

Commissioners' Board Meeting November 13, 2008

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, November 13, 2008 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 Mark C. Scott called the meeting to order with Commissioner Christian Leinbach and Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt in attendance. Also present were the Chief Clerk Terry L. Styer, County Solicitor Alan Miller, Esq. and County Administrator William E. Dennis.

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

Presentation:

- A. Lee Zelewicz, Executive Director of the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, presented the Commissioners with the Trust's *Atlas of Architectural Drawings*, as well as a brief update of the Trust's recent activities.

Chief Deputy Warden Janine Quigley together with Unit Commander Lieutenant Miguel Castro introduced the members of the Berks County Prison Special Operations Group (C-SOG), explaining that two months ago 31 staff members volunteered to go through a rigorous selection and training process in hopes of becoming a certified operator on the Special Operations Group at the Berks County Prison. Out of the 31, the 14 attending today's meeting were able to demonstrate the physical and mental perseverance necessary to become part of this elite group, the first Tier 1 Team certified by the United States Corrections Special Operations Group in Pennsylvania. She explained that Tier 1 status teams are trained to handle multiple high intensity conflicts, have a command structure, receive on going training and have the latest technology and equipment ready for all levels of incidents. She added that this group, referred to as SOG, has specifically been trained to handle hostage recovery, close quarters riot control, cell extractions (when an inmate refuses to move from one location or status to another or is a threat to himself or others) and other high risk situations such as transports and evacuations. She said that these men are receiving no tangible rewards for the risk that they have volunteered to take on.

Each Commissioner shared their pride, enthusiasm and positive impressions from the Special Operations Unit presentation they each took part in at the Prison. Commissioner Scott said that this approach to dealing with inmate issues will dramatically reduce liability for the county while it serves to increase safety for the prison staff and inmates alike.

Berks County Prison Special Operations Group (C-SOG) continued:

Commissioner Leinbach said he was impressed with the way this program focuses on controlling one's composure and emotion during some very tense situations. Commissioner Barnhardt said he was struck by the professionalism of this team and noted that while the overwhelming population of the Jail is the "non-violent offenders", this change in procedures with the theme of non-violent compliance is a good fit. He also complimented the staff for the coordination of training sessions with not only the BCERT (Berks County Emergency Response Team) but with Chester County response teams as well.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Leinbach to approve the November 6, 2008 Commissioner meeting minutes, all voted yes to approve. Commissioner Scott announced that the board held an executive session on Monday November 10, 2008 for the purpose of discussing personnel issues.

Consent Agenda Items

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt, seconded by Commissioner Leinbach, and all voted unanimously to approve the items listed below:
 - 303.08 A. Resolution authorizing 2008 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$85,944 and 2008 Appropriations in the amount of \$3,006,317 per listing dated November 7, 2008.
 - 304.08 B. Human Resource Recommendations per list dated November 13, 2008.
 - 305.08 C. Resolution to amend Resolution 280-08 regarding The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP.) Reimbursement request has been amended to \$.12 per pound.
 - 306.08 D. Resolution approving the award and authorization to execute as a result of Request for Proposal #08-07-KL a contract in the amount of \$68,000 to audit financial statements of the County of Berks for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2008, with the option of auditing its financial statements for each of the two subsequent fiscal years of 2009 and 2010 to:

Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC
830 Sir Thomas Court, Suite 100
Harrisburg, PA 17109

308.08 F. Resolution to reappoint Glenn R. Seidel to a four year term as a farmer director on the Berks County Conservation District Board.

2. 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 October 17, 2008.

County Administrator:

Administrator Dennis reported that the majority of his time has been spent working with the Budget Director on the proposed 2009 budget scheduled to be open for public inspection on November 18, 2008 and adoption on December 16, 2008.

Reports

1. County Treasurer Nelson Long, CPA submitted the weekly Treasurer's report which was read by County Administrator Dennis.
2. County Controller Sandy Graffius presented the weekly Controller's report.

Reports of Commissioners

Commissioner Scott provided a detailed opinion on the County banking services procurement project and explained that despite the fact that professional services are not required to be bid, Treasurer Nelson Long took that approach in the best interest of the county, ending up with two best qualified proposals in the opinion of his office and that of the Controller. He reported that the Controller's Office expressed that National Penn Bank could provide the best coordination with the County's new Oracle financial system allowing ease of on-line banking. Judy Lumis of the Controllers' Office also reminded the board that this banking change is only affecting the "operating" accounts of the County and that the bulk of the county's finances will continue to be invested in a variety of banking institutions as per the investment recommendations of the County Treasurer. Commissioner Scott noted that since this RFP was published, the County is now bound by the terms of the bid proposal including the fact that the proposal is a three year period. Therefore, the suggestion by Commissioner Leinbach to accept the proposal from National Penn for a one year trial period would not be possible, however the terms of this contract would allow the county to terminate the contract at any time subject to a 30 day notice. Following a long discussion regarding this procedure and noting a motion that was made and seconded previously, Commissioner Scott called for the vote with Commissioners Scott and Barnhardt voting yes and Commissioner Leinbach voting no, the motion carried and the Resolution 307.08 was approved.

- 307.08 E. Resolution authorizing the Berks County Board of Commissioners to accept a proposal of National Penn Bank, Philadelphia & Reading Avenues, P. O. Box 547, Boyertown, Pennsylvania, 19512, received September 30, 2008, for a three (3) year Contract beginning January 1, 2009 and ending December 31, 2011 between the County of Berks and National Penn Bank for on-line and other banking services subject to final approval of the terms and conditions by the Solicitor's Office.

Commissioner Barnhardt reported on a meeting he had attended regarding the Library system and the City Library. He reported the concerns expressed by the City Library and the apparent lack of financial support in the future from City Council. He said that he is beginning to look at libraries as a core service for the county.

Commissioner Scott

Commissioner Scott reported on a recent discussion at the Berks County Planning Commission meeting regarding the proposed RiverView Development Project in the City of Reading. He then credited former Planning Board Chair, Bob Ludgate, Jr. with pointing to the potential impact up and downstream from the construction of a "seawall" the RiverView developers have proposed to protect their project from flood waters. Commissioner Scott proposed that the Planning Commission be instructed to closely monitor the review by the Army Corps of Engineers regarding this structure as they determine its feasibility. Both Commissioners Leinbach and Barnhardt agreed.

Citizen Comment:

Cecilia Zuber, citizen of Reading provided the Commissioners with a magazine article called Blue Skies High Anxiety suggesting that reports of air pollution is creating unnecessary public fears.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:57 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L. Styer, Chief Clerk