

## **Commissioners' Workshop Meeting Tuesday, December 16, 2008**

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

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, December 16, 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.

Commissioner Scott announced that an Executive Session was held on December 15, 2008 for personnel discussion.

### ***II. 2009 BERKS COUNTY BUDGET***

County Administrator Bill Dennis and Budget and Finance Director Bob Patrizio provided a brief summary of the changes to the 2009 Proposed Budget since November 18, 2008.

Commissioner Barnhardt discussed the projects that have been scaled back in order to hold the line on taxes and once again thanked the County Administrator and Budget Director and his staff for the work on this budget.

Commissioner Scott said that the real impact to the budget is when the unions demand increases such as 4, 5 and 6% along with lifetime healthcare, days off and things that would never exist in the private sector yet they continue to make these demands on the negotiating team. Commissioner Scott went on to say that this is a big issue especially in light of this recessionary economy and that our efforts to maintaining the lid on the expenses of County government going forward will depend largely on containing those wage increases among the rank and file and negotiating tough but fair contracts with organized labor.

Commissioner Leinbach discussed the county's prioritization process to help with future funding decisions. He also believes that this board will be able finish the next four years without a tax increase but he noted that there is more work to be done to get this county to the point where it is "right-sized" yet able to do what is it supposed to do based on its constitutional directive. He then thanked the other Commissioners for the way they worked together as professionals.

Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Leinbach to adopt the 2009 Berks County Budget, but prior to the vote Commissioner Scott explained the Pennsylvania Public Official and Employee Ethics Act requirements for disclosure for each Commissioner who has family member(s) who could benefit from any decision made in his position as Commissioner who serves as a member (even in a volunteer capacity) on various boards such as the BEP (Berks Economic Partnership), RiverPlace Development Corporation and the fact that each Commissioner who may serve with an organization that receives or may receive funding as part of the proposed 2009 budget, is required to disclose verbally and in writing the potential conflict of interest and abstain from discussion and or voting on those line items in the budget involving the funding of the organizations.

Following that explanation, each Commissioner presented their letters of conflict noting their individual abstentions from portions of the 2009 Budget. Following those disclosures and noting specific line item abstentions all voted yes to approve the 2009 Budget and Real Estate Tax Millage.

- 337.08 A. Resolution authorizing adoption of the 2009 County of Berks Budget and further establish that the 2009 Real Estate Tax millage will remain at 6.935 mills.

### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS / REQUESTS:**

#### **Budget Department**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2008 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$158,376 per listing dated December 12, 2008. Bob Patrizio, Budget Director, presented the report.
- B. Motion authorizing Mark C. Scott, Esq. as Chairman of the Board, to execute Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator Candace Noll, per attached listing dated December 12, 2008.

#### **Human Resources**

- A. Jennifer Biehn, Human Resource Director presented Human Resource recommendations per list dated December 16, 2008.

#### **Planning Commission**

- A. Adopt a resolution approving the amendments to the County's Natural Land, Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program. Shannon Rossman, Intergovernmental Affairs Planner with the Berks County Planning Commission, attended to discuss the proposed amendments.

**Solid Waste Authority**

- A. Adopt a resolution to amend the Berks County Solid Waste Management Plan. Berks County Solid Waste Management Authority Executive Director Jane Meeks presented this amendment for approval.

**Solicitor**

- A. Adopt a resolution establishing the Berks County Open Records Policy. County Solicitor Miller thanked Adrian Shchuka, Chief of Trials for the Berks County District Attorney's office, and Terry Styer, Chief Clerk, for helping to develop the final draft of the Open Records Policy for the County of Berks. Mr. Shchuka attended the meeting to answer any questions.

**IV. REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

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

**V. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

- A. A motion was made seconded and approved to authorize a letter be sent to the PEMA from the Commissioners regarding the NIMS (National Incident Management System) clarification points.

**Commissioner Leinbach**

- A. Commissioner Leinbach presented a letter of support for the Hamburg Elm Street Project Grant application from the commissioners. A motion was made, seconded and approved to sign this letter of support.

**Commissioner Barnhardt**

- B. Adopt a resolution re-appointing Norman Wilikofsky, Reading, PA, to the Berks County Municipal Authority. This is a five-year appointment effective January 6, 2009 and ending January 5, 2014.
- C. Adopt a resolution re-appointing Cathy Pilat, Blandon, PA, to the Berks County MH/MR Advisory Board. This is a three-year appointment effective January 1, 2009 and ending December 31, 2011.
- C. Adopt a resolution authorizing the appointment of Barry L. Schlouch, Blandon, PA to the Berks County Planning Commission to replace Robin Koch, who resigned. This is a four-year term effective January 1, 2009 and will expire on December 31, 2012.

**Commissioner Barnhardt continued:**

- D. Commissioner Barnhardt thanked Jane Meeks, Executive Director of the Solid Waste Authority and Michelle Kircher, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Scott for their assistance in developing a schedule for meeting on a quarterly basis with the County's Municipal Environmental Advisory Councils and to help with a future amendment of the Berks County EAC Bylaws and Website.

**Commissioner Scott**

Commissioner Scott continued his update to the Commissioners with regard to the County's interest in the Surface Transportation Board process to prevent the abandonment 8.6 mile Colebrookdale Railroad spur.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

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Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk