

Operations Meeting Minutes April 6, 2021

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

1. American Rescue Planning Committee Discussion – Pam Shupp Menet, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Economic Development.
Berks County will be receiving approximately \$81.6 million from the American Rescue Plan, and will have until December 31, 2024 to spend these dollars. Unique to this funding program is that local municipalities will also receive approximately \$178 million, and school districts will receive approximately \$160 million. Although local municipalities and school districts will directly be receiving their own dollars, they will also be able to apply to the County for funding.
The U.S. Treasury has not yet released official guidance on how the funds can be used and the process the County must follow, but Ms. Shupp Menet proposed the County establish an American Rescue Planning Committee (“ARP”) in determining the best use of these funds, including the creation of an Administrative Committee to implement the program, consisting of members of the Controller’s Office, Purchasing Office, Budget Office and Treasurer’s Office.
The other committees would be comprised of several sub-committees including County employees and community representatives. The County would focus on 1) social services and programming; 2) a business response; and 3) special project and infrastructure. The committees would determine what has previously been done through the CARES Act funding, what other sources can be accessed, and where the County can coordinate and collaborate with other funding sources. County operations and facilities was also suggested as a 4th focus group.
In order to have the greatest impact on the community, the Commissioners believed it is important to coordinate with local municipalities and school districts on potential funding projects to avoid duplicity in the use of funds.
Commissioner Barnhardt asked that if it is allowed, he would like to see some funds dedicated for a Request for Information at looking into the possibility of establishing a county health department. The Board would consider this request.
The Commissioners agreed to appoint Ms. Shupp Menet to lead the overall effort of the ARP, and because of the scope and magnitude of this effort the Commissioners agreed to look for a support person to assist Ms. Shupp Menet in her role as Director of Economic Development.
Seeing no further discussion, Commissioner Barnhardt motioned that the American Rescue Planning Committee as outlined by Pam Shupp Menet be approved, and a position be formulated for economic development under Ms. Shupp Menet’s auspices. Commissioner Rivera seconded said motion, but asked if this should be a two-step process?
After discussion, the motion was amended to 1) approve the plan for American Rescue Planning Committee as outlined by Pam Shupp Menet; and 2) for Pam Shupp Menet to devise a job description to support economic development to be brought before Salary Board for consideration. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera.

The motion carried.

Commissioner Rivera asked what are the next steps?

Ms. Shupp Menet said because of motion, she will have the notes from today captured for the Commissioners, and to communicate the Board's action to the media and public relations so the public understands the structure the County will put in place for the best utilization of the funds.

From the floor:

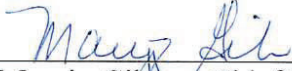
2. Commissioner Rivera reported the online link for applications for the CHIRP has been suspended because of the high volume of activity. The 908 applications received are being reviewed and processed.**

**After the meeting was adjourned it was realized Commissioner Rivera mistakenly said CHIRP instead of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

Seeing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m..

Comments – None

Respectfully submitted,



Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk