

Operations Minutes August 4, 2020

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, August 4, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Live, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Participating were Commissioner 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 and Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht. Chief Financial Officer Robert Patrizio also attended.

The following items were listed for discussion:

1. County Budget Impact PCCD Grant funding for State FY 2020-2021- CFO Robert Patrizio received notification that for FY 2020-2021, PCCD Grant funding would only be made for a five (5) month period. DA John Adams, Warden Janine Quigley and APO/JPO Chief Probation Officer Robert Williams were asked to participate and comment on respective PCCD grants received by their respective Departments/Operations. DA Adams spoke first and indicated that the three (3) grants received by his office were all funded by Federal pass-through funds that would not be affected by any State cut-backs.

Bob Williams spoke next and indicated that his VOJO Grant expired at the end of 2020 with a new application due in September. The Intermediate Punishment Grant could possibly be affected by any State cut-backs in funding.

Lastly, Warden Quigley spoke on the Vivitrol Program Grant, noting that the Case Management portion funded by that grant and under contract with COCA, could be affected by a Budget cut-back. Approximately \$58,000 would be needed to replace the lost Management Services provide by COCA.

Commissioner Barnhardt indicated that perhaps CARES funding could cover the lost funding to continue the Vivitrol Program Case Management through the end of the year.

Commissioner Leinbach asked if Commissioner Rivera wished to comment. He indicated that he would defer any comment until he had a chance to further study the matter.

2. The next item concerned an amendment to the DA's PCCD Grant to provide for a Courthouse Companion Dog under the Victim/Witness Program. The dog would be used especially in matters involving children. Grant funding would cover not only the cost of the dog, but all related expenses as well, thereby having no financial impact to the County Budget. Amy Sundstrom, Victim/Witness Supervisor, has agreed to assume responsibility for housing and caring for the dog at no additional cost. On motion by Commissioner Rivera, seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt, it was unanimously voted to approve the grant amendment.

3. Tami White, Berks County United Way, along with Chris Pruitt, United Way Volunteer, spoke to the Commissioners about the importance of the Annual United Way Campaign during the pandemic environment. As an example, Tami provided statistics on the increased usage of the United Way 2-1-1 line for assistance to individuals and their efforts in raising monies for a Berks County COVID Response Fund, which to date, has raised over 1 million dollars and has delivered over \$700,000. to forty-one (41) applicants. She also asked the Commissioner's for their support with the County's Annual Campaign. Commissioner Leinbach agreed to host a virtual gathering of the County "Leadership Givers" which are those employees that annually contribute at least \$1,000.00, as well as a virtual session with Department Heads as a means of recommending their participation in the campaign and also suggest individual departmental meetings with employees. Commissioner Rivera moved and Commissioner Barnhardt seconded that the County move ahead with its participation in the Annual Employee United Way Campaign, which passed unanimously.
4. Angel Figueroa and David Castro made a presentation of their program of education and contact tracing with particular emphasis on the Latino and other Minority Communities. They anticipate having their program up and running by September, to be conducted through the months of September, October and November, coinciding with the annual flu season. Commissioner Barnhardt recommended that Mr. Figueroa and Mr. Castro contact Carolyn Bazik, Co-County Wellness, to determine how the two programs could work in conjunction with each other and thereby, reduce operational costs by eliminating duplicated efforts. Commissioners Rivera and Leinbach agreed with this recommendation.
5. The Commissioners next called upon Christine Sadler, County Solicitor, and Justin Loose, IT Director, to discuss how best to handle the public comment portions of meetings in a virtual setting. The issue arose due to a complaint that the character stroke limits set by the Microsoft Teams platform does not allow for a full three-minute comment. Ms. Sadler recommended that the three-minute comment limit be applicable only to any in-person meeting and that comments made in a virtual meeting setting be limited to the constraints of the platform being utilized at the time. It was unanimously agreed by the Commissioners to include a Resolution on the August 6, 2020 Commissioners' Meeting Agenda modifying the current policy on conduct of meetings to reflect this recommendation.
6. Lastly, Commissioner Leinbach recommended that the Thursday afternoon Phase 3 Meetings be cancelled and revisited on an as-needed basis moving forward, to meet the needs of the County as situations change in the future. This was unanimously agreed upon by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ronald R. Seaman, Deputy Chief Clerk