

**Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, June 3, 2008**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, June 3, 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 Kevin Barnhardt and Commissioner Christian Leinbach 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. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2008 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$37,441 per listing dated May 30, 2008.
- B. 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 June 2, 2008.

Emergency Management:

- A. Adopt resolution authorizing the execution of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Radiation Emergency Response Fund Grant Application and Agreement in the amount of \$31,092.00, for the period of July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

Human Resource Director:

- A. Human Resource Recommendations per list dated June 3, 2008.

III. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

County Administrator Bill Dennis presented his weekly report (attached)

IV. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS

- A. Adopt a resolution appointing Jeff Schatz, Robesonia, PA to a 5 year term, expiring 1/1/2011 on the Reading Regional Airport Authority, replacing Ike Matza.

Commissioner Leinbach

- A. Kathy Grim, Park Ranger, Blue Marsh Lake, briefly discussed the Water Safety Festival at Blue Marsh Lake.

Commissioner Barnhardt

- A. Adopt a resolution reappointing Robert W. Jones, Wyomissing, to a 3 year term, expiring 6/1/2011, on the Berks County Public Libraries Board.
- B. Adopt a resolution reappointing Ruth M. Perkins, Wyomissing, to a 3 year term, expiring 6/1/2011, on the Berks County Public Libraries Board.
- C. Commissioner Barnhardt said he spent a day at the Prison to observe the operation from the start of roll call all the way through some very difficult inmate treatment sessions and was very impressed with the dedication and professionalism shown by the Prison Staff. He wanted to express appreciation to the following staff members for their assistance: Warden Wagner, Deputy Warden Quigley; Sgt. Ringler, Sgt. Franklin, Sgt Deiterich, C.O.s Moore, Kope, Dougherty, Spatz, Springer, Treatment Supervisor Christa Parish and APO Mike Brown.
- D. The Commissioner said he wanted to discuss the proposed Hay Creek Trail and point out that no final decision has been made on the project to date. He also wanted to express appreciation for the citizen's interest both pro and con, most of which he said was provided in a professional manner, although some messages have had a threatening tone. He said he was elected to make the right decision and sometimes they are tough decisions. To that end he said he has performed an exhaustive amount of research on this project and continues to meet with citizens to discuss their concerns. He said that he wanted to make an attempt to dispel some of the misinformation in newspaper on radio and television about this project and pointed to the fact that previous boards of Commissioners have indicated the need for the trail and other recreation amenities after they were identified through the very public process of developing a county comprehensive plan known as Vision 20/20 as well as a County Park and Recreation peer review report. He then went on to correct some specific comments in an advertisement by the Grass Roots Group "People for Pennsylvania's Future" that he described as a distortion of the facts, pointing specifically to the fact that 10 to 12 feet has been the proposed width for the trail's cartway, the 66 foot wide easement was the original width of the railroad right of way and in some areas may be needed for maintenance or storm water controls for the trail.

Commissioner Barnhardt continued:

He said that the trail would cross rural streets but no consideration has ever been made to "take" ownership of those roads. He said he walked the entire length of the proposed trail and saw no area that crossed through any property owner's "back yard." As for the cost, he reported that the estimated construction is proposed at \$2 million with \$1 million funded by a state grant and the other million has been set aside from the County's \$12 million Open Space Bond fund. The proposed annual maintenance budget is \$80,000 with an additional \$22,000 for the purpose of two additional Part Time Park Rangers.

- E. The Commissioner then reported on a recent meeting he attended with the Berks County Pandemic Advisory Council who have created a very informative web site – www.flutoolbox.com
- F. Commissioner Barnhardt said he responded to the Chair of the Berks EAC regarding the change in the applications review process and the future direction of the Berks Environmental Advisory Council by offering a suggestion that the organization could focus on more outreach to municipalities (encourage creation of new EAC's); the development of programs and cooperation with existing EAC's to work on common problems together, i.e. sludge, recycling, air monitoring and environmental legislation.

Commissioner Scott

- 157.08 A. Resolution authorizing Mark C Scott Esq. Chair to sign a Subordination Agreement between the County of Berks and the owners of a property in Birdsboro PA to allow the County's lien on the property to be listed as second or subordinate to the mortgage in order for the current property owners to refinance their existing mortgage. Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to approve this resolution. Commissioner Leinbach seconded the motion and all agreed.

Commissioner Scott reported that he has reviewed new information regarding some potential issues surrounding the property title to the rail bed of the proposed Hay Creek Trail. He suggested that approximately half of the former railroad bed may still be owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad Company and that they are still paying taxes on those parcels. He referred to a section of the County code that requires a railroad company's approval to operate a former rail bed as a trail. He said that his preference for preservation of rail travel will always override his desire for a trail. He then focused on the property proposed for development in New Morgan Borough and the fact with the access to highways and rail service it could make this site the most viable economic development site in Pennsylvania.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:18 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk