

## **Commissioners' Workshop Meeting Tuesday, July 29, 2008**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, July 29, 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. PRESENTATION:**

PA Representative David Kessler presented a check for \$200,000 to Vicki Kintzer, Vice-Chair of the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. These grant funds are from The Economic Advancement Program of the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. Representative Kessler also discussed recent legislation he introduced that would provide \$500,000 annually to farmers who wish to convert from conventional farming methods to organic farming. He explained that the time needed to build up the nutrients for this conversion is usually two years when the crop production yield may drop and these funds are designed to encourage organic farming by assisting farmers during that transition period

Bob Hopkins - West Nile Virus Program Coordinator, Berks County Conservation District, presented information on the 2009 Gypsy Moth spray program. He noted that the deadline to apply for 2009 spraying is August 15, 2008. Details and requirements are available on the Conservation District website—[www.co.berks.pa.us/conservation](http://www.co.berks.pa.us/conservation).

### **III. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:**

#### **Budget Department:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2008 Appropriations in the amount **(\$108,050)** per listing dated July 25, 2008. Budget Director Bob Patrizio presented the report.
- 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 July 28, 2008. Candace Noll, Sr. Contract Coordinator presented the list of contracts.

**Engineer**

- A. Adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of an \$840,562 grant agreement between the County of Berks and the PA Department of Environmental Protection for the Antietam Lake Dam Repair Project. Bill Westcott, PE, attended the meeting to discuss the details.

**Human Resources**

- A. Human Resource Recommendations per list dated July 29, 2008. Assistant HR Director Jennifer Biehn and District Attorney John Adams discussed the recommendation.

**Juvenile Probation:**

- A. Adopt a resolution to approve application for Grant-In-Aid funds from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission for fiscal year 2008-2009. The grant amount is \$371,229. JPO Director Robert Williams attended the meeting to present the application.

**IV. REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

County Administrator Bill Dennis presented his weekly report (attached.)

**V. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- A. Adopt a resolution to reappoint Barry Rohrbach and Glenn Yeager, both from Reading, to an additional five (5) year term, which will expire on 12/31/12, on the Berks County Redevelopment Authority.
- B. Resolution authorizing the termination of the 1998 CMS Swap agreement; the 1998 Swaption agreement and the 2002 variable-to-fixed Swap agreement.

**Commissioner Leinbach**

- A. Commissioner Leinbach gave a review of the Tax Forum held in conjunction with Penn State Cooperative Extension. He noted that 73 people were in attendance and comments are being compiled and will be posted on our website.
- B. Review of Berks ESCO (Energy Savings) contract status. Commissioner Leinbach will be meeting with one of the ESCO companies along with Alan Shuman of Shuman Development Corp. to discuss potential energy saving possibilities within the County facilities.
- C. The Commissioner referenced an email that he received noting that Unemployment Benefits have been permanently extended 13 weeks. This will need to be reviewed to determine how the County budget will be affected.

- D. Commissioner Leinbach read a letter from a citizen who had made agreement with the County to sell an easement for the proposed Hay Creek Trail. The letter noted that the writer is no longer interested in selling and considers his contract null and void. The Commissioner stressed that the Board needs to make a decision on the future of the trail soon.

**Commissioner Barnhardt**

- A. Commissioner Barnhardt reported that Veterans Affairs Director Janice Kingkinger has formed a Veterans Task Force. Their first order of business is to form a complete list of all servicemen from Berks County who were killed in action in the hopes of developing a web site to honor those veterans.
- B. Commissioner Barnhardt then discussed a recent meeting he had attended with area recreation and conservation organizations that reported that they always look to the County's Open Space and Greenway Comprehensive plans as their guidance documents but noted that we currently have no plan or personnel charged with implementation of those documents. He also said that a representative of the DCNR (PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) told the group that funds are available to provide for perhaps a five year Circuit Rider who could assist with the implementation of these plans.

**Commissioner Scott**

- A. Commissioner Scott reported that he has been in conversation with the County's Consultant for the Hay Creek Trail project regarding Penn Dot grant funds that have been acquired. He reported that if the trail is not approved, the \$600,000+ will need to be returned. Commissioner Scott asked the consultant if we continue to acquire land on a gradual basis, do we need to return the grant and reported that he was uncertain. Commissioner Scott suggested that the Board may want to purchase easements with the understanding that the land would be used for either a trail or railway as there may be a renewed interest in rail service as fuel prices continue to rise.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk