

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, 2007

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 20, 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, and 1st Assistant Solicitor Christine Sadler Esq. Chief Clerk Terry Styer did not attend the meeting.

Commissioner Schwank opened the meeting with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:

County Administrator

Bill Dennis asked Brian Gottschall, Deputy Director of Berks County Emergency Management, to give a report on last week's I-78 storm related disaster. Brian gave high praise to all of the county agencies who helped, especially the Sheriff's office for deputies with 4 wheel drive vehicles that were used to assist getting workers to the highway, and to Hamburg Emergency Services and the Berks County Red Cross who had the emergency shelter at Hamburg Middle School open and ready to go within one hour of notification. He also noted that the National Guard battalion sent to help them were dispatched to Iraq yesterday.

Commissioner Gajewski asked that the Commissioners be notified at the same time the County Administrator is notified in the future, so that they can be aware of the problems and assist as necessary.

Commissioner Scott asked what, in hindsight, would Brian and his team have done differently. He said that he has several ideas that will be discussed later and that have been included in his report to PEMA. His biggest concern was the late notice. He was only informed at 4:30 PM Wednesday.

Commissioner Gajewski noted that the commissioners each received correspondence from the Governor's office asking for suggestions to alleviate future problems. The Commissioner is sending a letter recommending a special radio frequency to alert all of the area emergency staffs, with the first request coming from the PA State Police (PSP).

Commissioner Schwank noted what seemed to be a lack of communication between the three counties concerned, as well as between the Reading and Hamburg barracks of the PSP. It also seemed that the PSP did not follow federal emergency guidelines. She noted that she is glad that the Governor is taking responsibility and is issuing the investigation.

Commissioner Gajewski asked about loss of life. Brian stated that there were no fatalities and no injuries to either responders or passengers. There were three transports for health conditions.

Commissioner Schwank commended Brian for his excellent report and for his department's effort over four days of difficulty. She also commended Craig Breneiser and the 911 staff who fielded a 67% higher call volume over that time.

Budget Department:

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated February 16, 2007. Candy Noll, Contract Coordinator presented the list of contracts.

Human Resource Director:

- A. Human Resource Recommendations per list dated February 16, 2007.

Human Service Grants Coordinator:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the execution of the Assurance of Compliance Certificate with respect to the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP), and further authorizing Mary Henry-Moss, Human Service Grants Coordinator, the ability to distribute \$6,000 of HAP Funds to Easy Does It, Inc. for their Bridge Housing program in the Reading facility for the fiscal year 2006/2007.

IV. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the exoneration of local Tax Collectors for unpaid 2006 Berks County Property Taxes in the total amount of \$3,242,192.50 representing 6761 unpaid accounts per listing dated February 15, 2007 and forward to Tax Claim Bureau for collection of same.

Commissioner Schwank

- A. Commissioner Schwank reported that she forwarded a letter from the Commissioners to Kevin Casey, Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation, Department of Public Welfare regarding operations of group homes, requesting an investigation into the operations of Supportive Concepts for Families, and the placement of out of county individuals into Berks County group homes.

Commissioner Gajewski

- A. Adopt Resolution to make application for a Federal earmark for \$2 million for ShotSpotter for 2008. Commissioner Gajewski asked for this resolution to be adopted at this meeting as the application is due by the end of this week.

Commissioner Scott questioned whether this earmark is the only way to access funds for this project. Commissioner Gajewski commented that DCED and Homeland Security are other options and that he is working on those options as well, and that whenever there is any possibility of a grant, he will bring complete information packages to the meeting. When questioned about cost, he noted that a portable system costs around \$250,000, and that fixed systems are variable. Costs include all installations. Commissioner Scott voiced his concern that there has been no contact with the mayor or police chief of Reading since they would be most affected by this system. Commissioner Schwank also voiced her concern at the lack of response from the city. She is concerned about the cost of deploying resources to implement it and that there is not enough information at this time. She asked if the decision could be delayed. Commissioner Gajewski noted that the application must be submitted this week and **made a motion to adopt the above resolution**. Commissioner Scott said that he must join with Commissioner Schwank that there is not enough information and that he objects to earmarks and **would not second the motion**. Commissioner Gajewski stated that he will notify the county police departments that the county is not interested in moving forward at this time.

Commissioner Scott

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally O'Reilly, Assistant to Chief Clerk