

Operations Meeting Minutes July 14, 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.

1. Berks County 2030 Strategic Plan of Action proposal by Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (“GRCA”) –Jim Gerlach, President and CEO, John P. Weidenhammer, Eric Jenkins, Tom McKeon, Robert Firely, Jeremy Zaborowski, Ken Pick

GRCA submitted a letter proposal to the Board of Commissioners asking for consideration and support for the implementation of a “Berks 2030 Strategic Plan of Action” process. The goals are to develop a comprehensive vision for the County’s economic health by 2030; to identify and properly align the County public, private and philanthropic sector priorities; and to determine the specific plans of action necessary to accomplish projects based on economic impact, available resources and project success. Mr. Gerlach recommended the formation of an initial planning group of elected leaders and economic and community leaders to develop a specific scope and identify projects, a general timeline for completion, a tentative budget and the selection of a professional consultant.

Commissioner Barnhardt agreed the County should embark on this effort, it is an opportune time, and the process should be driven from the County’s perspective, and should encompass the entire County. Commissioner Barnhardt believes and will verify that the County can utilize CARES Act funds to cover the cost of the strategic plan, but time is tight as the deadline to utilize the CARES Act funding is December 31, 2020.

Jamal Abodalo, City of Reading Community Development Director, and Pedro Cortes, Managing Director for the City of Reading offered support on behalf of the Mayor and City of Reading.

Next Step: GRCA and the Commissioners will each submit a preliminary list of names who should be on the initial planning group, and meet in two weeks to share the list of names for consideration as well as the size of the group.

Commissioner Leinbach asked for another meeting to be scheduled for the July 28, 2020 Operations Meeting.

2. Annual Report on Bond Compliance –
Robert Patrizio, Chief Financial Officer, provided his required annual Bond Compliance Report for the year ending December 31, 2019. Mr. Patrizio stated the County is in compliance in all respects with all requirements and has satisfied all continuing disclosure requirements.
Mr. Patrizio was pleased to report last the March the County was upgraded to a AAA bond rating for the first time.

3. Community First Fund Proposal –
Commissioner Barnhardt supports the concept of the Community First proposal, but is not sure how much the County can provide until we know where we are with the Needs Assessment Survey.
Commissioner Rivera spoke with Community First Fund and made them aware we are not sure what the County can offer.
Commissioner Leinbach is open to whatever is best for our local businesses.

4. Commissioner Barnhardt provided background on a request from Ron Horn, Pretzel City Sports, requesting permission to use trails on Mt. Penn that will appear on next week's agenda.
Commissioner Barnhardt reported Ron Horn had utilized the County's trail system at Antietam Park years ago, and has again reached out to the County requesting permission to resume some of those races. Commissioner Barnhardt said if we agree, the County must impose restrictions to safeguard and control use of the trail system and monitor the trails after the races. Cathy Wegener and Brendan Lederer will also provide a response to the request at the meeting.

Adjourned at 10:43 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk