

## **Operations Minutes November 10, 2020**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

The following matters were discussed:

1. Angora Fruit Farm Plans – Cathy Wegener (Parks Director), Brendan Lederer (Parks Deputy Director) and Jennifer Brooks (Parks Environmental Education Supervisor) Ms. Wegener reported the Parks Department was tasked with developing a plan to rehabilitate the Angora Fruit Farm (“Park”) for an environmental education center to include a rendering of the building for use by the public and site amenities for the Park. Watkins Architects was hired to prepare the plan project which was paused in the fall of 2019. Since then Watkins has updated the proposal to include additional tasks including a final schematic design and documentation for a new park building. Ms. Wegener said she is looking for direction from the Board today on how the Parks Department should move forward at this site.

Ms. Wegener mentioned Phase I of the original proposal included demolition and salvage of the barn and house which is has been deemed unsafe for public use.

The Commissioners generally support providing some type of educational programing, but not something right now because of the budget stresses related to COVID-19, and agreed to hold off until next year on the rest of the projects until we see how the County comes through COVID-19. It was also discussed to see what funding is left in Act 13 Shale funds.

However, the Commissioners do feel it is imperative to remove the old barn structure as soon as possible.

Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to remove the old barn structure at Antietam Lake Park pursuant to the Phase I of the original proposal submitted by Watkins Architects, and in conjunction with legal and the Purchasing Department. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. The motion carried.

After further discussion of next steps, it was agreed to have the Master Plan updated by YSM, which would help significantly when applying for future grants for the Park.

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt for the Parks Department to reach out to YSM to update the Master Plan dated 2010 and to bring it back before the Board when completed. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. The motion carried.

2. Electronic Poll Book discussion -

Based on the long lines and length of time spent in those lines, Commissioner Barnhardt proposed looking into electronic poll books for future elections. ES&S has the capacity to provide the poll books. Commissioner Barnhardt asked to put a place holder in the 2021 Budget the amount of at least \$1 million to cover the cost of electronic poll books, and perhaps hold demonstrations early next year with Poll workers.

Both Commissioner Leinbach and Commissioner Rivera see value in looking into electronic poll books if it would benefit the County and agree with Commissioner Barnhardt to have Bob Patrizio add a placeholder as a line item in the 2021 Budget.

3. Adult Probation Electronic Monitoring Proposal – Bob Williams, Chief Probation and Parole Officer (“APO”), and Steve Weber, Court Administrator  
After discussion with the President Judge, Mr. William proposed APO providing electronic pre-trial monitoring for certain populations at the Jail, and asked if the Board of Commissioners would be willing to fund a new position in APO. Mr. Williams believes the new officer could handle at least 150 pre-trial individuals, thereby reducing the Jail population. The pretrial probation officer will supervise defendants released by the court in lieu of bail on electronic monitoring, as well as APO offenders released by the court from jail pending violation hearings. The APO will ensure participants abide by their electronic monitoring conditions and appear for all court appearances. Essential duties include assessment and screening for program eligibility, monitoring of program participants, tracking of court dates, referrals to community-based services and attending to revocation motions should electronic monitoring violations occur. District Attorney John Adams completely supports this position, adding it can help alleviate a lot of people who are in Jail potentially for summary offenses. The Courts also agree it is a good idea. The Commissioners support the proposal, and asked Human Resources to add the position to the Salary Board Agenda this Thursday, November 12, 2020. Bob Patrizio was asked to put a placeholder in the contingency for the 2021 Budget.
  
4. Proposal for the District Attorney to take over the operations of the Children’s Alliance Center – District Attorney John Adams  
Mr. Adams reported in August 2020 the Opportunity House advised the District Attorney’s Office they could no longer operate the Children’s Alliance Center (“CAC”) which is located in the Services Center, and proposed to the Board that the District Attorney’s Office be charged with operating CAC. Mr. Adams said the program is 95% grant funded, and those grants will be transferred to the District Attorney’s Office to run CAC. Mr. Adams said there will be some staff changes.  
Betsy Kartsothis said Salary Board is ready to go with the District Attorney staffing changes.  
After further discussion, Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to support the transition of the Children’s Alliance Center from the Opportunity House to the District Attorney’s Office. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. The motion carried.  
The issue of positions will be discussed at Salary Board.

Comments - None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk