

Commissioners' Board Meeting May 31, 2007

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, May 31, 2007, at 10:30 A.M. in the Board meeting room on the thirteenth floor 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 was 1st Assistant Solicitor Christine Sadler, Chief Clerk Terry L. Styer, and County Administrator William E. Dennis did not attend the meeting as they were attending the County Commissioners of PA (CCAP) Administrative Conference. County Solicitor Alan Miller, Esq. also did not attend the meeting.

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

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Scott made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Gajewski to approve the May 24, 2007 Commissioners meeting minutes, all voted yes to approve.

Consent Agenda Items

- I. A motion was made by Commissioner Gajewski, seconded by Commissioner Scott and all voted unanimously to approve the items listed below:
 - 151.07 A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2007 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$9,200.
 - 152.07 B. Resolution to award a contract to operate **Business Development Services** in partnership with the Pennsylvania CareerLink ~ Berks County to the following service provider: **Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)**, 15300 Commerce Drive North, Suite 200, Dearborn, Michigan The amount of the proposed contract budget for the period July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008 is \$292,561. Program operations are scheduled to begin on July 1, 2007.
 - 153.07 C. Human Resource Recommendations per list dated May 29, 2007.
 - 154.07 D. Resolution authorizing tax forgiveness of the following parcels, including all penalties and interest:
 1. .017 acres, 614 S. 15 1/2 Street, Reading (16-5316-39-37-4058) 2006 County taxes. \$41.70
 2. .40 acres, 637 S. 15 1/2 Street, Reading (16-5316-39-36-4835) 2006 County taxes. \$97.87

- 155.07 E. Resolution authorizing the execution of an Addendum A-3 to Agreement CA-2498-05 Tetrahedron Consultants, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$7,810 to provide consulting services for the proposed expansion of the Western Berks Sanitary Landfill, Cumru Township, Berks County.
- 156.07 G. Resolution to appoint Michael Rivera of Bern Township, to the Council on Chemical Abuse Advisory Board to replace David C. Naugle who recently resigned. 3 year term ends 2/1/2010.
2. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per listing dated May 24, 2007.

Reports

1. County Treasurer – Commissioner Schwank read report for Nelson Long, CPA.
2. County Controller – Sandy Graffius, Controller, read report.

Miscellaneous

Commissioner Gajewski mentioned a letter received from Help America Vote Act (HAVA) regarding a \$9,000 payment for improving voter training. The check and letter have been forwarded to Election Services.

Commissioner Gajewski also reported that the proposal from Chris Hartman regarding evaluation of the Lehigh Cement quarry expansion was received. Total of this project is not to exceed \$3,000 and the evaluation should be reported approximately 3 days after the resolution is approved. The Commissioner asked for it to be listed for a vote at the Tuesday, June 5 meeting.

Commissioner Scott noted an article published in this week's Reading Eagle entitled *Private Guards Weak Link to Security*. He said that security guards are a professional service linked to the evaluation of a building and its vulnerabilities. A former controller was in favor of bidding out the services at the end of each contract, whereas the commissioner prefers one on one negotiation with the existing firm, and noted that a newly hired firm would have a learning curve allowing some vulnerability until they have become familiar with the buildings. Commissioner Schwank agreed in part, noting that the importance is in how the service is managed and feels that we have done a good job of that to date.

Citizen Comment/Business from the Floor

Kevin Horneman, a former landowner in Rockland Township, now a resident of Reading, commended the County on Ag Land Preservation to date and asked the Commissioners to comment on their definition of the Ag Coordinator position, and when the person will be hired. He feels that the county needs to get more involved in the Ag business—coordinating business, (i.e.: Ag business park) volunteers and state organizations with county services.

Commissioner Schwank noted that June 15th is the deadline for the commissioners to review the resumes received to date. She feels that the Ag coordinator will be the liaison between the agricultural community and the business community.

Commissioner Gajewski feels that marketing is an important aspect; new ideas can be developed to aid in sales of products.

Commissioner Scott mentioned the conference on innovative farming techniques that he attended earlier in the month. He noted a farmer from Northern Chester County who was able to increase dollars per head by decreasing her herd and changing to cheese production. He also noted that marketing is the appropriate emphasis—while farmland has decreased consumers have increased. There are more high-end consumers coming in from Northern New Jersey and King of Prussia who are willing to buy more specialized products. The Ag Coordinator could also provide assistance in obtaining technical information for niche product production. He would like to see the family farmer preserved by both farmland preservation and crafty marketing.

Mr. Horneman replied that infrastructure is important; we should create jobs in an “Ag Business Park” to help people who are already here and in need of employment. He suggested that the county should be looking into a bond issue for major help to keep existing agricultural industry here. He also feels that if the landowners can see what the County is doing to help, it will give them confidence that they can make a living here. Commissioner Gajewski noted that Sun Rich Foods will have the types of jobs mentioned above when they open here.

Commissioner Schwank noted that the global market has not yet been explored as far as local food products for export.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:12 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally O'Reilly, Assistant to the Chief Clerk