

Operations Meeting Minutes May 26, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

Pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public the Operations meeting was held via Microsoft Teams Live at 9:30 a.m..

Participating were Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach, Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt, Commissioner Michael S. Rivera, Executive Assistants Mary Buerer, Jessica Blausner and Barbara Lopez, Chief Administration Officer Ronald R. Seaman, County Solicitor Christine M. Sadler, Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht, and Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk. Also participating Heather Berger, Application Specialist & Trainer and Producer, Lori Schneider, Implementation Specialist, Tim Smith, Enterprise Manager.

Discussion on Assignment of Responsibilities –

Commissioner Barnhardt proposed that as we move on and continue to expand COVID-19 related duties and obligations, and to minimize duplication of work efforts, he put together a short list of duties of the Commissioners, and assign who should be the sitting liaison for communicating back and forth. Commissioner Rivera and Commissioner Leinbach agreed it is a good idea.

Commissioner Barnhardt will handle Co-County Wellness along with Dr. Michalik, and Witt O'Brien along with Ron Seaman. Commissioner Barnhardt will continue to be the liaison to Governor Wolf's office.

Commissioner Rivera will act as liaison to the City and GRCA.

Commissioner Leinbach will be the liaison with Courts and Row Officers for now. Commissioner Leinbach will look at the Row Officers and follow-up as necessary.

Discussion - Rebuilding Berks (continuation from last week's meeting)

Pamela Shupp, GRCA, mentioned last week the discussion touched on some of our neighboring counties who met the population threshold requirement and will be a little ahead of Berks County in terms of deploying the CARES funds into community.

Ms. Shupp said because we know we will be going to the Yellow Phase in June, it is important to know when we will be receiving the funds, and will be critical in managing business and resident expectations. Ms. Shupp suggested putting a safety net in place for businesses who may not meet the requirements of the initial program and mentioned four components to reopening; procurement, financing, training and communication.

Deb Millman mentioned the PA Chamber currently has a business readiness seminar and training program to safely reopen businesses; something Berks County could offer to our local businesses.

Pam Shupp said communication and marketing is critical to deployment of funds and resources to the community.

Commissioner Barnhardt learned on his call with the Governor's Office on Friday Harrisburg has received the CARES Act money, and that Berks County must pull together a request and get it to Harrisburg quickly.

The Commissioners agreed to put together a broad overview of PPE, testing, housing, etc. as follows: Commissioner Barnhardt will pull together numbers for contact tracing, Commissioner Rivera will provide for housing, Ron Seaman and Brian Gottschall will do PPE for County and first responders and testing. Commissioner Barnhardt will also get an amount from Helping Harvest to submit for reimbursement.

Commissioner Rivera will reach out to Ken Pick and Jack Williams on housing costs. Commissioner Leinbach asked for the numbers to be submitted Thursday morning before Commissioners Meeting, and he will provide comments.

Mr. Pick said the part of the CARES act dealing with homeless issues does not have any income restrictions for use of the funds, and we will most likely have to create a new program for the funds. Mr. Pick was asked to work on that part, so the funds are being utilized in the way that makes the most sense in the community.

The goal is to submit a proposed CARES Budget through Commissioner Barnhardt to the Governor's Office this Thursday.

Future of the COVID Help Center

Barbara Lopez provided the email and call numbers from this past weekend, and noted we have not seen a high number of calls since May 18, and the emails are low.

Commissioner Leinbach recommended because of numbers are going down, and we will be going to Yellow June 5, he is inclined to continue until June 5 and close the Center unless there is a significant increase on that date.

Commissioner Rivera and Commissioner Barnhardt agree it is a good idea and good time to phase when we go Yellow.

Commissioner Leinbach asked Mary Buerer to list on next week's Operations Meeting Agenda to see if there has been any change, and if not, close the Center end of day Friday, June 5.

Questions/Comments: None

Commissioner Barnhardt mentioned the Commissioners received two documents from Pennsylvania entities dealing with visitors and vendors in reopening buildings that should be part of the discussion COVID-19 Leadership meeting this afternoon.

Commissioner Barnhardt reported the kickoff for Witt O'Brien is today at 3:00 p.m.

The call ended at 10:10 A.M.

Executive Session

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk