

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, March 27, 2007**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 27, 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 Vice Chair Thomas W. Gajewski, Sr. called the meeting to order with 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 was attending a County Commissioners Association of PA (CCAP) Conference in Harrisburg.

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

II. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS/REQUESTS:

County Administrator

- A. Weekly Report attached.

Budget Department:

- A. Motion authorizing Judith L. Schwank, as Chairman of the Board, to execute Contract Agreements/Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated March 26, 2007. Kelly Laubauch, Purchasing Manager, presented the list of contracts.

Human Resource Director:

- A. Human Resource Recommendations per list dated March 27, 2007

Human Services

- A. Adopt Day Care Plan agreement authorizing execution of a grant agreement between the County of Berks (Berks County Intermediate Unit) and the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, regarding childcare services in the amount of \$16,897,645.00 for fiscal year July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. Dr. Arlene Otis attended the meeting to answer any questions.

III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Gajewski

Announced Household Hazardous Waste Collection at Exeter Township Building on Saturday, April 14, 2007 from 8 AM to 2 PM.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:09 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk

To: County Commissioners
From: County Administrator
Subject: Weekly Report
Date: 3/28/07

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

Reminders

NACo County Government Week April 23rd-April 27th
Bring Your Daughter/Son to Work Day April 26th

Chamber – Diversity Discussion

The Chamber is bringing in a well-known diversity speaker, Tom Nesby, (some of his clients include Bank of America, Nordstrom, Met-Ed, U.S. Postal Service, Seattle Chamber of Commerce, etc.) to conduct a seminar on diversity. Mr. Nesby has asked the Chamber to invite individuals from various sectors and organizations to “brainstorm” with Mr. Nesby so that he can customize the workshop to fit the needs of Greater Reading businesses. The Chamber has asked Beth and me to attend to discuss our organization. The meeting is set for March 29th.

Community Pandemic Planning

Brian Gottschall, Jeff Weidner and I met with representatives from the PA Department of Health to discuss plans for the initial outreach to community organizations regarding planning for a pandemic event. A flu pandemic occurs when a new flu virus against which the human population has no immunity appears. This results in several, simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of infections and deaths. The intent of the outreach is to advise and educate organizations on pandemic causes and outcomes, and how to best manage an outbreak. Such an event will have a devastating effect on the workforce productivity and will seriously hinder those organizations who provide public services.

The World Health Organization (WHO) asserts that once a virus allows for efficient human-to-human transmission, a pandemic can occur. Because of high global mobility and interconnection, illness could spread quickly and, if the virus has a high fatality rate, threaten millions of lives around the world.

At present most experts argue that the question is not if another flu pandemic will occur but when. But while some scientists worry that the current situation indicates a looming pandemic, others doubt that there is any immediate danger. That of course begs the question, how real and should we really start to prepare. Regardless of whether a pandemic occurs in the next year or the next 50 years, the consensus among public health officials is that we should prepare ourselves for this eventuality now. To cite one scenario, it seems likely that many schools would close, and even if they did not, attendance would fall dramatically as parents kept their children at home. In either event, large-scale school closings would lead to a spike in workplace absences because parents would stay home to care for their children even if they were not sick. The impact on businesses of all kinds due to employee absenteeism would be dramatic.