

**Operations Minutes**  
**June 22, 2021**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

1. a.) Nationwide Indexed Principal Protection (IPP) – Investment Option – Jessica Weaknecht, Christie Bennet-Zellers, Bob Patrizio, Martin Burch and Emanuel Mahand from Nationwide.

Ms. Bennett-Zellers and representatives from Nationwide Insurance presented the Nationwide Indexed Principal Protection (NW-IPP) plan for discussion and whether the County wants to participate in the program.

Mr. Mahand said NW-IPP is a group fixed indexed annuity for employee retirement plans that tracks the performance of the S&P 500. The employees money is not directly invested, but its performance is used to credit the employee with interest earnings, subject to a specific limit that protects the principal. NW-IPP. Mr. Mahand explained the two options to participate. When asked her recommendation, Ms. Bennett-Zellers said since this is a relatively new program, only in its first full year, there is not a lot of data history. Ms. Bennett-Zellers wants to make sure county employees completely understand the program.

Commissioner Leinbach said he would support the program but asked Nationwide to prepare a brief synopsis that County employees will need to know before the employee has an opportunity to choose the program.

Commissioner Leinbach asked if there was a motion to approve the plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rivera and seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt to approve the NW-IPP with the understanding that a one page information sheet be provided upfront to all participating County employees.

Seeing no further discussion, the motion carried.

b.) Ms. Bennett-Zellers reported that in December 2019, the “SECURE” Act allowed 457b plans to lower the age to 59 ½ years of age from 70 years of age for in-service distribution. Currently the County’s deferred comp plans only allow employees to access their money when they separate or when they reach age 70. Ms. Bennett-Zellers asked if the Board had interest in approving lowering the age to 59 ½ years of age. The Board was supportive of this request.

Commissioner Leinbach accepted a motion from Commissioner Rivera to change the age for in-service distribution from 70 years of age to 59 ½ years of age. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt. Seeing no further discussion, the motion carried.

2. Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan Update – Planning Department – David Hunter, Ashley Showers and Matthew McGough.

The Berks County Planning Commission in coordination and cooperation with the Berks County Parks Department is embarking on an update to the current County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan, last updated in December 2007. The Planning Commission received a grant from the DCNR to prepare the update and would like to use a survey to solicit as much input as possible from the public in order to gauge the interest and usage of the existing park system in developing the new Plan. The flyer and survey will be posted

on the County's website, Planning Commission and Parks' web pages in both English and Spanish.

Emails along with the flyer will be sent to school districts and local municipalities. The Planning Commission will send the flyers and surveys out today and close the survey period July 30, 2021. Commissioner Leinbach suggested sending the link and flyer out to County employees today.

3. Annual 2020 Bond Compliance Update – Robert Patrizio, Chief Financial Officer  
Mr. Patrizio reported in order to meet federal IRS compliances associated with the issuance of tax exempt financing, the County must present this report at a public meeting. Mr. Patrizio is pleased to report Berks County as of December 31, 2020, has complied with and met all federal requirements.
4. Discuss lifting the COVID Declaration of Disaster Emergency – Christine Sadler, County Solicitor, Ron Seaman, CAO and Brian Gottschall, Director of Emergency Services.  
Ms. Sadler reported after meeting with various county officials including Brian Gottschall and Kelly Laubach regarding rescinding the March 12, 2020 Declaration of Emergency Disaster, she feels confident in recommending the Board of Commissioners rescind the Emergency Declaration. Ms. Sadler said the Declaration was critical in maintaining County operations and to procure PPE to assist the community. The County has ample PPE should there be another disaster. After some brief comments, there was a motion to terminate the Emergency Declaration. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt. Seeing no further discussion, the motion carried and will be entered in the form of a Resolution. (No. 226.2021).

#### From the Floor

1. Commissioner Leinbach shared excerpts from the Montgomery County Commissioners guidelines for Board of Commissioners Meetings. Commissioner Leinbach asked his colleagues to review some of these guidelines and consider implementing some of them, pending a legal review.
2. Commissioner Barnhardt reported he will be participating in an informational meeting today to finalize variations and styles for Commissioners public meetings. Commissioner Barnhardt reported there are two 2021 meeting dates and locations confirmed; Thursday, September 16 at 7 p.m. at the Wyomissing Library, and December 16 at 7 p.m. at the Muhlenberg Township Building. These meetings will be held in place of the Thursday 10 a.m. meetings.
3. Mission Vaccinate is scheduled for this Thursday downtown and Friday at the North Campus for County employees who have been vaccinated.

There was one comment from Karen Shuey, Reading Eagle, regarding the lifting of the Emergency Declaration. Ms. Sadler responded the Commissioners voted to rescind the Declaration today, but it doesn't take effect until Monday, June 28, 2021 the date all County and State mitigation mandates expire.

Operations Meeting

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There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to adjourn. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera, and the meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk

Moderator	Announcement	Heather Berger (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	6/17/2021 20:48	<p>Public comment will be accepted through the Q&amp;A function. Comments or questions must be germane to the topic being discussed and include your full name and municipality where you reside. If you are from the media, please put your name and who you are with.</p> <p>Comments will be read during the meeting and should not be considered to be interactive dialog with the Board. Any response to public comment will be done at the discretion of the Chairperson.</p>
Moderator	Announcement	Heather Berger (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	6/22/2021 14:06	Learn more at <a href="http://countyofberks.com/dept/planning">countyofberks.com/dept/planning</a>
Attendee	Question	Karen Shuey, Reading Eagle (Unverified)	6/22/2021 14:24	Just to clarify, the formal decision to end the declaration will be voted on at Thursday's meeting and will to into affect on Monday (June 28)?
Attendee	Question	Karen Shuey, Reading Eagle (Unverified)	6/22/2021 14:35	Thank you.