

Operations Minutes June 15, 2021

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

1. BCPL Membership and Automation Agreements – Amy Resh, Berks County Public Libraries, System Administrator and Paul Bradshaw, Assistant County Solicitor.

Ms. Resh explained when she took over leadership of the Berks County Libraries System she became aware of significant variations in the member library agreements. Since 2019, Ms. Resh has been working modify the agreements, and with the assistance of Assistant County Solicitor Bradshaw presented final versions of the Membership Agreement and System Automation Agreement to Board of Commissioners for support and approval. Drafts of both agreements were sent to member libraries for review and comment.

Ms. Resh focused on the Membership Agreement as that garnered the most comments from member libraries. One key concern was the number of member libraries that did not meet required State standards. Ms. Resh and Mr. Bradshaw took into consideration, and addressed many of the suggestions and recommendations from member libraries, and in order to give member libraries adequate time to modify their practices, made the effective date of the agreement January 1, 2022.

Ms. Resh submitted a proposed letter to the Commissioners to send to member libraries explaining the new agreements and what would happen if they do not sign the agreements. A letter of termination will be sent certified mail to all member libraries notifying them the current agreement will terminate December 31, 2021.

The Commissioners consider this is a positive step forward. State standards are important, and the agreements will hold member libraries to those standards. If member libraries don't sign the agreements, in addition to County funds, they would lose access to cataloging services, technology support and other services currently provided. County funding of libraries is not a federal or state mandate or requirement. The Agreements balance the concerns of the Commissioners to ensure that the funds provided to libraries are used to elevate County library services, and the timing of the agreements provide lead time to develop and implement plans to bring libraries into compliance.

Ms. Resh asked the Board to approve terminating the current agreements effective December 31, 2021.

Commissioner Leinbach supported sending a letter and notifying the libraries now that the current agreement will end December 31, 2021. Member libraries must sign and submit new agreements by December 31, 2021, in order to receive County funding. Commissioner Barnhardt disagrees with the State constantly granting waivers to some member libraries, and believes the standards set forth in the agreements are not too burdensome for member libraries.

Question in Q&A from Karen Shuey, Reading Eagle - What are the standards that libraries need to meet, and which libraries are currently not meeting those standards? How much county money is at stake for each library if they do not meet these standards? Ms. Resh mentioned the six standards. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic there were no libraries not meeting standards, but in 2019 there were five libraries.

The following two motions were offered:

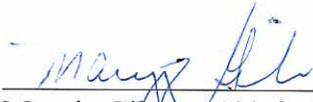
1st Motion: Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to terminate the existing Membership and Automation Agreements effective December 31, 2021. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. Seeing no further discussion, the motion carried.

2nd Motion: Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to approve the new Membership Agreement and Automation Agreement and send a letter to member libraries outlining the requirements of the new Agreements. There will be no waivers offered by the County. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. Seeing no further discussion, the motion carried.

Comments attached.

There being no further business, Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to adjourn. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. The meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk

Source	Type	Identity	Timestamp	Content
Moderator	Announcement	Heather Berger (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	6/11/2021 15:29	Public comment will be accepted through the Q&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. 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.
Attendee	Question	Karen Shuey, Reading Eagle (Unverified)	6/15/2021 13:43	What are these standards that libraries need to meet and which libraries are currently not meeting those standards? How much county money is at stake for each library if they do not meet these standards?
Moderator	Response	Christian Leinbach (CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)	6/15/2021 13:44	I will ask this shortly(Karen Shuey, Reading Eagle (Unverified) asked "What are these standards that libraries need to meet and which libraries are currently not meeting those standards? How much county money is at stake for each library if they do not meet these standards? ")
Moderator	Announcement	Heather Berger (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	6/15/2021 13:56	Thank you for your questions and comments. This Q&A is closed as the public comments have been addressed.