

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, April 22, 2008**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 21, 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:

Budget Department:

- A. Motion authorizing Mark C. Scott as Chairman of the Board, to execute Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated April 21, 2008. Kathy Miller, of Community Development, attended to answer any questions regarding the Community Development contracts.

Human Resource Director:

- A. Beth Schiepan Human Resources Director presented the list of Human Resource Recommendations per list dated April 22, 2008.

Office of Aging

- A. Adopt a resolution approving Berks County Office of Aging four-year plan for Aging services for the period July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2012.

III. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Administrator Dennis presented his monthly report (attached)

IV. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Crystal Seitz, President of the Greater Reading Convention and Visitor's Bureau requested consideration for expanding the area of the County covered by the Hotel Tax to include all of the County and currently, eight additional hotels. She also requested 100% allocation of the additional taxes (estimated to be \$300,000 annually) be provided to Visitor's Bureau in addition to the revenue currently received from hotels within the 15 mile city radius.

Ms. Seitz provided the Commissioners with information including a list of hotels currently paying hotel tax as well as those that fall outside of the current boundary. In addition she provided a statewide report showing percentage of tax levied and a disbursement plan for all the counties in PA that levy a hotel tax. She said that Berks County is the only county that levies a tax based on a 15 mile radius from the City of Reading rather than the entire County. She explained that the additional funds could be used in part to advertise more of the festivals run by smaller communities, such as Hamburg's Hamburger Festival and Lyons' Fiddle Fest.

Commissioner Scott agreed with the expansion and possible distribution to the bureau since the hotels in the north would receive greater benefit from the Visitor's Bureau's additional marketing rather than the likelihood of any additional customers due to the events held at the Sovereign Center (the Convention Center Authority collects 80% of the hotel tax revenue to pay the bond debt for the construction of the Sovereign Center.)

Commissioner Barnhardt suggested that some of the new money may be held back to pay for audits to make sure all hotels are paying the tax that they're collecting.

Commissioner Christian Y. Leinbach announced that a public hearing on the proposal has been slated May 8* at 2 p.m. in the Commissioners boardroom.
* note for the record that this meeting has since been changed to 3 PM on May 15, 2008

Commissioner Leinbach

- A. Lisa Kneer announced the Berks Unity Solution Festival, May 3rd, 2008, 11:00am-4:30pm. Location: City Park: Constitution Way and Hill Rd., Reading, PA. She indicated that approximately 80 – 90 Social Service agencies will be represented and invited the Commissioners to attend. For additional information the web site address is:
www.berksunitysolution.org
- B. Adopt a resolution to send a letter of support from the Board of Commissioners to the delegation from Berks County in the Senate and House for Senate Bill No. 9 requiring identification of lawful presence in the United States as a prerequisite for the receipt of public benefits.

Commissioner Barnhardt

- A. Commissioner Barnhardt praised President Bush for signing the Second Chance Act (H.R.1593) which authorizes \$165 million per year in federal grants to local governments. The Commissioner noted that those funds would be appropriate for the Berks County Re-entry program.
- B. Commissioner Barnhardt commended the Reading Eagle for reporting on the \$480,000 anonymous donation received by the Wyomissing School Board describing the lack of public discussion with that transaction, "less than above board."

Commissioner Scott

- A. Bill Westcott, County Engineer, informed the Commissioners of the status of the ownership and maintenance of the approximate 171 street lights located on the Rte. 422 by pass. He was instructed to contact Penn Dot to see if they could absorb the repair and maintenance responsibility for these lights along with the others they already maintain.

V. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk