

Berks County Operations Minutes
August 30, 2022
9:30 a.m.

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, August 30, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 13th floor of the Berks County Services Center, and via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach called the meeting to order with Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt and Commissioner Michael S. Rivera in attendance. Also present were Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor, Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Administrative Officer, and Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes of August 16, 2022, were approved as presented.

9:30am – 9:45am

Student Success Commons and Library at Albright College - Jacquelyn Fetrow, Ph.D., President, Albright College, and Karen Campbell, Ph.D., Provost, Albright College - Presentation of Grant Award Check

Jacquelyn Fetrow, Ph.D., President, Albright College, spoke about their programs, social mobility, and a vision of where they are as an anchor institution in greater Reading. She shared a PowerPoint presentation showing the project they will be investing in using the grant dollars awarded to Albright. Thanked the Commissioners for the support in the Innovation Corridor and the support in the future of Northeast Reading.

Commissioners presented Albright College with a Grant Award Check of One Million American Rescue Plan dollars.

9:45am -10:00am

Alvernia University – School of Nursing at Reading CollegeTowne– John Loyack, President of Alvernia University & Thomas Minick, Vice President for Institutional Advancement - Presentation of Grant Award Check

John Loyack, President of Alvernia University, thanked the Commissioners for their continued support and the grant awarded to Alvernia. Mr. Loyack spoke about the projects they intend to use the grant award dollars towards, such as new programs in downtown CollegeTowne. He also indicated that they intend to invest in current programs such as the expansion of housing, the John Post School of Engineering, physician assistant programs, nursing program refresh, and serving downtown with clinical services. He Spoke about the catalyst that CollegeTowne has become in community Economic Development.

Commissioners presented Alvernia University with a check for One Million American Rescue Plan dollars.

10:00am – 10:15am

Weitz Health Pavilion: Advancing a Legacy of Educational Excellence - Dr. Susan Looney, President, Kenneth Dearstyne, SVP of Finance & Administrative Services. And Anthony DeMarco, Vice President of College Advancement - Presentation of Grant Award Check

Dr. Susan Looney, President of Reading Area Community College, thanked the Commissioners for their support and the grant dollars being awarded to RACC. She spoke about converting Weitz Hall Pavilion into healthcare programs, which will increase the number of students and help double the nursing program student capacity. Weitz Health Pavilion advancing one of the only Hispanic institutions in Pennsylvania and are 40%, Latino students. Spoke about the key project redesign, moving the program into one bldg., developing with nursing students and creating a state-of-the-art simulation lab, and installing simulated patient rooms. Gave a detailed list of all the current health science programs and the future programs they want to offer with the expansion.

Commissioners presented Reading Area Community College with a Grant Award Check in the amount of One Million American Rescue Plan dollars.

10:15am – 10:30am

Fine Free proposal for Berks County Public Libraries - Amy Resh, System Administrator for Berks County Public Library System, Decision Requested to allot an additional \$125,000 to System Member libraries in 2023 to eliminate overdue fines

Amy Resh is recommending fine-free pilot programs to waive overdue fines for books, DVDs, and digital rentals. Gave an update on the results from the fine-free pilot program some libraries conducted over the past year. During the pilot program, there was no increase in late or lost items but reiterated that the fines would continue to be imposed on lost and damaged items. She is asking for \$125,000 one-time ARP funding for member libraries in 2023 to eliminate overdue fines for standard library materials.

Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to approve the fine-free proposal for the Berks County Public Libraries based on the American Rescue Dollars one-time plan. Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion, and there being no further discussion, the motion carried.

10:30am – 1045am

Commissioners on the Road meetings for 2023 – Kevin Barnhardt, Commissioner–
Decision Requested - to approve moving forward with on the road meetings for 2023
and to send out an email blast to municipalities for the opportunity to host.
Potential dates: 3/30/23, 6/29/23, 9/28/23 and 12/14/23, 12/21/23 or 12/28/23
As of today, we have three (3) interested municipalities: Topton, Union, Sinking Spring

Commissioner Barnhardt wants to see the On the Road meetings continue, and he is looking for approval from the board to move into the same phase for On the Road Meetings in 2023. We have three municipalities interested in hosting an On the Road meetings in 2023: Topton, Union, and Sinking Spring.

Commissioner Leinbach indicated that the County would be doing calls to the public within the township/municipality the meetings are taking place to remind them of the OTR meeting.

Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to continue with the On the Road meetings for 2023 and approve the dates of 3/30/23, 6/29/23, 9/28/23, and 12/14/23. Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

Public Comments

No comments.

There being no further business, Commissioner Leinbach adjourned the meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk