and time for this inspection. Those who have submitted a Notice of Interest will be invited to attend.

**Ag Center – Proposed Interpretive Trail**

I have attached a concept drawing of the proposed Ag Center Interpretive Trail developed by the Conservation District. The funding for this project comes from grants received by the Conservation District. This project is still in the development stage, the Conservation District is currently looking for a consultant/architect to do preliminary design. Some points regarding this project include:

- The County has included in this project the replacement of the sidewalk outside the entrance to the Ag Center. This has been included in the 07 Capital Budget.
- The design better defines the parking area in the northeast corner (that comes out onto the County road). It also establishes a better defined drainage area.
- This design does not compromise and intended use for Community Corrections parking and in fact increase available parking