

Operations Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2021

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

1. Introduction of the new Debit Card Process – Berks County Controller Sandy Graffius, Oliver Arthur, Audit Department Manager and Project Manager, Controller’s Office, and Stuart Long, Chief Revenue Officer, Rapid Financial Solutions.
The debit card, CourtFunds, is handled by Rapid Financial Solutions. Rapid Financial Solutions serves about 2,000 government agencies across the United States, and 35 throughout Pennsylvania. The debit cards will initially be sent to veterans. (By statute, veterans that served during wartime are to be paid \$75 for funeral expenses.) Currently paper checks are sent. The Controller’s Office decision to use debit cards was because of the familiarity with debit cards and the debit card process, and because of the high cost to prepare and process paper checks. A brochure will be included with each debit card with detailed easy instructions.
The cost to the County will be \$.55 to load each card, which is still less expensive than cutting a check. Other potential future uses for the card is paying jurors and poll workers. The President Judge has been presented with the information for review.
2. Cash Flow Forecast Update 2021-2023 – Robert Patrizio, Chief Financial Officer.
This report is updated annually. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020 ended with \$37.5 million higher plan. Key reasons were the deferral of capital projects from 2020 to 2021, State Care Act funds reimbursement of budgeted payroll for the Jail and Sheriff’s Department, lower payroll due to COVID furloughs and vacancies, lower health benefit costs due to COVID induced deferral and elimination of elective procedures and favorable inflation trend, and net cash flow savings in Children and Youth Services due to lower placements and services.
Although the Commissioners believe this is a better outcome than they projected in January 2020, Mr. Patrizio cautioned there are some deficits that may grow.
It was pointed out the County must take into consideration money it will receive from the American Rescue Plan, which allows more flexible spending than the CARES Act, and allows a longer length of time to spend it. The Commissioners agreed it is still incumbent to keep focused on the fiscal health of the County and be mindful of the County’s responsibility to taxpayer money.
3. Financing Options – Dennis Adams, Treasurer
Mr. Adams made a request to the Board of Commissioners to add another firm to allow the County the ability to capture more interest on County savings. Mr. Adams received a proposal from Santander who is offering 10 basis points, which is higher than other financial institutions the County has accounts with and is Act 732 compliant.
After a brief discussion, Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to increase the number of accounts to four to include Santander.
Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. The motion carried.


NOTE: A resolution will be listed on the Commissioner's Agenda Thursday, April 22, 2021 authorizing the County Treasurer to open a new investment account with Santander Bank.

4. Commissioner Rivera asked if Commissioners had any comments in response to the list from the Greater Berks Development Fund of first round applicants for CHIRP funds. Action is expected to take place at this Thursday's Commissioners' Meeting. Commissioner Barnhardt stated he is not supportive of allotting money to Maria's on Penn Street because of its significant drug activity. Commissioner Barnhardt also asked about the significant number of women owned businesses but have men as contacts. Commissioner Rivera believes the contacts could be accountants, managers, or a minority business partner. Commissioner Rivera was asked to advise GRCA of the Commissioners' concern with Maria's Restaurant, and if possible, without violating any rules, to not include the restaurant in the award of CHIRP funds.

Seeing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Comments – None

Respectfully submitted,



Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk