

**Commissioners' Organizational Board Meeting
Monday, January 5, 2004**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, January 5, 2004 at 10:30 AM 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. Solicitor Alan Miller called the meeting to order with Commissioner Judy Schwank, Commissioner Tom Gajewski, Commissioner Mark Scott, Solicitor Alan S. Miller, and Acting Chief Clerk William E. Dennis in attendance.

Solicitor Miller called for nominations for Chair of the Berks County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Gajewski nominated Commissioner Schwank. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Schwank. Commissioner Scott acknowledged the right for the winning party to name its own chair, adding that he wished Commissioner Schwank well. The vote was unanimous.

The gavel was handed over to Commissioner Schwank, who called for nominations for Vice Chair. The Commissioner informed those present that this position was not utilized in the recent past but she considered it a good suggestion. Commissioner Scott nominated Commissioner Gajewski, seconded by Commissioner Schwank. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Gajewski nominated Commissioner Scott for Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Schwank. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Gajewski nominated William Dennis as Acting Chief Clerk, with Commissioner Scott seconding, and Commissioner Schwank concurring.

Commissioner Gajewski nominated Alan Miller as County Solicitor, with Commissioner Scott seconding, and Commissioner Schwank concurring.

Commissioner Schwank read a proposed resolution establishing a Code of Conduct, calling the proposal a standard that all of us can agree upon and ideas that all of us can support. Commissioner Scott remarked that since the items included in the resolution were subjective and unenforceable, which if enforceable could create abuse, he could support the resolution. Commissioner Gajewski added that the Code set a tone for future action of the Board and all those conducting public business. Commissioner Gajewski moved adoption of the resolution, with Commissioner Scott seconding and Commissioner Schwank concurring.

Solicitor Miller presented a resolution authorizing the incoming Berks County Board of Commissioners the authority to take all necessary steps to conduct all financial transactions on behalf of the County in accordance with the Third Class Code of Pennsylvania. Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Gajewski with Commissioner Scott seconding and Commissioner Schwank concurring.

With the conclusion of the business part of the meeting, Commissioner Schwank offered her comments on the new administration, stating that a diversity of comments were welcome. She added that good ideas will come from everywhere and that the Board should be receptive to those ideas.

Commissioner Schwank then outlined initiatives for the new administration:

1. More outreach of information to the public regarding meetings, including online access of agendas and minutes and faxing information to those who don't have internet access;
2. Spend more time explaining agendas, reevaluate what is to be considered for the consent agenda, more detail on budgetary items;
3. Establish a periodic Commissioners' meeting at night;
4. Establish a periodic Commissioners' meeting at different locations within the County;
5. Establish a message board on the county web page allowing the opportunity to question and receive responses from the Commissioners and County staff.

Commissioner Schwank added that these initiatives are all directed toward making County government more accessible, and getting more people involved. The Commissioner concluding by saying that she is pleased for the opportunity to serve as chair and is at the same time humbled by it. She asked that everyone join her in making these initiatives a success.

Regarding improvements to the web page, Commissioner Scott stated his desire for each commissioner to have the opportunity to post opinions on particular issues. He also reiterated his congratulations and wished Commissioner Schwank good luck.

Commissioner Gajewski echoed congratulations to Commissioner Schwank and he thanked the people of Berks County for voting for him. He added his desire for an environment that encouraged debate with constructive criticism and respect for differences.

With no other action before the board, meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William E. Dennis
Acting Chief Clerk