

**Pre-Commissioners' Meeting**  
**Tuesday, April 27, 2004**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 27, 2004, at 10:30 AM, in the thirteenth floor Board Room of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public. Commissioner Chair Judith L. Schwank called the meeting to order with Commissioners Tom Gajewski and Mark C. Scott in attendance. Also present were Acting Chief Clerk William E. Dennis and Solicitor Alan Miller.

Commissioner Schwank followed with a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The Board of Commissioners discussed and approved the following items for listing at the April 29, 2004 Meeting:

**II. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- A. Adopt Proclamation regarding *Berks Heim Volunteers Give Warmth*, recognizing the hard work and dedication the volunteers of Berks Heim give to the residents and staff. Mary Kirkhoff, Robert Kise, Anna Cammarano, Marie Lynskey, Shirley Sellan, Helen Latshaw, and Pat Kennedy to be in attendance. Doris Evans explained the types of volunteer work performed.
- B. Adopt Proclamation regarding *Celebrate Children Day*, May 1, 2004, an advocacy event for young children and their families.
- C. Present Certificate of Recognition for Senator Michael A. O'Pake for his indispensable support to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA) and for being honored by the United Way of Berks County as "Friend of CASA 2004." Commissioner Gajewski acknowledged Senator O'Pake as a role model, the reason that he initially decided to run for office. Senator O'Pake in his acceptance acknowledged the work of Commissioner Gajewski regarding the amber alert system. Commissioner Schwank stated the Board's appreciation of what the Senator has done for the children of the County and the State.
- D. Presentation by Leigh Tallas, Director of Veterans Affairs, and Michelle Rathman, Assistant Director of Veterans Affairs, regarding Veterans' Claims. Mr. Tallas advised that Berks County leads the State in claims funds awarded. He also related that veterans' widows do not know that they have benefits available. Volunteers checked each case and identified such widows, and they are now receiving benefits.

- E. Authorize refund of 2003 County Property Taxes at the request of the Board of Assessment Appeals.

***Commissioner Schwank***

***Commissioner Gajewski***

- A. Adopt Resolution ratifying and confirming sending of a letter dated April 22, 2004 to the Housing Development Corporation of Lancaster expressing the County's intent to provide a \$400,000 loan and further to hereby agree to the guarantee of such loan.
- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing the appointment of Melvin C. Fishburn, 20 Morgan Drive, Reading, Pennsylvania, 19608, to the Berks County Redevelopment Authority, appointment to expire 12/31/2008.
- C. Adopt Resolution authorizing the reappointment of Barry Rohrbach, 14 Muirfield Drive, Reading, Pennsylvania, 19607, to the Berks County Redevelopment Authority, appointment to expire 12/31/2005.
- D. Authorize payment of invoices under the following Community Development Disbursement Vouchers:
  - a. No. 2075 – Community Development Block Grant Program
  - b. No. 2077 – Community Development Block Grant Program
  - c. No. 2074-S – Emergency Shelter Program
  - d. No. 2076-S – Emergency Shelter Program
  - e. No. 461 – HOME Grant Program
  - f. No. 1214 – Property Rehabilitation Program
  - g. No. 1215 – Property Rehabilitation Program

***Commissioner Scott***

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing an increase in Maintenance subsidy from \$10.00 per day to \$11.00 per day for a female child born 12/26/99 on request of BCCYS and in accordance with applicable federal regulations (Case Number 18302).
- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing subsidized adoption of a female child born 11/21/87 on request of BCCYS and in accordance with applicable federal regulations, at the rate of \$16.00 per day Maintenance, including physical and mental health care, and \$500.00 legal cost plus filing fees (Case Number 5799).

***III. OTHER REQUESTS:***

***Budget Director:***

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 Budget Appropriations in the total aggregate amount of \$188,777.00 per listing dated April 23, 2004.

***Contract Coordinator:***

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per attached listing dated April 23, 2004.

***Solicitor:***

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing the Board of Commissioners to agree to guarantee a bond issue by the Reading Regional Airport Authority in the amount of \$8,000,000.00. Mr. John Rinehart advised that, in fact, the total amount of the issue would be \$8,400,000.
- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing the appointment of Stevens & Lee as Special Counsel to the County and directing the County Solicitor to file a petition with the Court of Common Pleas to approve of such appointment.
- C. Adopt Resolution authorizing the appointment of Reed Smith as Special Counsel and directing the County Solicitor to file a petition with the Court of Common Pleas to approve of such appointment.
- D. Adopt Resolution authorizing the appointment of Rhoads & Sinon as Special Counsel and directing the County Solicitor to file a petition with the Court of Common Pleas to approve of such appointment.
- E. Adopt Resolution authorizing the appointment of Holsten & Associates as Special Counsel and directing the County Solicitor to file a petition with the Court of Common Pleas to approve of such appointment.
- F. Adopt Resolution ratifying and confirming the execution of the Settlement Agreement between the Trustees of the Reading Public Library, the Berks County Public Libraries and the County of Berks. Commissioner Gajewski thanked Christine Sadler, First Assistant County Solicitor, and the Library Board for their efforts, who genuinely displayed their concern for library service. Commissioner Schwank also acknowledged the role of Ms. Sadler and the volunteer Library Board, their efforts leading to an increased level of service countywide.
- G. Adopt Resolution ratifying and confirming execution of a letter agreement between the County of Berks and the Berks County Solid Waste Authority concerning the 2004 Household Hazardous Waste Program.

Commissioner Scott advised that the public participates in a free program of tremendous benefit. He added that it would help if those who drop off could pay a \$10 to \$20 fee. Commissioner Schwank stated her pleasure of finally seeing this becoming a permanent program. She agreed that perhaps small businesses could contribute toward the effort.

***IV. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:***

Commissioner Schwank informed those present that she had attended a "Career Day" at Gov. Mifflin and that she had received a follow-up letter from a student. The letter outlined what the student would like to see the Commissioners address, including better roads, recreation, law enforcement, and tourism. The Commissioner encouraged students and the public to let the Commissioners know what they would like to see addressed. Commissioner Schwank also noted that the Governor visited Berks County the previous day to confer with local officials on economic development issues.

Commissioner Gajewski added that he would contact the Governor, stressing the need to take a regional approach to economic development initiatives. Citing Cabela's as an example, the Commissioner asserted that political boundaries do not define employment and economic benefits.

Commissioner Scott, using the Food Park proposal as an example, stated that one must look at the overall long range impact of an effort and not just try to get something in place.

Commissioner Scott also advised that the empowerment team of the Reading School District would be meeting that evening. The Commissioner would be presenting a proposal to the team regarding addressing illegal alien students who are being educated at legitimate taxpayers' expense. Commissioner Scott asserted that this condition has national, state and local implications, citing an estimated \$60 million dollars spent statewide on educating illegal aliens. The proposal to be presented is one from Dr. Porter, who is very credentialed in examining this problem. Commissioner Scott stated that it is essential to conduct this study for the benefit of the school district and the public. The proposed cost of the study is \$9,750. The Commissioner did not request that the county fund this study at this time.

Respectfully Submitted,

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William E. Dennis, Acting Chief Clerk