

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, February 5, 2008**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 5, 2008, 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 Mark C. Scott called the meeting to order with Commissioner Christian Leinbach, and Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt in attendance. Also present were County Administrator, William E. Dennis, Solicitor Alan Miller Esq., and Chief Clerk Terry Styer.

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

II. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:

9-1-1 Communications:

- A. Adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of an agreement (subject to final review by the County Solicitor) between the County of Berks and T-Mobile USA, Inc. to vacate radio spectrum licensed to the County in return for payment from T-Mobile for the design and implementation of a replacement point-to-point microwave radio system for the County of Berks Radio System. 9-1-1 Communications Director Craig Breneiser explained that T-Mobile's plans will enable the County to upgrade the 20 year old microwave radio system with "state-of-the-art" equipment that will also coordinate with the move of the 9-1-1 center as well.

Budget Department:

- A. Adopt a resolution authorizing 2007 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$689,218, and 2008 Appropriations in the amount of \$30,000 per listing dated February 1, 2008. Bob Patrizio, Budget Director presented the budget report.

Children and Youth Services

- A. Adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of an agreement between the Berks County Children and Youth Services and the Berks County Court of Common Pleas for the provision of court-appointed counsel to indigent parents. The terms of the agreement are from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. Tracy Barlet, Deputy Court Administrator and George Kovarie, Director of Berks Children and Youth Services explained that this agreement will allow the county to apply for 50% funding match for this required service which has been budgeted for approx. \$70,000 per year.

Children and Youth Services (con't)

- B. Adopt a resolution authorizing Mark C. Scott as Chairman of the Board, to execute a three (3) yr. grant agreement for Time Limited Family Reunification Funds providing \$215,000 per year beginning FY 2008 (July 1). Barbara Jakubek, Director of Placement from Children and Youth explained that this is a continuing program for intensive family reunification efforts; she indicated that there is no County match for these state funds and that due to new state funding requirements this will be the first year the Children and Youth will be the applicant for this existing program.

Community Development:

- A. Ken Pick, Community Development Director discussed the proposed Hamburg Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and requested the board to appoint a County representative to serve on the Hamburg TIF Committee. Ken then explained that Hamburg Borough adopted their Second Street redevelopment area program in 2007 with the intent to increase commercial development in what has been designated as a blighted area and to improve traffic congestion along the Route 61 corridor and Front Street in downtown Hamburg; He said the plan includes road and intersection improvements and the extension of Grand Street from South Front Street to Route 61. The Commercial/Industrial Development of Phase one is projected to create \$7 million in increased assessed property value with an estimated \$253,577 in new real estate taxes of which 50% is anticipated to be diverted to pay the expected debt service for the \$1.5 million loan for the Phase II of the Grand Street Extension project. Commissioner Leinbach expressed some reservations about TIF's generally and cited examples where the proposed increase in property value didn't measure up to expectations; he then added that when the municipalities involved are serving as the bond guarantor, they are on the hook if the property taxes generated do not cover the debt service of the project. He cited Cabella's as an example of where the projected revenue fell below what was anticipated even though in that example it was Cabella's that will be required to provide the additional revenue for the debt service not Tilden Township. Commissioner Barnhardt added that the critical piece of these TIF transactions is that there must be complete, long term "buy-in" with the municipalities involved along with the County and School District.

III. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

County Administrator Bill Dennis presented his monthly report which is attached to these minutes.

IV. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS

- A. The Commissioners discussed the possibility of amending a grant agreement with the Office of Budget, Commonwealth of PA to allow the funds that were previously committed to the RiverPlace Amphitheater project to be committed towards the funding of the Reading Area Community College (RACC) Bridge rehabilitation. Following a discussion with Robert Behling, executive Director of RiverPlace Development Corp. and Ken Pick, Community Development Director regarding many aspects of this project including the concept of using the "functional value" of the bridge as the County Match in the grant application with the Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program (RACP); Commissioner Leinbach made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt and approved by all to send a letter to the Governor requesting this grant amendment.
- B. The allocation request from Berks Economic Partnership (BEP) was discussed by the Commissioners and Budget Director Patrizio who explained that last year's award of funds to the BEP was conditioned on a required private sector match and having met that commitment, it was agreed that the county would release \$175,000 to the BEP.
- C. Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of an agreement for the review of the Cabot Supermetals Air Quality Plantwide Applicability Limit (PAL) Permit, as proposed on Liberty proposal No. P080026. Amount not to exceed was \$4,600. Commissioner Scott discussed the proposal by Liberty Environmental and suggested that the county move forward on this review. Commissioner Leinbach reported that he had a conversation with Timothy Knapp, Environmental Manager of Cabot, who informed him that this application proposes to actually reduce Cabot's permitted emissions levels. It was decided to gather additional information to determine the potential impact of this permit application before proceeding with an environmental consultant.

Commissioner Leinbach

- A. Commissioner Leinbach discussed the process by which Commissioners appoint and re-appoint members of boards and authorities suggesting that attendance records should be a primary consideration for those considering reappointments. He stated further that if the bylaws of the organization have an attendance requirement then the Commissioners reappointment process should never bypass that requirement. Both Commissioners Scott and Barnhardt agreed with this position.

- B. Commissioner Leinbach then expressed concern with the County's Information Systems Department and hoped that the management changes proposed for the future will enable good staff to obtain additional training. He also expressed strong feelings toward the change from the County's Lotus Notes (E-mail) program to another more user friendly and intuitive program such as MS Outlook. Interim I.S. Director Bob Hardner was in attendance and agreed that many changes are necessary and that the County's entire IT platform needs to be evaluated. The Commissioners agreed that they will be looking forward to hearing a menu of ideas regarding the County's Information Technology platform from the potential IS Director Candidates in the near future.
- C. Commissioner Leinbach expressed his desire for the County to participate in a Green Initiative and will provide more information on this program in the future.

Commissioner Barnhardt

- A. Commissioner Barnhardt reported on the County Police services study and said that to add the City of Reading to the RFP as presented by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) would total \$96,984. He also reported that he has received information from Ron Stern of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) that a grant program with the Shared Municipal Services Grant program will enable the county to apply for a 50% match. He cautioned that the application should be made and the grant awarded prior to the approval of this PERF Proposal. He asked the Commissioners to defer any decisions on this proposal until the middle of April. Commissioner Scott made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Leinbach to apply for these funds. Both Commissioners commended Commissioner Barnhardt for his initiative in seeking out these funds.
- B. Commissioner Barnhardt suggested that a Commissioner has been requested to serve on the 4H Development Board.

Commissioner Scott

- A. Adopt a resolution reappointing John T. Connelly to a 5 year term on the Berks County Municipal Authority, ending 1/2/2013.
- B. Commissioner Scott discussed the county's two 457B Deferred Compensation plans which are available to all County employees and suggested that the county should be obtaining proposals from other vendors willing to reduce the fees therefore providing policy holders (employees) with a better rate of return on their investments. Commissioners Leinbach and Barnhardt agreed with this proposal

V. *CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR*

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk