

## **Operations Meeting Minutes July 8, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**

Pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public the Operations meeting was held via Microsoft Teams Live.

Participating were Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach, Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt, Commissioner Michael S. Rivera, Executive Assistants Mary Buerer, Jessica Blausler and Barbara Lopez, County Solicitor Christine M. Sadler, First Assistant J. Chadwick Schnee, Assistant County Solicitor Paul Bradshaw, Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht, and Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk.

- Continuation of Constable Discussion from the June 23, 2020 Operations Meeting- Participants: Christine Sadler, Sandy Graffius, John Adams, Eric Weaknecht, President Judge Parisi and the Commissioners.  
The general consensus was the latest proposal from Zelenkosfke Axelrod was too costly and might not produce the information the Commissioners are seeking.

Sheriff Eric Weaknecht met with the Lancaster County Sheriff and reported they handle the initial notification to the defendant, a very aggressive process, and are realizing a 65% collection rate. Sheriff Weaknecht believes it is worthwhile for Berks County to look into handling that part of the process in a similar way. It is an automated download from the AOPC, so there would not be any data entry, and he does not anticipate the need to hire additional deputies, but probably will need an office support position.

The President Judge is willing to look at different systems, but the Courts look at the offense not necessarily the costs involved in the process. Judge Parisi said the Magisterial District Justices and the constables must also have the opportunity to provide feedback before a final decision is made on the process.

The President Judge will discuss with the Court Administrator and reach out to the Magisterial District Justices.

Ms. Graffius had a discussion with Lancaster Controller who reported Lancaster is seeing a better response when the Sheriff sends the initial letters, and said she is agreeable to the Sheriff's Office sending out the initial notification letters.

John Adams agrees with Sheriff Weaknecht's proposal. He believes it makes sense, has a cost savings and supports best practices in streamlining the system.

Next Step: An update and report from Courts will be listed in early September.

- Department Head/MC Performance Evaluations –  
Jessica Weaknecht, Director of Human Resources reported to the Board that she would like to resume department head and management/confidential performance evaluations.  
Ms. Weaknecht asked the Commissioners if they were interested in performing a 360-review compared to the current evaluation process.  
After discussion, the Commissioners want to continue using the current evaluation process, and to perform the evaluations based on anniversary dates instead of on a calendar year basis.  
Ms. Weaknecht will work on getting everything ready to present at a future department head meeting.
- Oversight of FEMA Grant – Ron Seaman and Robert Patrizio  
Mr. Seaman reported the County is in the midst of grant season and have numerous County staff overseeing and applying for many grants, but one that is still looming and needs oversight is the grant for FEMA through PEMA for reimbursement under the CARES Act, and at the present time, Budget and Finance staff is not able to handle management of the grant and is asking the Board for direction where oversight of this grant should be.  
Mr. Patrizio explained the grant process is a very time consumptive process, and his office does not have the skill set to properly manage this grant and asked the Board if management could be turned over to the Fiscal Manager at the Department of Emergency Management.  
  
After discussion, the Board directed Ron Seaman to contact Brian Gottschall to discuss the option of his Fiscal Manager managing the FEMA grant.  
  
Grant Manager position –  
The Board discussed the possibility of creating a new Grant manager position. Commissioner Barnhardt does not current support hiring a grant manager, but is willing to look at a proposal for a grant administrator.  
No further action was taken.
- Discuss Steps to Protect Berks from sliding back –  
Commissioner Leinbach suggested that any County department that can telework should continue indefinitely in order to avoid sliding back, and to continue promoting the continuation of telework.  
The Commissioners also agreed to direct Stephanie Weaver to work on a campaign strategy to be released in July and August to continue pushing out and making sure Berks County numbers continue to go lower and not higher.  
Commissioner Leinbach will ask Kelly Laubach how much is left in the original budget to cover the new campaign.

- Commissioner Barnhardt asked Bob Patrizio to provide the revenue the County is receiving on tax collections at next Operations Meeting.  
Mr. Patrizio had that information available and reported that as of the end of May, we were only 2.75 behind from last year.

Adjourned at 11:49 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk